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Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies

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Item 3(a) of the provisional agenda

Discussion on high-level innovation policy principles for sustainable development

Proposal for draft Terms of Reference for a Task Force on High-Level Policy Principles on Innovation for Sustainable Development

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The mandate of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies is to develop “international good practices and policy recommendations on the role of innovation and competitiveness policies to foster sustainable development” through regular international policy dialogue, to disseminate these good practices broadly, to apply them in assessments of national innovation policies and performance, and to use them as the basis for policy advice and capacity building.¹

2. Since its inception, the Team has developed international good practices and policy recommendations on a broad range of topics for adoption by its parent body, the ECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public Private Partnerships. At the same time, it has gained new insights by using the above good practices in country assessments and capacity building work in countries with economies in transition, insights that can complement and enhance the knowledge base.

3. At its thirteenth session on 25-27 March 2019, the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships invited the Team of Specialists to convene a dedicated task force to develop draft high-level policy principles on selected aspects of

¹ Revised Terms of Reference of the ECE Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies (ECE/CECI/2017/2 Annex III), available at:
https://www.unecce.org/fileadmin/DAM/ceci/documents/2017/CICPPP/Official_documents/ECE_CE_CI_2017_2-1705270E.pdf

innovation for sustainable development through a process of broad-based multi-stakeholder consultations.

4. The principles should capture consensus on what characterises and enables good innovation policies, institutions and processes across the ECE region, especially for member States with economies in transition. They should serve as a reference to guide UNECE's analytical work, including country assessments, serve as a reference to guide national reform efforts, help innovation policy makers lobby for increased policy co-ordination, and highlight issues to be addressed regionally through the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs and other mechanisms. The principles will be non-binding, and their application will be at the discretion of each country individually.

5. The present proposal elaborates on the possible mandate and modalities of operation of this dedicated task force. It draws on the Concept note on potential high-level principle for innovation policies discussed at the 11th session of the Team of Specialists in November 2018 (ECE/CECI/ICP/2018/INF.3) as well as on the structure of the terms of reference of similar task forces established recently under other sectoral committees of ECE.

II. Mandate and Reporting

6. The Task Force is created under the UNECE Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies. It will be guided in its work by the Team's Bureau. The final draft of the High-Level Policy Principles on Innovation for Sustainable Development will be submitted to the Team of Specialists for review and endorsement, and to the UNECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnership for approval.

III. Objective

7. The objective of the Task Force is to develop a set of draft High-Level Policy Principles on Innovation for Sustainable Development for endorsement by the Team of Specialists and subsequent approval by the UNECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships.

IV. Planned Activities and Outputs

8. The Task Force will undertake the following activities:

(1) Take stock of existing UNECE documents on good practices on selected innovation policy issues as well as of existing high-level policy principles and instruments and initiatives of similar scope with relevance to innovation for sustainable development produced by other UN entities and other international organisations.

(2) Prepare a concept note defining the scope of the UNECE High-Level Policy Principles. The paper should define inter alia

(i) geographical scope

(ii) substantive coverage

(iii) frequency of review and adaptation

(3) Compile a set of case studies of national innovation policy approaches from throughout the UNECE region illustrating good practice as an evidence basis for developing High-Level Policy Principles.

- (4) Prepare an initial draft of the High-Level Policy Principles.
- (5) Consult publicly on the initial draft with all relevant stakeholder communities.
- (6) Incorporate the results of the consultations into a revised draft.

V. Indicative Time Table

9. The Task Force will be constituted initially for a period of twelve months starting with the 2020 session of the Committee on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies. Initial results will be delivered to the 2021 session of the Committee, including possible options for additional work.

VI. Methods of Work

10. The Task Force will primarily work via email and telephone conferences. However, face-to-face meetings may be scheduled to formulate a more detailed work plan and discuss its tasks. In order to be cost effective, face-to-face meetings should be organized alongside the annual sessions of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies or other relevant international meetings.

11. For the preparation of the draft documents, the Task Force may take advantage of the electronic document sharing infrastructure available at ECE.

12. The high-level policy principles will be developed through an open and transparent process, through which all stakeholders will be given opportunities to contribute throughout the development of the policy principles. The process will be:

- (i) led by member States who make the final decisions for approval;
- (ii) enable the active participation of all relevant stakeholder groups; and
- (iii) support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

13. The initial draft will be reviewed by the Bureau of TOS ICP. Following feedback from the Bureau, the draft will be made available for a public review on a dedicated UNECE web page for a 30-day period. A notification that the draft is available for public review, with the deadlines and description of the public review process, will be sent to all TOS ICP and CICPPP delegates as well as the respective networks of experts. Relevant international organisations will also be invited to comment and provide input.

14. All comments received during the public review stage will be logged in and registered, with the Task Force's responses, on the public web page.

15. Once the public review is over, the Task Force, through the UNECE secretariat, will submit the draft to TOS ICP for review and endorsement. If endorsed by TOS ICP, the draft will be sent to CICPPP with a recommendation for approval.

17. The Task Force will link its work to the global and regional work on science, technology and innovation in the context of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

VII. Maintenance and implementation

18. After publication, the Team of Specialists may recommend to the Committee to review the high-level policy principles periodically to reflect new developments in

innovation policy practice and ensure the continued relevance of the principles. Guidelines for maintenance and implementation will be developed by TOS ICP.

VIII. Membership

19. The Task Force will be open to all UNECE countries. Expertise is sought in the area of science, technology and innovation policy, including as it relates to countries with economies in transition. Secretariats of relevant international organisations may also be invited to contribute. Among the organisations to be considered are

- (i) other regional Economic and Social Commissions under the UN,
- (ii) the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNESCO, the International Telecommunications Union, the World Intellectual Property Organisation
- (iii) the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development
- (iv) the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development,
- (v) the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

20. Participants in the task force shall provide resources for their own participation. The existence and functioning of the Task Force shall not require any additional resources from the UNECE secretariat.

21. ECE acts as secretariat to the Task Force.
