



# REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026–2029

# ASIA-PACIFIC

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# FOREWORD

Today, technological developments and the globalization of trade continue to reshape economies and societies worldwide. As a result, the activities and characteristics of the postal sector have changed profoundly, along with the expectations of society and businesses with regard to postal services. In this evolving environment, our role in facilitating communication across borders is more relevant than ever. Governments must provide the necessary enabling environment and ensure that universal postal services are maintained. In parallel, postal operators around the world must adapt to these shifts and meet the evolving demands through structural reforms, innovative services and continuous modernization.

Supporting our member countries in building resilient and future-ready postal services is central to the UPU's mandate. In this regard, the regional development plan (RDP) constitutes a key document, translating our shared priorities into concrete support at regional level. During the Abidjan cycle, we significantly strengthened our field presence, including doubling the number of regional offices. This demonstrates the high priority we continue to place on development cooperation.

This RDP reflects detailed analyses of the region's current situation and the lessons we learned from the Abidjan cycle. It provides both an overview of the global and regional postal environment, together with a targeted set of development cooperation actions tailored to the needs of the region for the 2026-2029 cycle. I believe that it will serve as a guiding reference for implementing development cooperation in line with the discussions held at the Dubai Congress on regionalization.

As the United Nations specialized agency responsible for postal services, we work closely with our regional partners to identify priorities for development cooperation activities and initiatives. This RDP is therefore the result of an inclusive regional dialogue between us and our stakeholders. Despite present challenges, significant opportunities arise from the continued growth of cross-border e-commerce and trade. By leveraging their extensive networks and trusted reputation, designated postal operators are well placed to support governments in advancing national policy objectives.

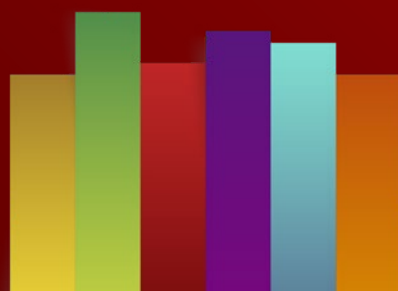
I look forward to strengthening our close cooperation with regional partners as we work together with our 192 member countries to maximize the impact of their socio-economic development efforts and deliver tangible benefits to citizens and businesses across the region.

## **MASAHIKO METOKI**

*Director General of the UPU International Bureau*

CHAPTER 1

# GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE POSTAL SECTOR



## GLOBAL TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

The global postal sector is undergoing a profound transformation. Although the world economy grew at an average annual rate of 3.38% between 1996 and 2023, in terms of gross domestic product adjusted for purchasing power parity (GDP PPP), the postal sector recorded slower growth of 2.28% in real revenue. This divergence, commonly referred to as “postal decoupling”, reflects both the structural challenges and the potential of the sector amid digital disruption and evolving customer needs.

Despite the decline in traditional letter mail, the sector has shown resilience through the expansion of e-commerce, logistics and financial services. In 2023, for the first time, global revenue from parcels and logistics (32.5%) surpassed that from letter post (32.4%), marking a pivotal shift in the sector’s economic profile.

### Structural shift in the sector

Postal operators are rapidly transitioning from traditional, letter-dominant service models to integrated networks that encompass parcel logistics, digital services, financial inclusion and public service delivery. This transformation is driven by the need to remain relevant in the digital economy and to respond to the evolving expectations of citizens and businesses. However, the pace and depth of transformation vary greatly across regions. New business models, investment in digital infrastructure, the reskilling of the postal workforce and the establishment of agile regulatory frameworks are essential prerequisites for success.

## Diverging regional dynamics

The trajectory of postal sector development differs markedly between regions, revealing disparities that must be addressed through targeted cooperation:

**AFRICA** is a prime example of postal decoupling: while GDP has climbed steadily over the past 20 years, postal revenue has shrunk by 2.53% per year on average. Key constraints include underinvestment in infrastructure, low mail and parcel volumes, patchy regulation, and slow uptake of electronic advance data (EAD) and digital standards. In many countries, universal service obligations (USOs) are still to be defined, and access to international funding remains limited;

**ARAB COUNTRIES** have shown robust growth in postal revenue, outpacing GDP growth, largely owing to the rapid uptake of financial services and government-backed modernization programmes. Nonetheless, the Arab region faces challenges in addressing cross-border operational fragmentation and in harmonizing regulations for postal and digital services;

the **ASIA-PACIFIC** region has emerged as a global leader in postal innovation. The region boasts strong growth in e-commerce logistics, digital payment systems and postal financial services. However, the pace of growth is uneven, with countries in the region still facing infrastructure and policy bottlenecks that limit last-mile delivery and digital inclusion;

the **CARIBBEAN** has recorded modest economic growth, but postal revenue remains low owing to small market size and high operational costs. Regulatory inconsistency, low digital uptake and limited Post–Customs integration constrain development. There is an increasing need for targeted capacity building and climate-resilient digital transformation efforts;

the **EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS)** region shows relatively high levels of service reliability and resilience. However, it faces strong competition, with customer-centric innovation and both exogenous and endogenous regulation among the main challenges. Demographic shifts and labour shortages also pose structural issues for the sustainability of national postal operators;

**LATIN AMERICA** displays moderate economic growth, but postal revenue lags behind. Outdated and fragmented regulatory frameworks, uneven digital adoption and limited investment capacity hinder progress. Demand is rising for capacity building and more coordinated digital transformation strategies.

These divergences underscore the need for tailored intervention, strong regional coordination and continued alignment of UPU-led actions with national strategies.

## Climate, resilience and inclusion

Across all regions, the increase in climate-related disasters, geopolitical tension and pandemics has exposed the vulnerability of postal supply chains. The need to mainstream disaster risk management (DRM), business continuity planning and climate resilience into postal development has become imperative. In parallel, the postal network continues to serve as vital infrastructure for social inclusion, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Postal operators are uniquely positioned to deliver essential services such as social payments, e-government services, digital identification and financial access – reinforcing their role as enablers for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2022–2025 CYCLE

Under the Abidjan Postal Strategy, the UPU achieved significant progress:

By the end of the cycle, the majority of planned development cooperation activities had been completed across all regions, reflecting sustained delivery under the Abidjan Business Plan;

Implementation of the UPU's broader strategic priorities advanced consistently across the Council of Administration (CA) and Postal Operations Council (POC) work programmes, as reflected in the progress reports presented during the cycle;

Development cooperation was strengthened through regionalization, with expanded field presence and broadened partnerships with restricted unions and donors, in line with Congress mandates.

Key lessons from this cycle include the importance of strong regional engagement, flexible and diversified funding, and enhanced cross-cutting coordination within the UPU and with member countries – particularly through increased field presence, harmonized project management and improved collaboration with restricted unions.

## STRATEGIC ORIENTATION FOR 2026–2029

The Dubai Business Plan translates the UPU's long-term vision into 38 domain work proposals (DWP), structured around three strategic goals:



**GOAL 1: LEVERAGE THE SINGLE POSTAL TERRITORY THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE RULES-BASED SYSTEM;**



**GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN THE GLOBAL POSTAL ECOSYSTEM THROUGH INNOVATION FOR FACILITATING COMMUNICATION AND TRADE;**



**GOAL 3: ENABLE POSTAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENHANCED COOPERATION AND REGIONALIZATION.**

Among these, the importance of goal 3 is underscored by the fact that it requires the largest share of projected resources, at 133.58 million CHF over the 2026–2029 cycle. This highlights the Union's commitment to ensuring that no member country is left behind.

A core pillar of this commitment is the deepening of regionalization, which now serves not only as a delivery mechanism but as a strategic approach in its own right. Regionalization is no longer limited to field implementation; it is being positioned as a means of co-creation, empowerment and resilience building. Through enhanced regional presence – including the expansion of regional offices, the deployment of field experts, and closer engagement with restricted unions and local stakeholders – the UPU aims to tailor solutions more precisely to the unique needs of each region.

Key proposals such as DWP 27 (Development and cooperation – regionalization and projects), DWP 101 (Development and cooperation – emergency assistance) and DWP 205 (Development and cooperation – regionalization) support this approach by:

- elevating regional offices into centres for technical assistance, policy dialogue and resource mobilization;

- ensuring that regional strategies are shaped with – and not just for – member countries;

- strengthening alignment between regional priorities and global goals, particularly in areas such as digital transformation, financial inclusion, logistics development and regulatory modernization.

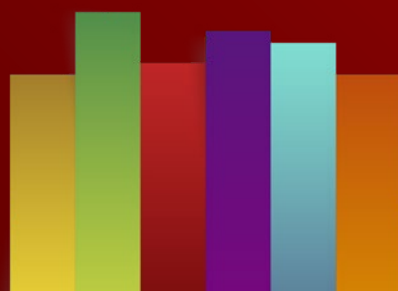
In this way, regionalization is both a structural lever and a political message: development must be regionalized, inclusive and responsive. It reinforces the idea that no solution is truly global unless it is regionally relevant.

This renewed emphasis on region-specific delivery models, combined with the results-based approach of the DWPs through key performance indicators (KPIs), sets the foundation for a more agile, equitable and accountable UPU that is prepared to support its members in navigating uncertainty, embracing innovation and achieving sustainable postal development.

The regional development plan (RDP) for the 2026–2029 cycle will be defined by its responsiveness to regional needs, its emphasis on resilience and sustainability, and its integration with the Dubai Business Plan and the UN SDGs. Chapter 2 will present a detailed regional analysis to guide priority setting and cooperation modalities tailored to each region.

CHAPTER 2

# REGIONAL POSTAL SECTOR ANALYSIS



## OVERVIEW OF THE POSTAL SECTOR

The postal services market in the Asia-Pacific region has undergone a significant transformation owing to digitalization, shifting consumer behaviour and the growth of e-commerce.

## POSTAL DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE (2IPD)<sup>1</sup>

The Asia-Pacific region covers a broad spectrum of countries, each with varying levels of postal development. Countries in the region are influenced by rapid urbanization and technological adoption to differing extents, with some leading global postal development.

The region exhibits a diverse distribution across the mid-section of the postal development level (PDL) classification, as shown in this graph, indicating a mix of emerging postal leaders and countries still confronting developmental obstacles.

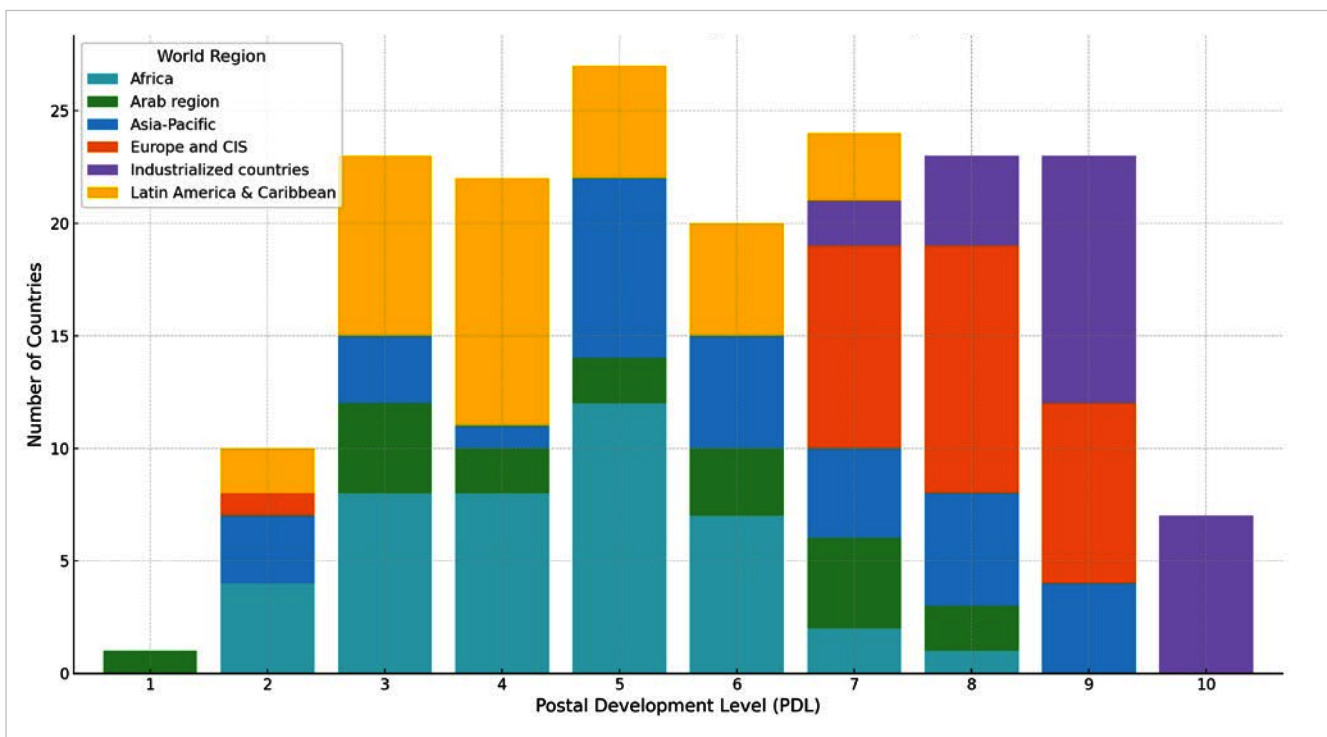
Rapid urbanization and uneven rates of technological uptake produce markedly different postal outcomes: designated operators (DOs) span the full spectrum from **PDL 2 to 9**, though most are clustered around **PDL 5 to 7**.

Substantial differences persist in postal development; in other words, not all governments are equally equipped with postal systems ready to deliver greater economic welfare. Higher postal development leads to higher levels of income per capita, greater economic growth and increased resilience.

The Asia-Pacific region's median score on the UPU Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD) indicates mid-range performance in most dimensions, except for relevance, which remains low. Consequently, many countries risk becoming increasingly disconnected from the global postal network. The region has persistent issues with timely and reliable service delivery, which could be attributed to infrastructure deficits and operational inefficiencies.

The Asia-Pacific region shows a significant spread in resilience scores: some countries are building more resilient systems, while others continue to face challenges that could impede their long-term development. The region demonstrates the greatest variability in relevance and resilience, underscoring the diversity and uneven development of postal services across the region.

### Distribution of postal development level by region



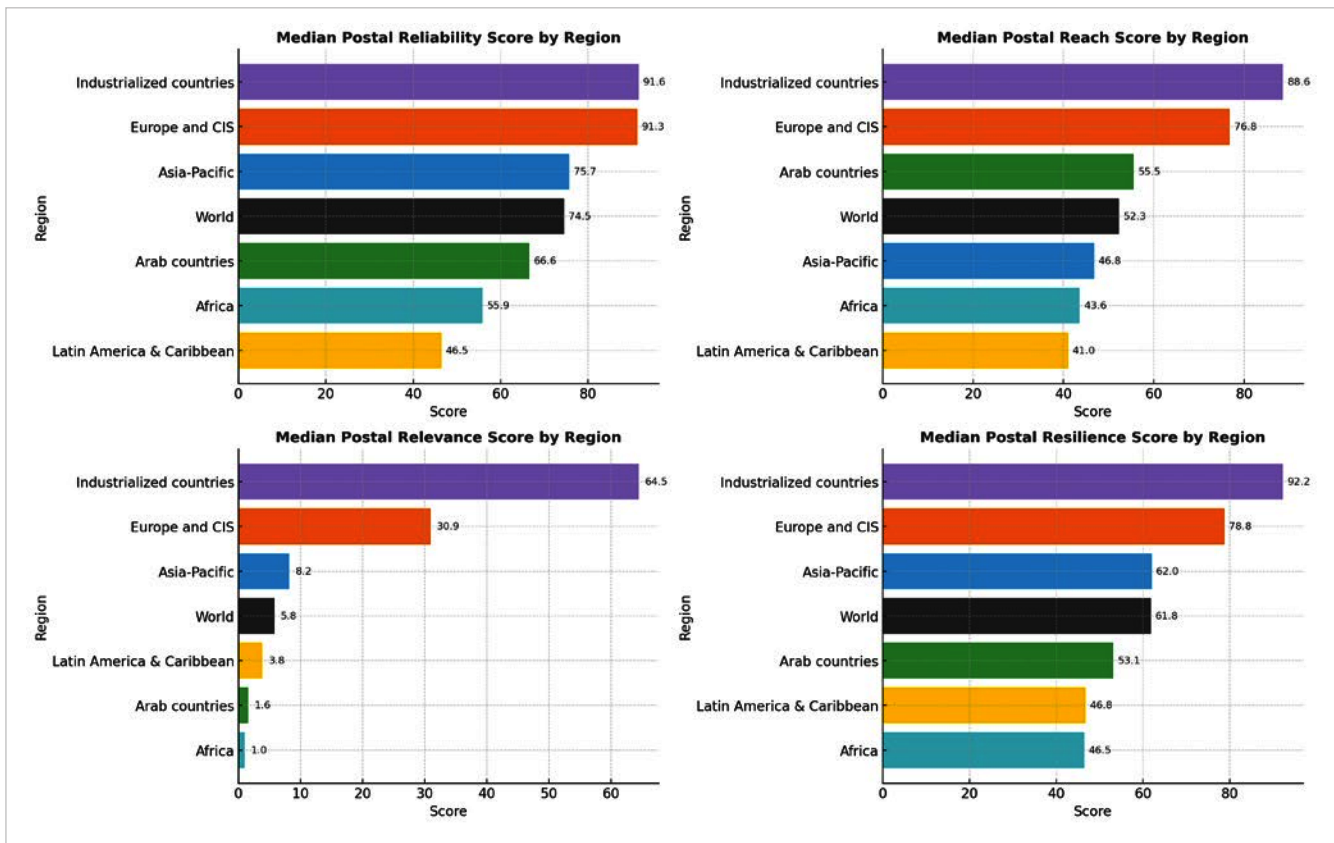
Source: UPU

### Median ZIPD scores by UPU region

UPU REGION	MEDIAN SCORE
INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES	94.4
EUROPE AND CIS	72.5
WORLD	50.8
ASIA-PACIFIC	46.4
ARAB COUNTRIES	42.4
AFRICA	36.3
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	32.3

Source: UPU

### Median ZIPD sub-scores by UPU region



Source: UPU

China and Thailand are among the top performers in the region, achieving PDL 9. Other strong performers include India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Viet Nam, which fall into PDLs 8 or 9.

## CHALLENGES

Modernization is uneven across the region, with significant gaps between high-performing countries and those in lower tiers, such as Kiribati and Papua New Guinea, which face challenges in leveraging postal systems for economic growth owing to limited infrastructure;

Low relevance scores indicate a need for better service diversification and market adaptation.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Targeted investments in digital services, automated sorting and expanded networks can help middle-income operators achieve world-class performance;

Countries like Thailand demonstrate the potential for rapid transformation through strategic modernization;

In terms of trade facilitation, strong performers like China and Thailand demonstrate the role postal networks can play in enabling cross-border trade and e-commerce.

The Asia-Pacific region's postal sector has significant untapped potential, with opportunities to enhance international connectivity, diversify services and improve operational efficiency.

## KEY DIMENSIONS

The postal sector in the Asia-Pacific region is characterized by rapid shifts in market demand, the dominance of e-commerce, and a transition from letters to parcels, all occurring within a diverse regional environment. These forces shape the core dimensions of postal development, including infrastructure, digital integration, financial and government services, competitive dynamics, sustainability considerations, and the regulatory environment. The following subsections outline these key dimensions.

### Market trends

#### E-COMMERCE BOOM

The Asia-Pacific region boasts the world's largest e-commerce market. Cross-border e-commerce has raised demand for efficient and cost-effective international postal and parcel services. Users of e-commerce platforms are likely to rely on postal networks and hybrid logistics solutions.

#### SHIFT FROM LETTERS TO PARCELS

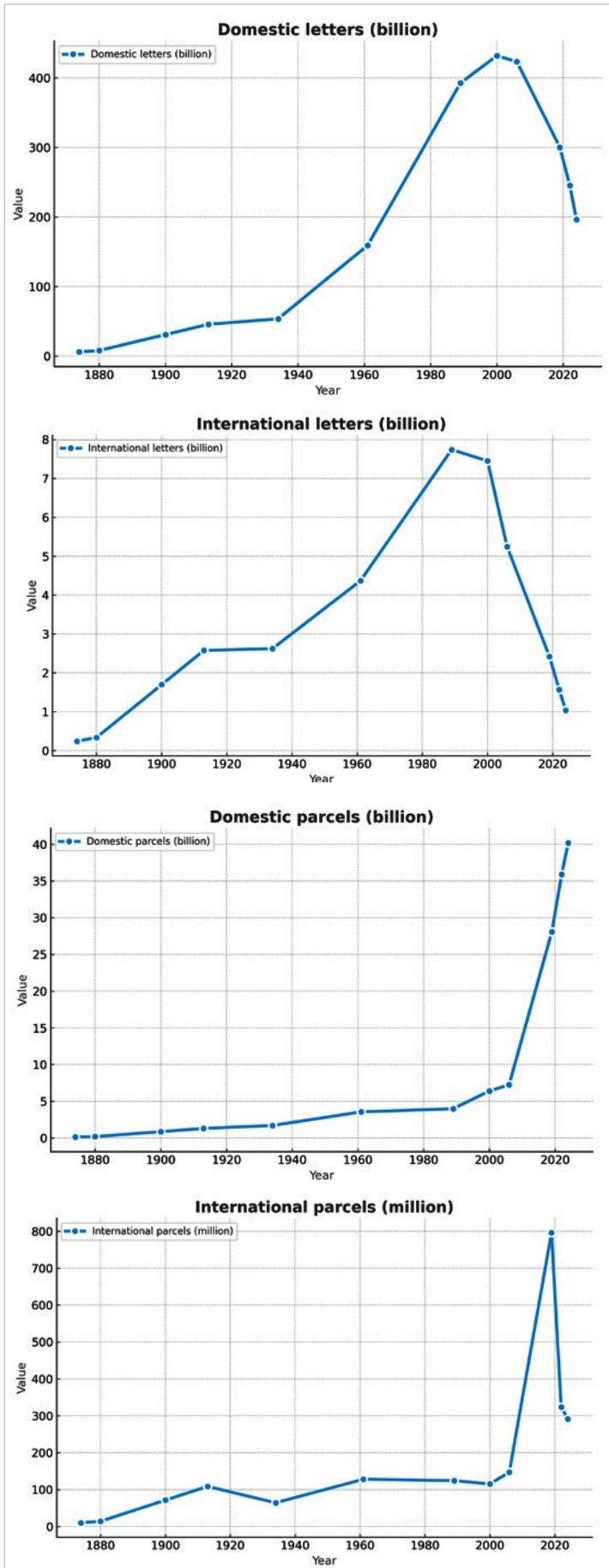
Traditional letter mail volumes are declining, while parcel and packet volumes are rising steeply owing both to online shopping and to digital communications replacing paper-based correspondence.

As shown [in these graphs](#), international letter-post traffic in 2024 is estimated to have been at the same level recorded in 1888, effectively erasing more than a century of international growth in just the past 35 years. Domestic letter volumes have similarly regressed, now standing at levels comparable to those seen 60 years ago in 1964.

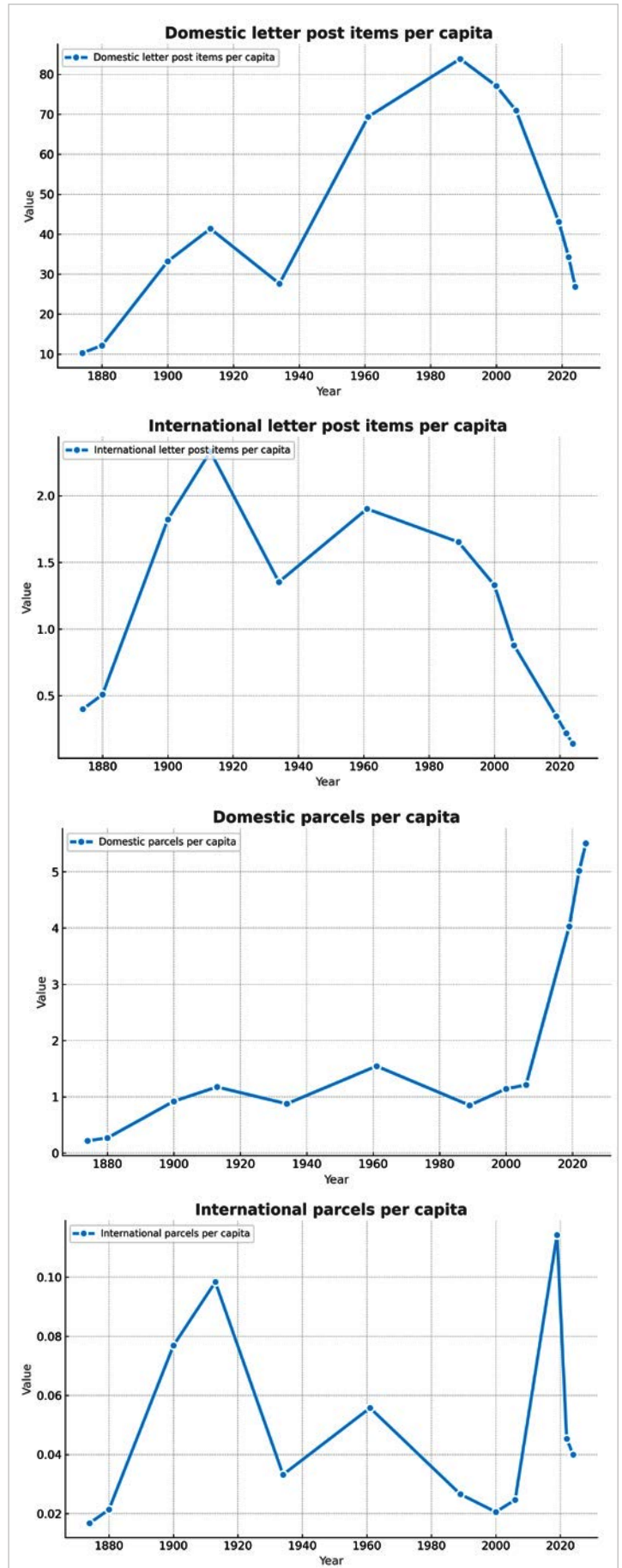
This sharp decline in mail volumes coincides with the exponential rise of new electronic communication methods. International letter post, in particular, has been a leading indicator of this shift, leaving the global postal industry with just 1 billion international letter-post items in 2024. In parallel, fewer than 200 billion domestic letter-post items were sent in 2024.<sup>2</sup>

This remaining cross-border volume ensures that value-added international postal services will maintain their relevance within the broader global postal ecosystem, particularly in regions where digital access is limited or unreliable.

### Letter- and parcel-post traffic 1874-2024

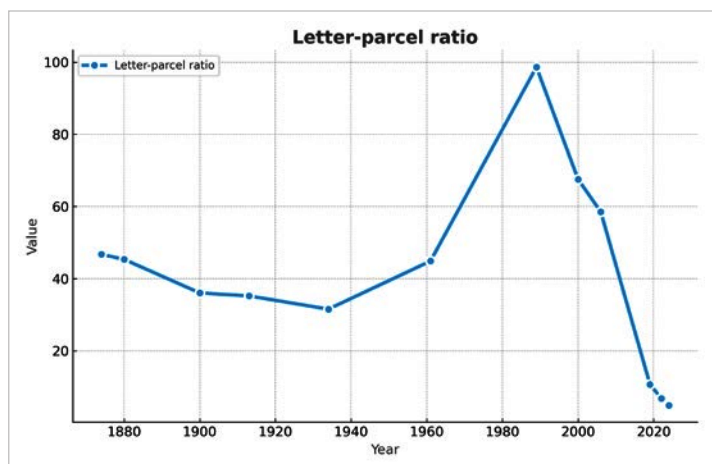


### Per capita mail volumes 1874-2024



Source: UPU.

## Letter-to-parcel ratio 1874-2024



Source: UPU.

Similarly, domestic letter post will retain a vital role in sectors such as government communications, direct mail and rural deliveries, where it offers unique advantages over digital alternatives.

The sharp drop in the global letter-to-parcel ratio is testament to the changing nature of postal demand, with parcels becoming the core of modern postal operations:

**1874:** 47 letters for each parcel;

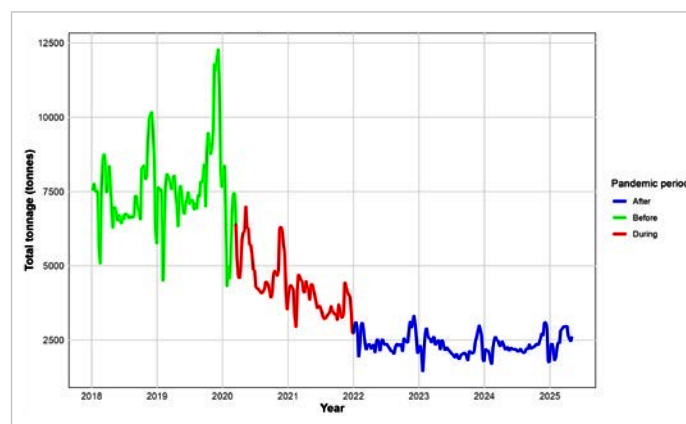
**1989:** 99 letters for each parcel;

**2024:** 5 letters for each parcel.<sup>3</sup>

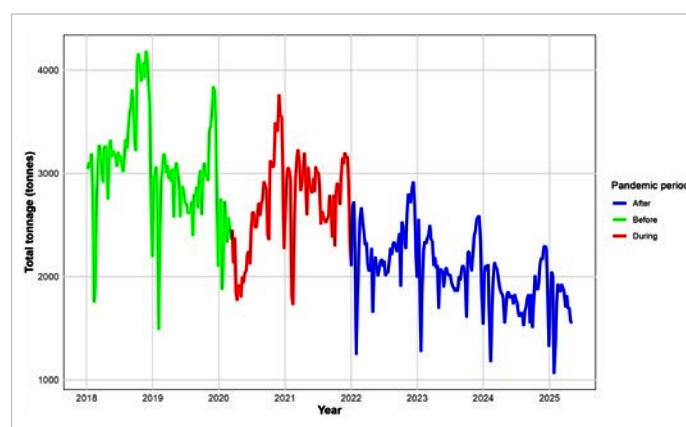
This shift also underscores the broader trends within global communications and logistics. As letters continue to decline in relevance owing to digital alternatives, parcels have surged, driven by changes in consumer behaviour and the rise of e-commerce. The postal sector's ability to adapt to these shifts will determine its future success, particularly as it navigates the complex landscape of international trade, digital communication and evolving consumer expectations.

The cross-border e-commerce market has been buffeted by two opposing forces since 2019: a collapse in traditional small packets in the international letter-post stream – governed by the UPU – and an explosion in low-value and lightweight e-commerce items reported by customs authorities.

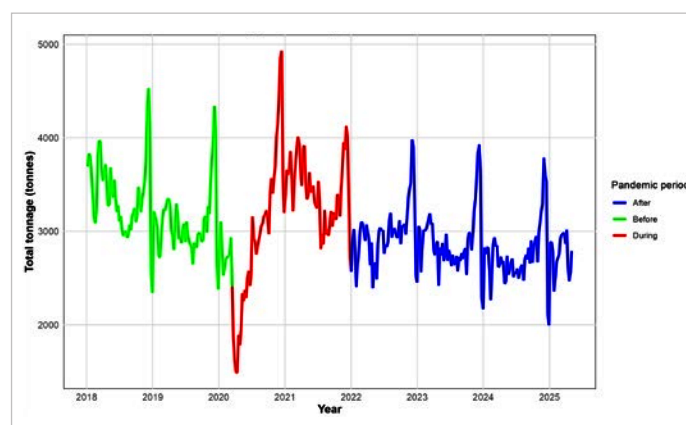
## Weekly total tonnage for Letter Post



## Weekly total tonnage for EMS

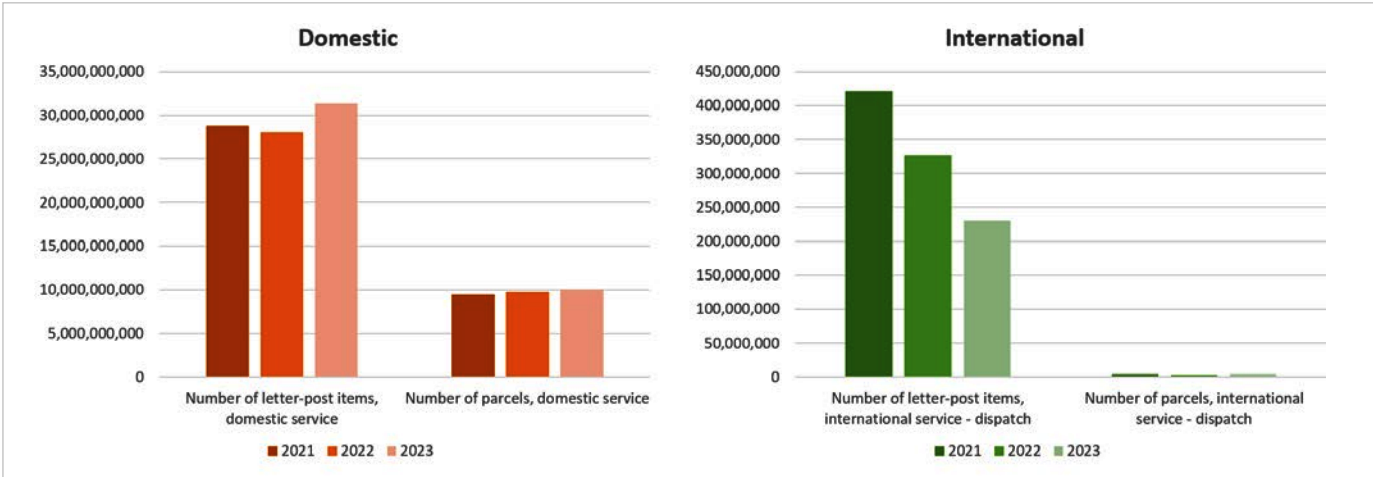


## Weekly total tonnage for parcel-post items



Source: UPU

### Evolution of domestic and international letter post in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region



Unlike pre-COVID mailbags, these items arrive via a mosaic of channels: postal, express integrator, third-party consolidator, and platform-owned fulfilment. Each channel has its own label format, tracking application programming interface (API), and line-haul procurement method.

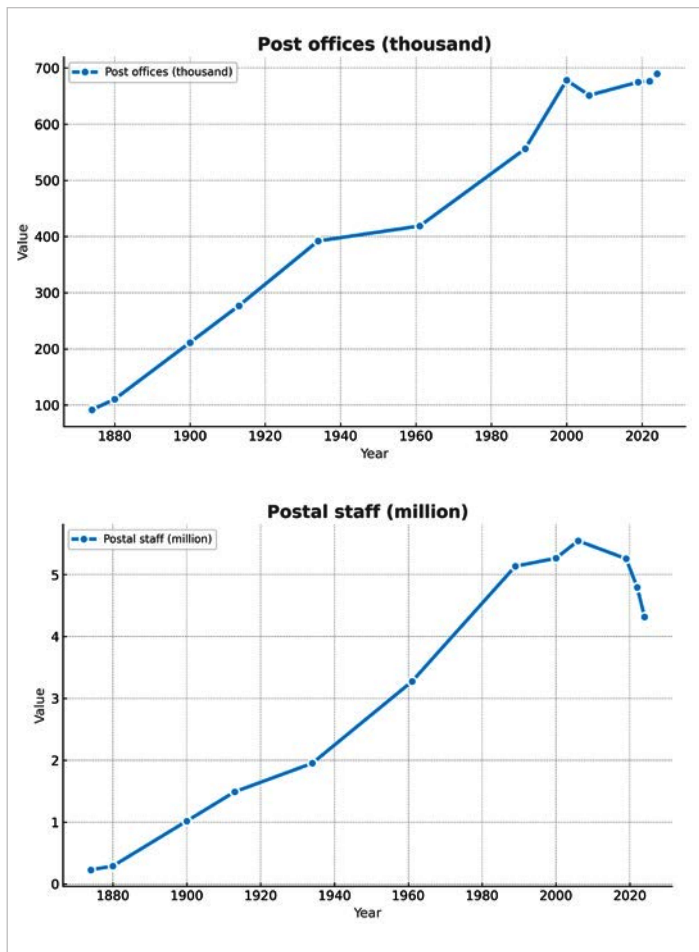
The macro indicators confirm that volumes are not falling across the board, but traffic is scattering across many more routes and service providers.<sup>4</sup>

As shown in these graphs, the global number of post offices increased from 91,701 in 1874 to 676,354 in 2024, representing more than a sevenfold rise over the last 150 years. This continued growth in the number of post offices underscores their enduring importance as a key asset for successful postal development over time, even in the modern era.

In addition to the growth in post offices, the number of postal employees increased steadily from 1874, highlighting the traditionally labour-intensive nature of delivering postal services. However, the last two decades have seen a significant shift, with postal employment transitioning from historical growth to a notable decline.<sup>5</sup>

These global postal development trends can be compared and contrasted to those in the Asia-Pacific region (see graphs below).<sup>6</sup>

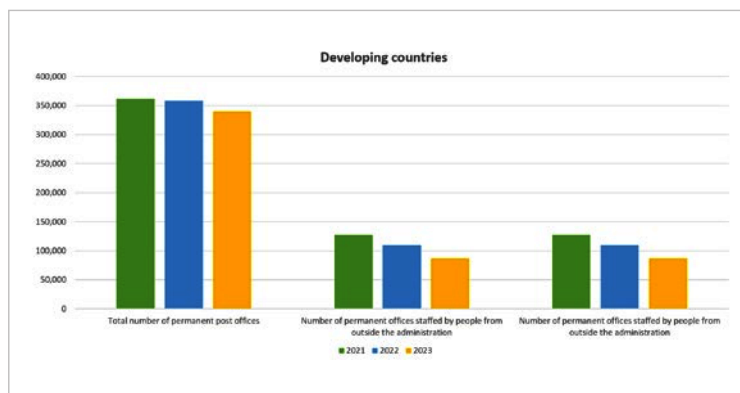
### Number of post offices and postal workers (1874-2024)



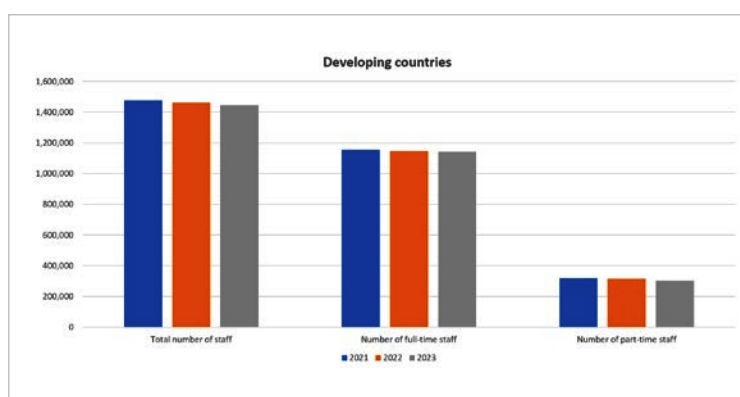
Source: UPU.

4 UPU report – State of the Postal Sector 2025.  
 5 UPU report – State of the Postal Sector 2024.  
 6 UPU Postal Statistics.

## Evolution of post offices in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region



## Evolution of postal staff in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region



## POSTAL RELEVANCE TO THE SDGS

Recent UPU research<sup>7</sup> also shows that sufficient access to postal infrastructure can generate positive effects, contributing significantly to the achievement of national sustainable development goals. The implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will make the Post more relevant, and is a primary objective and mandate for the UPU as part of the wider UN family.

In the light of the evolving landscape of the postal industry, marked by fluctuating real operating revenues, increased competition and a persistent inflationary context, the percentage of income linked to the letter-post service is expected to continue to decline.

In contrast, the percentage of income linked to parcels and logistics services is expected to continue to rise and potentially overtake the income generated by letter post. The percentage of income linked to postal financial services is predicted to essentially remain constant.

Therefore, ensuring the economic sustainability of postal services in the coming years requires a multifaceted approach. The introduction of innovative digital postal services can boost this revenue category in the future.

This graph compares postal growth to economic growth in the region over the 1996–2023 period. This growth is driven by China, Viet Nam and, to a lesser extent, India. Parcel-led e-commerce and financial services drive postal revenue deep into positive territory: China Post reported 9.9% annual postal growth over the 2006–2023 period against an average annual increase in GDP of 7.6%.

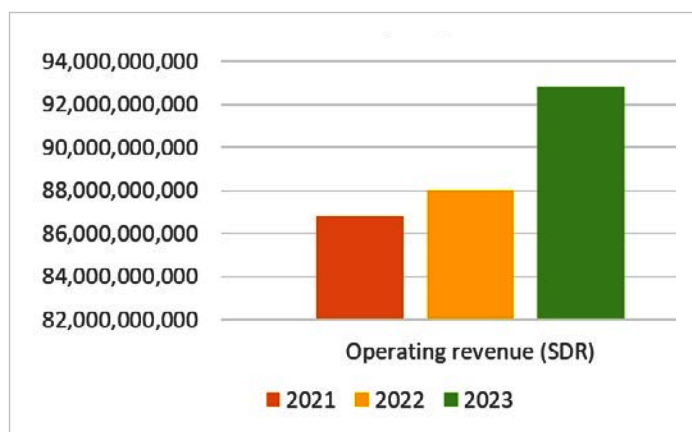
Yet dispersion is extreme: more than half of the sample sits below the horizontal axis, illustrating that parcel logistics are not a rising tide that lifts all boats.<sup>8</sup>

## GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Faced with declining letter-mail volumes, Posts in the Asia-Pacific region have diversified their traditional services portfolio by offering new digital services to enhance their revenue. Some Posts have launched numerous important activities that help provide social services in their countries while also bringing much-needed income to the post office. These activities include providing passport and driver's licence services and other government services, issuing social sector payments, and collecting municipal and other taxes.

Compared to the traditional postal product range, the provision of non-postal services, such as government and social services, makes up approximately 50% of postal revenue for some DOs in the region. It is therefore important to focus on this revenue source to sustain the postal network, while contributing to the overall socio-economic development of the region and thus bridging its development gaps.

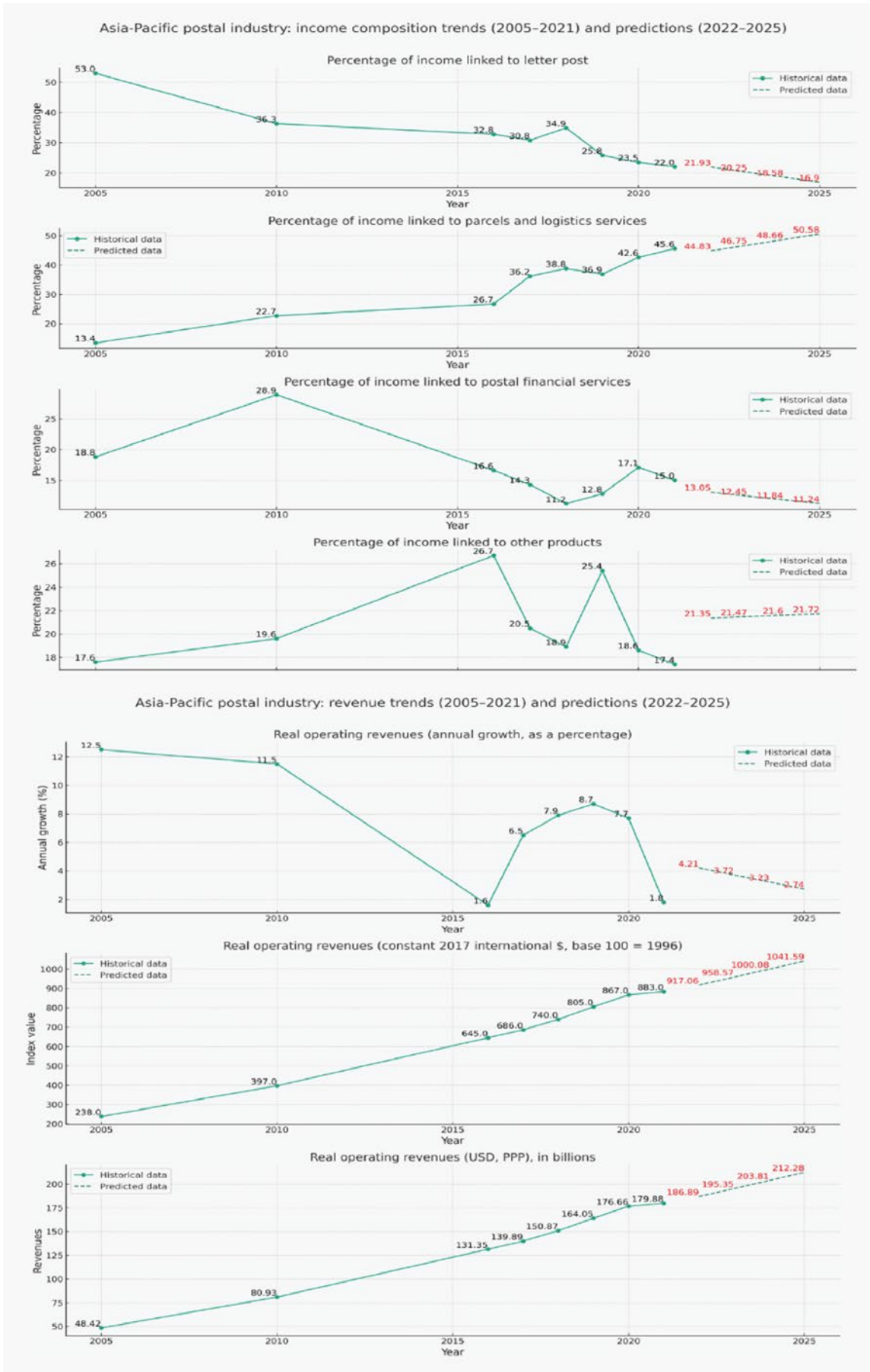
## Operating revenues in the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region



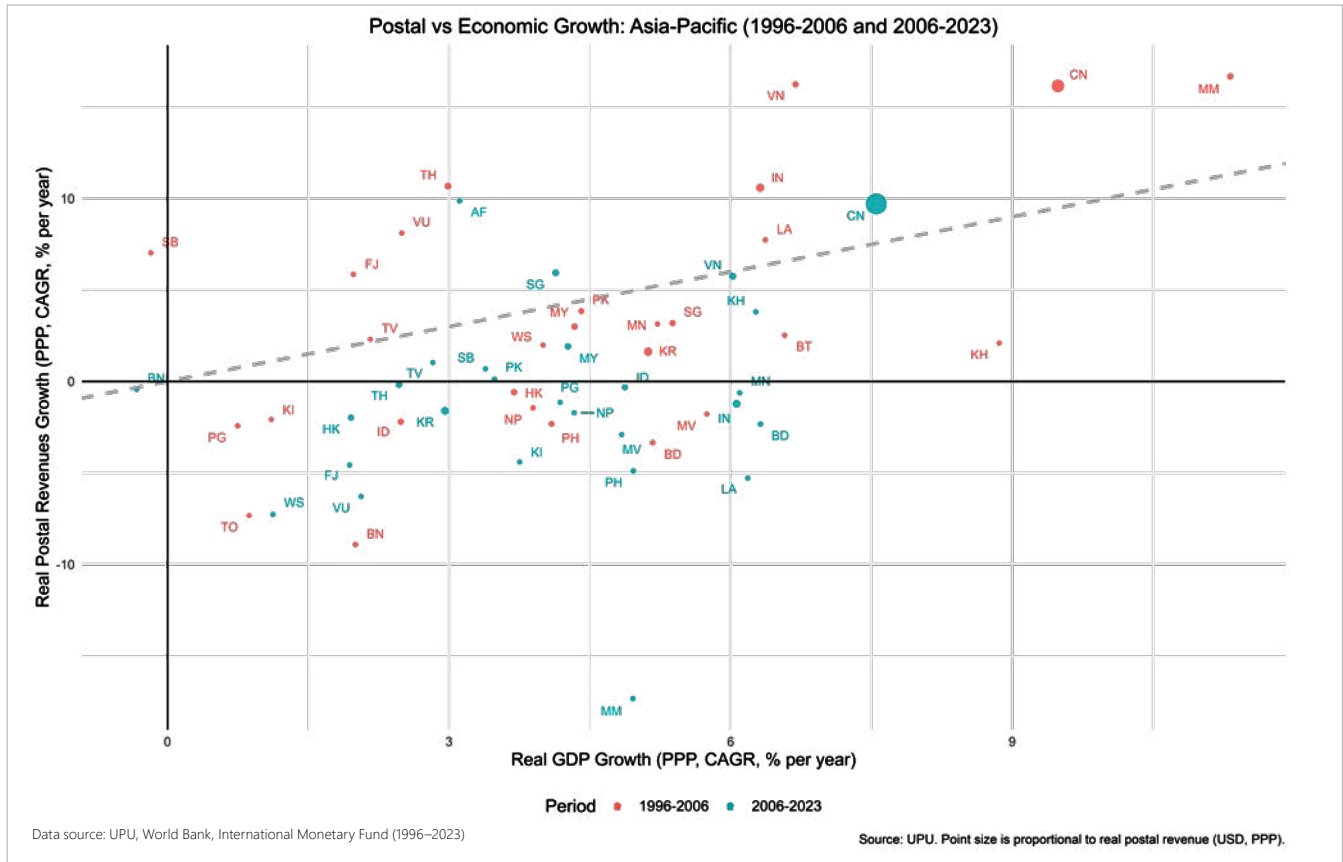
7 UPU report – State of the Postal Sector 2024.

8 UPU report – State of the Postal Sector 2025.

## Postal income trends



## Postal versus economic growth, Asia-Pacific region (1996–2023)



### POSTAL MODERNIZATION AND DIGITAL INTEGRATION

Some leading DOs in the Asia-Pacific region are modernizing their operations – introducing digital tracking, logistics technology and last-mile delivery innovations. Investment in automation and smart logistics is helping meet growing parcel delivery demands.

### COMPETITION FROM PRIVATE COURIER SERVICES

Posts in the region are facing strong competition from both international and domestic courier services. Private courier services often draw on advances in technology and provide high-quality customized services, especially for large business customers.

### E-COMMERCE BUSINESSES AS BIG PLAYERS IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN AND DELIVERY

With the advent of e-commerce services, both large and small e-commerce companies have made significant inroads in the supply chain and delivery market. Some e-commerce companies even deliver within 10 minutes. Large international and domestic e-commerce businesses offer large discounts on merchandise and free delivery, leading to a big boom in custom for these companies. This adversely affects postal business.

### SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN LOGISTICS

In urban centres in the region, there is a focus on carbon-neutral deliveries and electric vehicle fleets. There is also pressure to improve packaging and reduce waste across supply chains.

## Opportunities

### CROSS-BORDER SME ENABLEMENT

There is a great opportunity to provide affordable international shipping solutions for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) exporting in the emerging markets of the region.

### TECH-DRIVEN VALUE-ADDED SERVICES

Enhanced tracking, dynamic delivery options (e.g. lockers, pickup points), and AI-powered route optimization could be introduced into the region's postal sector. There is also the potential to integrate postal APIs with e-commerce platforms for better logistics control.

### LAST-MILE INNOVATION IN RURAL AREAS

With large rural populations, services like drone delivery, mobile post offices and crowd-sourced delivery can play a role in expanding reach.

### REGIONAL LOGISTICS HUB

A country can position itself as a regional logistics and postal distribution hub for DOs in the region.

## Regulatory environment

The regulatory environment for postal services in the Asia-Pacific region is shaped by national laws and global postal frameworks. An overview of the key components is provided below:

### NATIONAL POSTAL REGULATION

Each country in the region has a postal supervisory authority, often operating under a government ministry. These ministries/regulators typically oversee:

**licensing of DOs;**

**service standards (e.g. delivery times, reliability);**

**pricing and tariffs;**

**competition with private couriers;**

**consumer protection and handling of complaints.**

### UPU FRAMEWORK

As UPU members, the countries of the region adhere to the Acts of the Union, including the Constitution, General Regulations and Convention, among others. The Acts of the Union help to ensure interoperability and a minimum level of service globally.

### CHALLENGES IN THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

**Fragmentation:** Varied rules across countries make cross-border postal operations complex.

**Modernization gaps:** Some postal systems are lagging behind in adapting to e-commerce and digital services.

**Security and compliance:** There is increased scrutiny on illicit trade and compliance with anti-money laundering and dangerous goods protocols.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROLE OF THE POSTAL SECTOR**

The socio-economic impact of postal services in the Asia-Pacific region is significant and covers many different aspects, affecting individuals, businesses and national economies. The following provides a breakdown of the impact:

### Economic empowerment and trade facilitation

#### **SUPPORT FOR SMES AND E-COMMERCE**

Small businesses across the Asia-Pacific region rely on international postal networks to access global markets, particularly in cross-border e-commerce. Cost-effective and reliable shipping via postal services reduces barriers to entry for micro-entrepreneurs from countries in the region.

#### **TRADE INTEGRATION**

Postal services complement logistics supply chains, helping integrate emerging economies into global trade flows. The growth of free trade agreements is expanding postal cross-border cooperation, supporting regional economic development.

### Financial inclusion

#### **POSTAL FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Many DOs in the region offer savings, remittance and insurance services, especially in rural and underbanked areas. This promotes financial inclusion, giving millions access to basic financial tools.

### Rural connectivity and development

#### **LAST-MILE DELIVERY**

International postal services extend connectivity to remote areas, enabling digital inclusion and allowing rural residents to participate in global commerce. Improved access to goods, medicines and services raises living standards and increases market access in rural communities.

### Disaster relief and humanitarian aid

#### **POSTAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

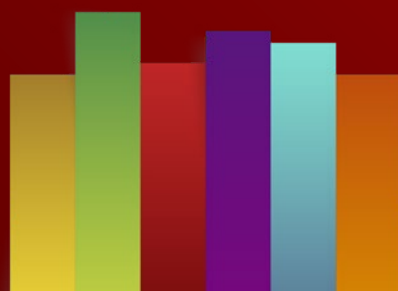
During crises such as natural disasters and pandemics, postal networks often help deliver essential goods, medicines and government aid, especially when private services are unavailable.

### Challenges and disparities

Despite these benefits, disparities exist: infrastructure is uneven across countries (e.g. urban-rural divide in delivery times and reliability). In some regions, postal services struggle with financial sustainability and outdated systems. Digital disruption poses a challenge to traditional mail operations, requiring faster adaptation.

## CHAPTER 3

# EVALUATION AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM 2022–2025 ACTIVITIES



# ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## ORE 3 project

The operational readiness for e-commerce (ORE 3) project aimed to assist targeted DOs in modernizing their operational processes. It promoted use of all available IT standardized tools and end-to-end systems to implement solutions aimed at improving operational efficiency and ensuring e-commerce development. The following activities were completed under the seven key pillars of the ORE 3 project.

Over the 2022–2025 period, regional workshops were organized: eight for Asia and five for the Pacific region. Country road maps and action plans were established and adopted by each participating DO.

A total of 24 on-site process reviews were conducted by field project experts, consultants and experts from the UPU International Bureau (IB).

In addition, three quality management certification audit visits were conducted by field project experts and IB experts.

A total of 14 postal security certification reviews were also conducted by consultants, field project experts and IB experts.

Lastly, 13 technical support missions were conducted by Postal Technology Centre experts.

## Procurement project

Postal equipment for least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) was procured from 2022 to 2025.

This project helped to facilitate all other projects aimed at improving the quality of postal services in the region.

## Capacity-building project

In cooperation with the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU), the UPU organized 22 training courses and workshops at the Asian-Pacific Postal College (APPC), a training arm of the APPU. The UPU provided around 221 fellowships to member countries from the region to attend these events.



**ORE 2022-2025  
ASIA-PACIFIC**

## South–South and triangular cooperation project

South–South cooperation is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the Global South. Traditional donor countries and multilateral organizations facilitate South–South initiatives through the provision of funding, training, management and technological systems, as well as other forms of support. South–South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) involves three actors: two from the Global South and one from the Global North. The latter, which can also be an international organization, provides financial resources so that the countries of the Global South can exchange technical assistance.

The following major activities were completed under the SSTC framework:

**The first regional postal leaders’ forum for the Asia-Pacific region was organized by the UPU in Jaipur, India.**

**A study visit for English-speaking African countries was conducted in New Delhi, India.**

**A workshop on the extension of the UPU Interconnection Platform was held in New Delhi, India.**

## Cooperation with the Asian-Pacific Postal Union

The cooperation agreement between the UPU and APPU was signed in September 2022. The purpose of this agreement was to establish a framework for the implementation of cooperation projects in the Asia-Pacific region throughout the 2022–2025 cycle.

## Projects funded by voluntary contributions from member countries

In addition to the above, projects in the following areas were implemented from 2022 to 2025, funded by voluntary contributions to the UPU:

**Flexible supply chain and mail transport network in the Pacific region and operational efficiency of the regional hub(s);**

**Climate resilience for Posts;**

**Exploring key aspects of postal regulatory reform in the Asia-Pacific region.**

## Regionalization

Under the new field presence model, the IB has successfully established a network of regional offices around the globe, including three offices in the Asia-Pacific region: the Bangkok office in Thailand, the Suva office in Fiji and the New Delhi office in India.

The new field presence model has led to greater effectiveness and closer interaction with regional stakeholders. Increased field presence has improved responsiveness to local needs and fostered stronger relationships with DOs and government bodies. In this way, the field presence strategy has achieved significant results in both cost reduction and enhanced proximity.

## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

In terms of the UPU’s overall development cooperation strategy, the following lessons were learned during the past cycle.

Development cooperation has become more results-oriented, with an emphasis on bilateral communication with beneficiary countries. Better results are obtained in countries whose governments are inclined to support postal sector development. Ensuring full cross-cutting coordination within the IB has made it possible to take global and interregional action with measurable and achievable common indicators. The shift in the strategic focus of development cooperation towards regionalization and field activities, as well as greater consideration of new national strategies and the role of key actors, has resulted in increased government involvement.

As part of a coherent approach, key projects have been developed to improve operational efficiency and e-commerce. In addition, focused policies have been formulated and postal regulatory frameworks have been harmonized and enhanced to reduce discrepancies in postal development.

The appointment of regional project facilitators has highlighted the value of a network of experts able to provide effective assistance to countries and continuously monitor activities as part of operational projects.

Joint cooperation and Quality of Service Fund activities have enabled the coordinated development of projects relating to activities identified by member countries.

Capacity-building activities centred on e-learning, the creation of decentralized pools of experts and the provision of advanced training to member countries, have been instrumental in establishing greater sustainability and ownership of activities.

UPU interventions have fostered greater regional cooperation, enabling knowledge sharing and the adoption of best practices. The serious commitment of restricted unions and key contributors in the area of development cooperation has been essential to the advancement of projects in the field. The optimization of resources and synergies with member countries, as well as with restricted unions and other regional partners, has been a key objective. By expanding partnerships, the IB has been able to increase external funding for the benefit of member countries.

However, replacing national team members responsible for monitoring project progress without also ensuring any knowledge transfer has been shown to hinder continuity and significantly limit the results of national and global projects.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evaluation of project achievements during the 2022–2025 cycle and the lessons learned across all areas of regional development cooperation, the following key recommendations are proposed to strengthen the design, implementation and impact of activities in future cycles:

### PROMOTE STRONGER GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

Encourage stronger government engagement by supporting DOs in advocating for postal sector development within national strategies. This will ensure that project gains are sustained and linked to national priorities.

### ENHANCE REGIONALIZATION AND FIELD PRESENCE

Consolidate the benefits of the field presence model by empowering the regional offices in Bangkok, Suva and New Delhi with increased operational flexibility.

### SUSTAIN AND EXPAND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND E-COMMERCE PROJECTS

Maintain a universal approach to excellence in postal operations, particularly in on-site regional workshops, process reviews, quality management, postal security and end-to-end operational systems.

### CONTINUE PROCUREMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

Expand procurement mechanisms for postal equipment in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, ensuring that procurement packages address the growing needs of e-commerce, last-mile delivery and climate resilience.

### DEEPEN CAPACITY BUILDING AND EXPERT NETWORKS

Scale up partnerships with the APPU and APPC, ensuring that fellowship and training programmes align with emerging needs for skills.

### EXPAND AND INSTITUTIONALIZE SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

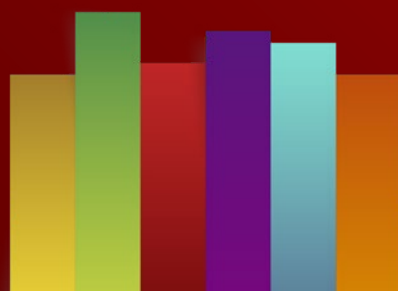
Utilize SSTC frameworks to ensure the replicability and continuity of successful initiatives such as study visits, regional leadership forums and technology exchange workshops.

### HARNESS PARTNERSHIPS AND EXTERNAL FUNDING

Encourage member countries to contribute voluntary funds by demonstrating the high impact of existing projects.

CHAPTER 4

# DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE 2026–2029 CYCLE



## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY

The UPU's approach to development cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region focuses on enhancing postal services to support socio-economic development, bridge the digital divide and strengthen regional integration. The objectives of UPU development cooperation for the Asia-Pacific region typically align with the UPU's broader goals but are tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the region.

## REGIONAL OBJECTIVES AND ALIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES

### Key regional objectives

#### Strengthen postal infrastructure and modernization

Support member countries in modernizing postal networks and services;

Promote digital transformation and innovation within postal operations;

Enhance automation and technological integration in mail and parcel processing.

#### Promote regional and global e-commerce integration

Develop and implement strategies to position DOs as key players in e-commerce;

Improve cross-border logistics and delivery capabilities.

#### Improve quality of service and customer experience

Enhance service reliability, delivery speed and tracking capabilities;

Implement quality management systems and measurement tools;

Foster customer-oriented service design and accessibility.

#### Provide capacity building and human resource development

Provide training and skills development for postal staff;

Strengthen management and technical expertise through workshops, seminars and knowledge sharing.

#### Foster regional integration and cooperation

Encourage collaboration among regional DOs;

Support joint initiatives and information exchange through regional projects;

Harmonize standards and procedures to facilitate smooth postal operations.

#### Provide government and social services

Encourage Posts to strengthen the postal network by providing important government and social services, thereby enhancing the utility of the network and obtaining additional resources;

Work with other agencies to help fulfil the relevant UN SDGs and enhance the role of the postal network in local communities.

## Champion sustainability and green postal services

Promote environmentally sustainable practices in postal operations;

Prioritize energy-efficient technologies;

Support national efforts to align with the UN SDGs.

## Focus on financial inclusion and postal financial services

Expand access to affordable financial services through the postal network;

Strengthen partnerships between Posts and financial institutions;

Improve digital financial services and address gaps in rural areas.

## Alignment of priorities

### DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION – REGIONALIZATION AND PROJECTS (RELATING TO DWP 27)

Achieve the three goals outlined in the proposed strategic framework for the 2026–2029 period, through implementation of the following pillars for development and cooperation activities:

#### Regionalization

Enhance the activities of the regional offices as bases for implementing development cooperation tailored to the specific circumstances and needs of the region. Specifically, the IB should undertake the following initiatives:

##### Enhancement of field operations and regional office functions

Increase flexibility and capability in regional activities to respond quickly to changes and opportunities, with the necessary support provided by the IB to this end;

Strengthen regional offices and position them as regional centres for information and expertise, ensuring proximity of support to member countries;

Involve regional offices in the creation and implementation of development plans;

Encourage field experts to visit the countries of the region to collate the requests and needs of member countries.

##### Strengthening of partnerships, mobilization of resources and regional cooperation

Build stronger partnerships with governments, restricted unions, international and regional organizations and private stakeholders for greater project alignment and impact;

Mobilize resources and form a new dedicated fund to support field presence and regional activities.

## Development and cooperation

Ensure effective implementation of technical cooperation projects to support member countries in guaranteeing universal postal services and reducing development gaps in postal operations, policies and regulations. Offer support through the updating of policies and regulations, procurement of equipment, training of staff, awareness raising, facilitation of technical cooperation and partnerships, and provision of advisory services.

### AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

Procurement of equipment;

SSTC;

Cooperation with restricted unions, including at APPC training sessions and APPU Executive Council meetings and postal business forums;

Specific on-site evaluations, operational reviews and field visits, among others, by the regional project experts;

Regional workshop on postal financial services.

## PHYSICAL SERVICES DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION (RELATING TO DWP 1)

Develop and implement market-relevant, customer-focused, innovative and well-differentiated postal services that enhance the sustainability, interoperability, operational efficiency, e-commerce integration and inclusiveness of the postal network, while facilitating the global exchange of postal items containing goods and documents, supported by appropriately tailored capacity-building activities.

### AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

Eight regional workshops for the Asia-Pacific region;

Eight country-specific on-site evaluations for improving operational efficiency and service reliability in beneficiary countries;

Six country-specific on-site evaluations for security certification;

One joint WCO–UPU regional workshop on customs.

## STRATEGY, PLANNING AND MONITORING (RELATING TO DWP 18)

Execute the UPU's strategy, planning and monitoring processes for the 2026–2029 Dubai Business Plan cycle. The key objectives are to ensure that the UPU formulates and adopts a strategy that addresses the needs of its stakeholders, taking into account market realities; secures the future readiness of the institution to respond to changing stakeholder needs; promotes a results-based approach to its operations by strengthening data-driven decision making; and enables the monitoring of strategic progress.

### AREA OF ACTIVITIES

One regional strategy forum.

## POSTAL FINANCIAL SERVICES (RELATING TO DWP 26)

Increase the number of UPU member countries adhering to the postal financial services framework and facilitate the interconnection of wider postal sector players with the UPU network. This will be augmented by providing advisory and technical support to member countries and their DOs, and enhancing the promotion of such services through the creation of a knowledge-sharing database, the publication of a new Global Panorama on Postal Financial Inclusion, and the updating and dissemination of the UPU framework and related agreements.

### AREA OF ACTIVITIES

One regional workshop on postal financial services.

## COOPERATION MODALITIES AND FUNDING STRATEGY

Development and cooperation activities are implemented under the framework of the development cooperation policy for 2026–2029 (Congress–Doc 15.Rev 1). The modality and funding of the activities are determined in line with the context, objectives and capabilities of the stakeholders involved.

The UPU regular budget is allocated mainly to priority activities in the region. Voluntary contributions to the UPU for development cooperation activities are also utilized for activities, depending on the requests of the donor countries and the requirements of the beneficiary countries.

SSTC is applied as a framework for development cooperation activities.



**AFRICA**

**ARAB REGION**

**ASIA-PACIFIC**

**CARIBBEAN**

**EUROPE AND CIS**

**LATIN AMERICA**



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