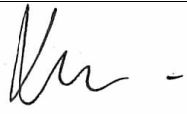




## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

<b>Evaluation Title:</b>	Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews and sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook		
<b>Period of Review:</b>	January 2014 – September 2020		
<b>Date of Evaluation Report:</b>	29/10/2020		
		Date	Signature
<b>Approved by:</b>	Nicolas Dath-Baron OiC Programme Management Unit	11/12/2020	
<b>Cleared by:</b>	Director of Division Elisabeth Tuerk ECTD	11/12/2020	
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Manager of the evaluation Ralph Heinrich Economic Affairs Officer ECTD	09/12/2020	

### **Recommendation 1:**

The coherence of collaboration with different entities could be further developed by means of organizing joint activities and events with participation of other UN agencies, including WIPO, international organizations, development partners, and stakeholders in the process of the review preparation and implementation of recommendations.

### **Management Response:**

Accepted

### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

Although UNECE is in the lead of activities, the secretariat will further and systematically work with other UN agencies and other partners by inviting them to participate both in the reviews themselves and to participate in or co-organise capacity building activities in support of country efforts to put review recommendations into practice.

Specifically for the next Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews (I4SDRs), which will be on the Republic of Moldova and on Uzbekistan, the secretariat will involve relevant UN agencies (including relevant ECE sub-programmes) and other development partners in the consultation processes, as authors or co-authors of individual chapters and in the peer reviews. For the follow-up capacity building with Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Armenia, the secretariat will explore the possibility of organizing events jointly with partners as a function of the topic and work programme agreed with these countries following review results and recommendations.

**Responsible staff:** Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, ECTD

## **Recommendation 2:**

Include in the reviews a tentative timeline to facilitate the implementation process for the governments. Ensure that recommendations include concrete and practical measures to be implemented by non-academic professionals working in the area of innovation policy development.

### **Management Response:**

Accepted

### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

In the Georgia review (completed and to be launched in December), the secretariat has already taken steps to further streamline, vet, and improve the coherence among recommendations, as well as to create a clear structure and summaries to guide the reader. Further steps will be taken to facilitate the implementation of recommendations in follow-up to the reviews.

Specifically, the secretariat will

- ensure in the upcoming reviews of the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan that recommendations are mutually consistent and as specific and actionable as possible, and add guidance on timing, importance, and responsible bodies;
- aim to present the recommendations in the form of a one-page, high-level reform road map;
- as part of the follow-up capacity building for Georgia develop action plans or road maps with timelines and further develop specific practical policy measures to facilitate implementation of those policy recommendations the Government wishes to pursue.

**Responsible staff:** Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, ECTD

## **Recommendation 3:**

Widen the pool of relevant experts, including the local ones, for team set-up or emergency replacement. Special attention should be paid to the experts' understanding of the context of the target countries, legal frameworks, private sector, and the link between innovations and sustainable development. Female experts should be encouraged to apply. Arrange interactive discussions with the member States governments, where they could validate the draft reports as peer reviewers do.

### **Management Response:**

Accepted

### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

The secretariat agrees that the pool of international experts should be widened to bring in fresh perspectives, to strengthen the expertise on sustainable development, and to aim for increased engagement of female experts. The secretariat will also continue to recruit new experts with specific expertise needed for individual elective chapters.

For the upcoming reviews of the Republic of Moldova and of Uzbekistan, the secretariat will

- engage at least one female expert as an author for each review;
- increase gender balance among peer reviewers;
- engage at least one new expert or organisation as an author;
- provide detailed guidance to newly recruited experts on the expected structure of their respective chapters through a concept note explaining and aligning the approach to the subject matter based on desk research and agreement with beneficiary countries;
- continue the practice of interactive, regular discussions with beneficiary countries on the content of chapters, the analysis, and draft chapters and reviews.

**Responsible staff:** Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, ECTD

**Recommendation 4:**

Speed up the reviews production process via further structuration and standardization of the process, e.g., introducing concept notes and data collection questionnaires for the experts. Process optimization is a subject for an individual piece of work requiring deep analysis. The peer review practice could be further upgraded by making written peer reviews collection a standard procedure.

**Management Response:**

Accepted.

**Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

To further standardize the process, the secretariat is undertaking concerted consultations with countries and experts on the methodology and scope of the sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO). In parallel, it is developing a detailed IPO manual that specifies and streamlines each step of the analysis, engagement, writing, review, and communications process based on the lessons learnt from the pilot. After having piloted several ways of revising the review process, the secretariat aims to try out additional ways to ensure synergies with the IPO and streamline processes in the reviews of the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan and put together a similar manual for the reviews.

For the upcoming reviews of the Republic of Moldova and of Uzbekistan the secretariat will

- circulate a questionnaire, using the IPO questionnaire as a basis, to the focal points to collect information from stakeholders to inform the brunt of parts I and II of the review;
- collect, as already done for Georgia, peer review comments in written form in addition to the peer review meeting;
- in the case of the Republic of Moldova build on the findings from the corresponding chapter of the IPO, aiming to complement and update these with strong focus on in-depth chapters in part III.

**Responsible staff:** Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, ECTD

**Recommendation 5:**

Pay more attention to special features and needs of individual countries. Private sector engagement should be strengthened. The IPO and the reviews should be regarded as independent streams of work that complement each other in terms of data and perspective, especially when they cover the same countries, but can be sequenced in any convenient order depending on circumstances.

**Management Response:**

Partially accepted.

**Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

For the upcoming reviews of the Republic of Moldova and of Uzbekistan the secretariat will identify two to three topics which the requesting Governments consider priorities to be covered in separate chapters, following a similar approach already taken for the review of Georgia. The Republic of Moldova review will draw on the results of the IPO (see comments above).

Private sector engagement is important, but our review beneficiaries and the subject of analysis is the nature of the innovation system and the role of governance, policies, instruments, and institutions in

enabling and promoting innovation across the economy and society. While the Reviews have covered policies and mechanisms for governments to engage systematically with the private sector and have consulted with the private sector extensively during the review process, including visiting individual companies and talking to business associations and chambers of commerce to get their views on existing innovation policies and how they respond to private sector needs, the focus should clearly remain on governance.

**Responsible staff:** Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, ECTD

#### **Recommendation 6:**

Introduce a more streamlined approach to the follow-up (including capacity building) and incorporate it in funding proposals. Introduce webinars as a regular part of follow-up capacity building. Collect the information about follow-up activities at a single webpage and link it with the reviews programme webpage.

#### **Management Response:**

Accepted

#### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

Funding for capacity building has already been included in the XB projects for the I4SDR of Georgia and for upcoming reviews of the Republic of Moldova and Armenia. As a good practice for all subsequent reviews, we will agree on a detailed capacity building programme around a specific planned or on-going reform effort in line with review recommendations with Georgia similar to the one carried out in 2019-2020 for Belarus. We will also revise the way information on the I4SDRs and on related capacity building is presented on our website.

**Responsible staff:** Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, ECTD

#### **Recommendation 7:**

Enrich the reviews with an individual chapter and practical advice for governments on how to mainstream gender equality, women empowerment, and disability inclusion in innovation development. Engage international and local experts to work in pairs on these subject matters.

#### **Management Response:**

Partially accepted.

#### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

The secretariat accepts the objective of further mainstreaming gender equality, women's empowerment and disability inclusion (along with other aspects of inclusiveness from the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, such as poverty reduction or the closing of digital and urban-rural divides). However, this objective can be achieved not only with a separate chapter, but also by mainstreaming these topics, i.e. by covering these aspects within other chapters as part of the relevant narrative, as has already been done increasingly, especially in the Georgia review. Which approach works best will depend on the situation in the country and the needs and expectations of the requesting Government, which has to agree on the review content generally and the topics for the elective, in-depth chapters of Part III in particular.

For the upcoming I4SDRs of the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan, the secretariat will consult with the Governments and propose different ways of addressing these topics, and will structure the reviews accordingly.

**Responsible staff:** Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, ECTD

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Management Response, Evaluation, PMU, UNECE