

## Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) gap assessment of SPECA countries: Paving the way to action under the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development

*Webinar*

*26 November 2020*

### Rationale

UNECE together with ESCAP is supporting SPECA countries<sup>1</sup> in their efforts to spur innovation as a central driver of the increasingly urgent transition from a low productivity and resource-intensive model of economic development to sustainable, knowledge-based growth in line with the SDGs. This support has been provided through a dedicated project on *Strengthening innovation policies for SPECA countries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* financed by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) and implemented under the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development.

In the framework of this project and to help strengthen the institutional capacities of the SPECA countries to develop and reform innovation policies and institutions for sustainable development and regional integration, UNECE has prepared a *Science, technology and innovation (STI) gap assessment of SPECA countries*. The report highlights key common STI challenges and gaps that each of the seven SPECA countries faces and outlines recommendations for the forthcoming Action Plan of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development, while taking into consideration the need to ensure resilient and sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery and transitioning to the circular economy.

In addition, under the project, an initial draft of a *UNECE Handbook on Incubators to promote innovation for sustainable development in the SPECA sub-region* was produced to identify gaps in the innovation structure and guide efforts to design, run and monitor effective incubator policy to support innovative entrepreneurship as drivers of innovation-led sustainable development in the region.

### Objective

The webinar aims to present and validate the draft findings of the *STI Gap Assessment of the SPECA Countries*. It also aims to discuss concrete actions for the first Action Plan under the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development. To further guide the conversation on driving innovation for sustainable development in the SPECA sub-region, the potential for new industrial policy (NIP) to support STI development through technology upgrading will be showcased. Technology upgrading appears to be the most suited NIP approach in the sub-region, given SPECA countries' economic structure, innovation capabilities and the state of governance of industrial and innovation policies. In addition, the webinar will feature discussion of effective incubator policy to support innovative entrepreneurship in the sub-region as a driver of innovation and sustainable development. This part will draw on the *UNECE Handbook on Incubators to promote innovation for sustainable development in the SPECA sub-region* (forthcoming).

### Participants

The workshop targets government officials and experts from SPECA sub-region responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating innovation, entrepreneurship, and SME policies, as well as business and civil society.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (UN SPECA) includes Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

## Draft Agenda

*Please, note that the below timing is based on CET time zone, Geneva/Paris time.*

Start time for Azerbaijan -12:00  
Afghanistan -12:30

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan - 14:00  
Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan - 13:00

Moderator: Christopher Athey, Economic Affairs Officer, Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE

09:00-09:30

### Access to the session

*Participants are recommended to join the meeting prior to its formal opening to familiarise themselves with the video conference tool. Thank you for consulting the technical note in advance.*

09:30-09:45

### Welcome and opening remarks

*Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE  
Mr. Jonathan Tsuen Yip Wong, Chief, Technology and Innovation Section, ESCAP  
Ms. Shahlo Turdikulova, First Deputy Minister of Innovative Development, Uzbekistan*

09:45-11:30

### STI policy in SPECA sub-region: current situation and recommendations for future actions

*Mr. Rumen Dobrinsky, European Alliance for Innovation, Belgium*

- Building on the findings of the *STI gap assessment of SPECA countries*, the presentation will review the current state of STI policy development and outline recommendations to help countries advance in innovation policy implementation for sustainable development and regional integration, while taking into consideration the need to ensure resilient and sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery and informing the Action Plan of the Innovation Strategy.

*Mr. Slavo Radosevic, Professor of Industry and Innovation Studies, University College London, UK*

- Given the growing importance of private sector intramural R&D and innovation expenditures, industrial policies that are supportive of innovation for sustainable development are indispensable. This intervention will consider the potential for STI support and sustainable development that the new industrial policy approach holds to inform and guide STI policy design and practice in the SPECA sub-region in the context of post-COVID-19 recovery and transition to the circular economy.

*Expert and participating countries' comments*

ESCAP, Ms. Aida Karazhanova, Economic Affairs Officer, ICT and Development Section

#### Afghanistan

- **Mr. Hayatullah Ibrahimy**, Director, Innovation and Emerging Technologies Department, Ministry of communication and IT
- **Mr. Ahsanullah Mohsen**, UNECE consultant under the project

#### Azerbaijan

- **Mr. Fariz Kuliev**, Board member, Innovation Agency
- **Ms. Yulia Alieva**, UNECE consultant under the project

#### Kazakhstan

- **Mr. Ayan Ramazan**, Head, Department of Innovation Ecosystem and Scientific and Technological Development, Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry
- **Ms. Yelena Shevchenko**, UNECE consultant under the project

#### Kyrgyzstan

- **Ms. Dinara Moldosheva**, Chairman, Kyrgyzpatent
- **Mr. Aziz Soltobaev**, UNECE consultant under the project

#### Tajikistan

- **Mr. Anvar Kodirov**, Director, Centre for Innovative Development of Science and New Technologies, National Academy of Sciences
- **Mr. Bahodur Mengliev**, UNECE consultant under the project

#### Turkmenistan

- **Mr. Araznury Ataev**, Head, Department of Economic Sciences, Academy of Sciences
- **Mr. Yuriy Aronskiy**, UNECE consultant under the project

#### Uzbekistan

- **Mr. Ziedbek Yunusov**, Deputy Director, Scientific and Practical Centre for the Implementation of Innovative Projects, Ministry of Innovative Development
- **Ms. Nodira Kurbanbaeva**, UNECE consultant under the project

11:30-12:20

#### **Incubators in the SPECA subregion: where are the gaps and what is the potential to boost sustainable development?**

**Ms. Yelena Kalyuzhnova**, Director, the Centre for Euro-Asian Studies, University of Reading, UK

- Building on the findings of the *UNECE Handbook on Incubators to promote innovation for sustainable development in the SPECA sub-region (forthcoming)*, the presentation will propose and explain central principles for policies, support measures, and institutions to enable and promote business incubation, drawing on international good practices and case studies.

*Expert and stakeholder comments*

ESCAP, **Mr. Tengfei Wang**, Economic Affairs Officer, Technology and Innovation Section

[Open discussion](#)

12:20-12:30

**Conclusions**

*Mr. Anders Joensson, Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE*