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Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

Fourteenth session

Geneva, 2-4 June 2021

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Programme of work, Inter-sessional implementation plan for 2021 – 2022, and Outline of key components of the programme of work 2023

Draft inter-sessional Implementation Plan for 2021-2022

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present document is based on the programme of work of the Committee for 2021 (ECE/CECI/2021/INF.6). It provides additional information on activities planned and proposed for the period between the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the Committee. To facilitate discussion, this document presents activities grouped by the main thematic areas covered by the Committee, i.e. Innovation and Competitiveness, and Public-Private Partnerships.

2. The plans and proposals reflect demand expressed by member States as well as the resources available to the secretariat at the time of writing. Delegates are invited to bring additional proposals and requests to the session.

II. Innovation and Competitiveness Policies

Events

3. The fourteenth session of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies will be held in Geneva on 4 - 5 November 2021. As part of the session, an international policy conference will provide an opportunity for experts from across the ECE region to exchange experiences on innovation policy. The bureau of the Team will decide on the specific topic in consultation with the Team members.

4. The 2021 session of the Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)

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will be organized together with UNESCAP. A policy conference will be organised back-to-back with the session. The precise location and date remain to be decided.

National Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews

5. Two national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews, of the Republic of Moldova and of Uzbekistan, will be carried out in cooperation with the respective Governments. A review of Armenia will be initiated in 2021.

Innovation Policy Outlook

6. Regular meetings of the network of IPO national focal points will be organized to exchange good policy practices and build government capacity to implement policy recommendations from the IPO. A follow-up publication documenting progress and analysing 2-3 select policy issues in-depth will be published in 2022 under the guidance of the network.

Innovation Policy Principles and Strategy

7. A task force convened by the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies will work on draft high-level policy principles on selected aspects of innovation for sustainable development. A broad multi-stakeholder consultation process will be continued based on the first task force meeting in May 2021.

Capacity building

8. In follow-up to the national Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Georgia, ECE will carry out a capacity building programme for Georgia on the topic of innovation-enhancing procurement, as per agreement with Government. The capacity building activities include a handbook on innovation-enhancing procurement based on international best practices, and a study tour for four Georgian officials to one of the ECE member States. ECE will publish the handbook on policies for innovative, high-growth enterprises in English and Russian, and aim to hold further trainings on this topic based on the handbook.

9. Under the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development, an Action Plan for the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development will be developed based on the gap analyses carried out for all 7 SPECA countries in 2020. Additional national capacity building will be provided upon request to SPECA countries on the basis of these gap analyses, a Handbook on business incubators to promote sustainable development in the SPECA subregion as well as a review of best practices in new industrial policy prepared in 2020. Kyrgyzstan is the first country to have requested such capacity building support. The Action Plan for the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development and associated capacity building activities will be implemented with the support of the UN Development Account project "Strengthening innovation policies for SPECA countries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

10. ECE will continue contributing to the capacity building workstream of the UN Inter-agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development following a successful pilot webinar in 2020.

11. Building on the Committee's existing work on innovation for the circular economy and on innovation-enhancing procurement, in cooperation with ECE's Trade subprogram, ECE will support selected member States on request in developing road maps or action plans for the circular economy transition in selected fields.

III. Public-private Partnerships

12. The focus of the work on public-private partnerships (PPPs) is on developing international PPP standards, recommendations, guidelines, tools and best practices in support of the SDGs and facilitate their implementation in countries through demand-driven national, regional, and international capacity-building activities to assist member States in improving their legal and regulatory framework and develop pipelines of infrastructure projects. The ECE Guiding Principles on People-first PPPs provide the normative basis for the work on PPPs.

Events

13. The fifth session of the Working Party on PPPs will be held in Geneva on 29-30 November 2021.

14. The sixth edition of the International People-first PPP Forum will be organised by the ECE in May 2022.

15. Regular coordination meetings of the network of the International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence affiliated to the ECE International PPP Centre of Excellence will take place in 2021 and 2022.

Standards, recommendations, guidelines and best practices

16. International standards on PPPs in health policy, in water and sanitation and in urban rail will be finalized during 2021 and 2022;

17. The ECE standard on People-First PPP/Concessions Model Law elements, including options for the two PPP models identified in the UNECE Guiding Principles definition of PPP (user-pays PPP/concession and government-pays PPP), will be finalized in 2021 and published in 2022. The ECE standard on People-First PPP/Concessions Model Law elements will incorporate the 10 UNECE people-first PPP Guiding Principles in a way to assist interested governments to integrate the approach in their respective national legal frameworks. The work will incorporate the following three key points: a balanced approach to ‘user-pays’ and ‘government-pays’ models; primary focus on the inclusion of the People-first PPP approaches and outcomes; and alignment of the definition of PPPs with the definitions from the UNECE Guiding Principles on People-first PPP and UNCITRAL work on PPP. It will also incorporate other relevant comments received from member States;

18. Work on a standard for “Building Back Better” projects in 2021 will be initiated with a proposal to set up a Project Team to be considered by the Working Party on PPPs and its Bureau;¹

19. The Guidelines on promoting People-first PPP Waste-to-Energy Projects for the Circular Economy will be further developed in 2021 based on comments from stakeholders;² and

20. The work on guidelines for the People-first PPP outcomes in accordance with the ten Guiding Principles on People-first PPPs³ will be launched in 2021.

¹ A panel discussion on this issue was held at the fifth edition of the ECE International PPP Forum on 22-26 April 2021, arguing that “Building Back Better” requires an inter-disciplinary team with expertise addressing not just the technical, financial and legal aspects of the projects, but also the social, environmental and climate change aspects with stakeholder participation that can effectively deliver the five People-first PPP outcomes.

² The Guidelines were submitted as a contribution to the high-level segment and cross-cutting theme of the 69th session of the Commission in April 2021 (as per Conclusion 2020 – 4.2 of the Working Party on PPPs).

³ The Guiding Principles were adopted by the Committee in 2019.

Capacity building⁴

21. A capacity building project in Ukraine⁵ to strengthen the capacity of public officials to develop and implement People-first PPP projects in line with the SDGs will be implemented in 2021 and 2022;

22. A capacity building initiative⁶ to strengthen national capacities of public officials in ECE member States, in particular in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine, to design and implement People-first PPPs will be implemented in 2021 and 2022; and

23. A capacity building project in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan to promote effective partnerships between the public and the private sectors through People-first PPPs⁷ will be implemented in 2021 and 2022.

People-first Projects

24. The work on the People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology for self-assessment of the project's contribution to sustainable development to be completed in 2021;

25. Provide support to Governments in self-assessing at least 30 PPP projects using the draft People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology during the testing phase before the adoption of its final (enhanced) version and using the adopted version thereafter; and

26. The campaign to reach 500 people-first PPP case studies will continue to be promoted, and additional case studies will be collected and presented at the sixth International PPP Forums in May 2022.

⁴ The capacity building is provided to support member States in implementing the Guiding Principles on People-first PPPs

⁵ The activities are part of the project "Developing and implementing the People-first PPP model for sustainable development in Ukraine" approved by the Executive Committee in 2020.

⁶ The activities are part of the project "Strengthening national capacities of the ECE member States to design and implement People-first sustainable PPPs in infrastructure along the Euro-Asian Connectivity Strategy" approved by the Executive Committee in March 2021. The implementation of the project is subject to approval by the Steering Committee of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund of the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund.

⁷ The project is part of a larger capacity building project from the 13th tranche of the Development Account with other implementation agencies (the Regional Commissions, UNCTAD and UN DESA) in coordination with the Resident Coordinators' Offices and UNDP. The secretariat has received requests for this PPP support from the Governments of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan.