Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews and sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook

Final Evaluation Report

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29.10.2020
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Executive Summary

Innovation, i.e. the successful introduction in the market of new products, services, production processes and business models, is as a key driver and means of implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since 2010, the Governments of the interested member States request the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to analyze and describe the current innovation performance and policy frameworks in the country, to benchmark them against international best practice, and to develop tailor-made actionable recommendations on how to improve the existing policies. In response to such requests, the UNECE’s programme of national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews has been developed and implemented, by the Innovative Policies Development Section, with the support of extrabudgetary funding.

The purpose of this subprogramme-level evaluation commissioned by UNECE Executive Committee in its 95th session of December 2017, is to review the relevance, coherence, sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency of the methodology and selection process of, and follow-up to, the UNECE’s programme of national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews 2014-2020, and the synergies between the reviews programme and the sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO). The scope of the evaluation explores the methodology, production process, and follow-up of five reviews prepared during the period of 01/2014-09/2020. The synergies between the programme and the IPO, the purpose of which was to provide a comparative perspective on innovation performance and policies across six countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) in 2019-2021, have been also reviewed.

The overall conclusion of the evaluation is that the programme has been highly relevant, coherent, effective, and efficient. The programme results have been moderately sustainable. The reviews have contributed to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners.

The reviews have been highly relevant to the national priorities and the needs of the main beneficiaries. The reviews have demonstrated coherence with international good practice, including the peer review practice for high-impact papers. The internal structure of the reviews was coherent. Collaboration with other entities took place in the form of consultations, data inputs, and Resident Coordinators’ assistance in the mission arrangement on the ground.

The reviews have achieved their objectives and have been relevant to the improvement of innovation policies in the target countries, demonstrating a good level of effectiveness. With a limited budget, the UNECE has produced comprehensive innovation reviews for the five countries, organized preparatory and data collection missions, peer reviews and presentations for each review. The human and financial resources were used efficiently and commensurate to the project results. Sustainability of the results are moderate and depend on the availability of national budget resources and international donor agencies/development banks’ assistance. To ensure effective implementation of the review’s policy recommendations, the UNECE offers to governments a follow-up: capacity building and policy advisory missions and seminars (webinars) based on demand from the governments.

The perspective of a sub-regional outlook and the analysis of a national review complement each other: while the latter gives a deeper qualitative assessment, the former provides structured quantitative analysis allowing for the countries comparison. The reviews programme and the IPO could be regarded as parallel workstreams, flexible in terms of their succession when they cover the same countries and independent from each other when they cover different countries. The UNECE has taken measures to incorporate gender mainstreaming and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable people in its reviews produced under the 2030 Agenda and to achieve 30%
representation at least of both genders among participants. The UNECE’s reviews produced under the 2030 Agenda include the matters of equality and inclusion to a reasonable extent.

**Recommendations:**

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 reviews preparation and implementation of recommendations. The peer review practice could be further upgraded by making written peer reviews collection a standard procedure.

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.

3. Widen the pool of relevant experts, including the local ones, for team set-up or emergency replacement. Special attention should be payed 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
Introduction

A. Background

As part of its mandate, the UNECE’s Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (CICPPP) has been conducting since 2010 a programme of national innovation reviews. The purpose of these reviews has been to analyse national innovation performance, systems, policies, and institutions of member States against international good practice, and to make targeted recommendations on how innovation policies and institutions could be improved to enhance innovation performance. The reviews are carried out on request of Governments and in close cooperation with national authorities. The findings and recommendations are presented to the CICPPP for endorsement before being published. UNECE offers follow-on policy advice and capacity building to support the implementation of policy recommendations on request.

The subprogramme-level evaluation was commissioned by the UN Executive Committee on its 95th session of December 2017. The subject of the evaluation is ECE Subprogramme 4, Economic cooperation and Integration, the Innovation Performance reviews (re-named as ‘Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews’ after 2017; in the rest of this report shortened to ‘innovation reviews’, ‘reviews programme’, or ‘reviews’).

The programme was funded both from extra-budgetary (XB) contributions and from the regular UN budget (staff time). The Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) contributed $116,900 for the Review of Armenia. The Russian Federation provided $110,000 for the review of Tajikistan, $80,000 for Belarus, and $81,973 for Kyrgyzstan. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) made available $120,000 for the review of Georgia. The total budget for the five reviews accounted for $508,873. Twenty-five international experts have been involved in the production of the five reviews. The regular UN budget covered the work of the UNECE staff; the Project Manager provided the following estimate: 1 month P-5, 2 months P-4, 2 months P-3, 1.5 months G-staff.

B. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this evaluation was to review the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency of the methodology and selection process of the UNECE’s programme of national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews 2014-2020, and the synergies between this programme the sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO). The evaluation also addressed follow-up to the reviews programme and the sustainability of its results.

The results of the evaluation will contribute to a longer-term vision for supporting national innovation policy reforms, assessing options for streamlining the review process, and to further strengthening synergies between sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlooks and national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews. The evaluation results will help to learn from the past reviews what ECE can do better in its future national reviews. The outcomes of the evaluation can be used to enhance the outreach to policymakers and other major stakeholders to strengthen their engagement in intergovernmental processes and to improve the methods and processes of intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration that support innovation and competitiveness policies.

C. Scope
The evaluation covered the methodology and process of carrying out national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews, as well as follow-up support for the efforts of countries to put review recommendations into practice. The evaluation explored the innovation reviews prepared by the Innovative Policies Development section during the period from January 2014 to September 2020. The activities covered the following publications:

- Innovation Performance Review of Armenia (2014),
- Innovation Performance Review of Tajikistan (2015),
- Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Belarus (2017),
- Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Kyrgyzstan (2019),

D. Methodology

The evaluation was conducted from 15 June 2020 to 1 November 2020. The evaluation methodology included the following:

1. Desk review of the materials provided by the UNECE Project Manager (national reviews, documents related to the programme of national reviews and the pilot IPO, reports of the CICPPP and TOS-ICP, budgets and relevant UN and ECE resolutions on the matter), information found at the UNECE’s website (project descriptions, reports, documents, presentations, publications, etc.), other information sources (including websites of other relevant donors and UN agencies). The full list of documents is attached as Annex 2.

2. Electronic survey covering international experts involved in the reviews and the pilot Innovation Policy Outlook as authors or peer reviewers; national focal points and consultants; members of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (CICPPP) (Annex 3). The questionnaire included open-ended and closed-ended questions with possible answers “Yes”/”No”/”Not Applicable”, and rating scale questions using a 0 (poor) – 5 (excellent) scale (Annex 4). The survey questions were based on the evaluation criteria and set of questions from the Terms of Reference, restructured and grouped into four thematic blocks in order to make the questionnaire more transparent for the respondents and to facilitate the collected data processing. The questionnaire was sent to 42 potential respondents the contacts of which had been shared with the Consultant by the UNECE and identified additionally by the Consultant, and 22 of them completed and returned it. The survey response rate was 52%. The survey results (Annex 5) were first analysed for all respondents and then disaggregated for two groups of respondents: international experts (authors, co-authors, and peer-reviewers) and national representatives (focal points, local consultants, TOS-ICP members). This disaggregation was introduced in order to study the difference of views of these two groups. The number of international experts among the survey respondents is bigger than that of the national representatives (approximately 2:1), so this exercise is rather illustrative than statistical.

3. Interviews. The main source of information for the targeted interviews was the list of participants and stakeholders which was provided by the evaluation Project Manager. The following groups of stakeholders were covered: national focal points (for views on processes, efficiency, effectiveness); governments of the beneficiary countries more broadly (for relevance and sustainability); international experts involved in different capacities (for views

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1 The national review of Georgia was produced in parallel with the IPO in 2019-2020, and it was available only as draft chapters. The full review will be completed by the end of October 2020.
on synergies between the reviews and the IPO, and on coherence and compatibility with international good practice; representatives of the donors (Eurasian Development Bank, Russian Federation, and Swedish International Development Agency); staff from ECE involved in the programme, and secretariat (for background and context). Interviews via Zoom, Skype, and WhatsApp have been conducted with 33 project participants which is twice as much as the initial target, gender balanced (Annex 3).

4. The information was triangulated to ensure data validity/quality. Three methods were applied to gather the necessary data: document analysis, surveys, and interviews. The sources of information were selected on the basis of their availability, credibility, and appropriateness, e.g., documents from the UN, documents from the beneficiary governments, other documents.

5. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the ECE Evaluation Policy and the Synthesis of Guidelines for UN Evaluation under COVID-19. The consultant considered and followed the 11 evaluation guidelines when planning and conducting the evaluation during the pandemic. The most useful guidelines include ‘Proactively collaborate and communicate’; ‘Ensure utility of the evaluation’ (guiding principles); ‘Adjust scope’; ‘Assess criticality and limitations’ (work planning); ‘Increased use of remote data collection’; and ‘Real time focus’ (evaluation approach).

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality were integrated into all stages of the evaluation, in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group’s revised gender-related norms and standards. The evaluation findings and conclusions reflected a gender analysis and made recommendations on how gender can be better included in the process.

E. Evaluation limitations

1. Due to the pandemic, the interviews were conducted only online, via Zoom, Skype and WhatsApp. From the perspective of the consultant, this did not create a significant bias due to the high quality and availability of these means of communication. It is important to note that all interviewees were familiar with this kind of software and easily agreed to use it, which is not always the case for projects covering CIS countries.

2. The interview opportunities were limited by the availability of the respondents during the data collection period because of the vacation period (July-August). Nevertheless, the response rate was quite high, for both the e-survey and interviewing.

3. During the evaluation period, the final national review of Georgia was still undergoing. The Georgia national review report was presented for discussion at the webinar organized by the UNECE on 27 October 2020.

F. Key evaluation questions

The evaluation applied the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The evaluation provided answers to the key questions listed below:

Relevance
1. To what extent were the reviews’ major achievements consistent with ECE mandates, including relevant SDGs, and more specifically with the mandate of the Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogramme?
2. To what extent were the topics covered in the reviews aligned with national priorities of recipient countries?
3. To what extent did the reviews serve the needs of the main beneficiaries, i.e. innovation policy makers and other innovation stakeholders in the countries reviewed?
4. How relevant are the activities with regards to gender equality and empowerment of women?
5. Do the reviews incorporate the perspective of vulnerable groups? Is disability inclusion mainstreamed?

**Coherence**
6. To what extent were the methodology and the policy recommendations of the reviews consistent with international good practice? To what extent were findings and recommendations validated by international experts? To what extent do/can the cross-country perspective of a sub-regional outlook and the in-depth analysis of a national review complement each other? Are the facts collected, the topics covered and recommendations coherent?
7. How coherent is the collaboration with other entities (United Nations, other international organizations, civil society, academia, etc.) in delivering on expected accomplishments? Could this engagement with partners and various stakeholder groups be improved?
8. How could the methodologies and/or delivery processes of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks be aligned better?

**Effectiveness**
9. To what extent did the reviews achieve their objectives? To what extent were the programme outputs relevant to improving innovation policies in recipient countries? To what extent did they support the promotion of sustainable development?
10. To what extent did the reviews engage with all relevant innovation policy stakeholders? To what extent were they able to contribute their insights to the analysis?
11. What were recurrent challenges to achieving the objectives and expected accomplishments of national reviews? How could these challenges be met more effectively?
12. How effective were the reviews with regards to gender mainstreaming, and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable including through disability inclusion?

**Efficiency**
13. Were the resources allocated to the individual reviews appropriate to the scale of the projects?
14. Were the human and financial resources allocated to individual reviews used efficiently and commensurate to the project results?
15. Were individual reviews implemented in an efficient manner?
16. To what extent can efficiency be improved by carrying out national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks in parallel or in close succession?

**Sustainability**
17. To what extent did the reviews contribute to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners?
18. Did the reviews contribute to enhancement of gender equality and empowerment of women?
19. Did the activities contribute to substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the most vulnerable groups?
Evaluation findings

Relevance

According to the collected evidence, all five reviews have been performed at the target countries’ request. In 2012, the delegation of Armenia suggested to the secretariat to consider undertaking an innovation review for this country\(^2\). The delegations of Tajikistan and Belarus made similar requests in 2014\(^3\); for Belarus, this was the second round of reviewing, with the first innovation review published in 2011. The expression of interest of the Government of Kyrgyzstan in undertaking an innovation review was reported in 2015\(^4\). Representatives of Georgia also expressed their interest in receiving a review – in 2017, same year when Armenia requested a second-round review\(^5\).

The countries’ requests of second-round reviews can be regarded as an additional marker of relevance in this context: as confirmed in interviews with one of the leading international experts and a national representative of one of these countries, the innovation processes and policies are subject to changes, and the second-round review is regarded as an opportunity to see what has happened since the first review and a basis for further adjustment of the countries’ innovation systems.

Figure 1 below shows that, according to the evaluation survey, the topics covered in the reviews were aligned with national priorities of the recipient countries (e.g., technological and industrial development, human capital development, industry-science linkages and overall National Innovation System (NIS) development, as mentioned in national documents of Armenia, Tajikistan, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan\(^6\)), including the national sustainable development priorities, where applicable\(^7\).

Figure 1a reflects the responses of all survey respondents, with prevailing positive scores of 4-5 (27% and 36% correspondingly, 63% in total). Figures 1b and 1c show that all of the surveyed national representatives rated the review topics as strongly aligned with the national priorities (1c), and 50% of the international experts shared this opinion (1b). Explanatory comments of the respondents, mostly international experts are provided in Annex 5 par. 1 and represent different individual opinions. In general, the difference in the responses might be linked to the international experts’ deep understanding of innovation systems and the ways of their development, while the national representatives have a deeper knowledge of the national context.

Eighty-two percent of the survey respondents stated that the reviews’ major achievements were consistent with ECE mandates, including relevant SDGs, and more specifically with the mandate of the Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogramme (Annex 5, par. 27). The shares of positive scores in the groups of international experts and national representatives are similar: 79% and 86% respectively. The programme is aligned with the Terms of Reference of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnership contributing to the development of

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\(^2\) Report of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration on its seventh session. UNECE. United Nations Economic and Social Council, 20 December 2012. ECE/CECI/2012/2

\(^3\) Report of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration on its eighth session. UNECE. United Nations Economic and Social Council, 21 March 2014. ECE/CECI/2014/2


\(^7\) The reviews of Armenia and Tajikistan were prepared before the 2030 Agenda.
an environment that is conducive to economic growth and innovative development in terms of policies, financing, and regulations. The programme corresponds to the area of work of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies (TOS-ICP) dedicated to “carrying out assessments of national innovation systems and policies” on request from governments, “with the aim of providing peer-reviewed policy recommendations to improve national innovation performance and the achievement of sustainable development outcomes”. The programme supports achievement of the expected accomplishments ‘b’ and ‘c’ of the Subprogramme 4 ‘Economic cooperation and integration’ of the UN’s Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2016-2017 and Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018-2019 by improving understanding at the national level of policy options to promote sustained economic growth, innovative development and greater competitiveness, promoting implementation of ECE recommendations, and strengthening national capacities of countries to promote good practices and implement ECE recommendations in these areas.

Though the reviews prepared before the 2030 Agenda publication (Armenia and Tajikistan) do not include specific chapters on innovations for sustainable development, they contain scattered references to and mention different aspects of sustainable development (e.g., search for sustainable drivers of economic growth, sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable energy, etc.). The later reviews are explicitly linked to the sustainable development paradigm, in particular, through Goal 9 inspiring the States of the ECE region to work together to “build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”. At the level of the SDG 9 targets, the reviews are associated with targets 9.3-9.5 and 9.B-9.C by providing policy advice in such areas as enterprise access to finance, eco-innovations, STI development, domestic technology and ICT development. The Gender equality, empowerment of women, vulnerable groups, and human rights aspects section demonstrates the link of the reviews with SDG 5 on gender equality and its targets 5.5 and 5.C. However, the connection between innovations and sustainable development is much deeper than a match with SDGs: innovation is recognized as one of the means of the overall 2030 Agenda implementation.

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10 (b) Enhanced implementation of ECE recommendations on promoting a policy, financial and regulatory environment conducive to sustained economic growth, innovative development and greater competitiveness; (c) Strengthened national capacity of countries in the region to promote good practices and implement ECE recommendations on a policy, financial and regulatory environment conducive to sustained economic growth, innovative development and greater competitiveness.
11 (b) Improved understanding at the national level of policy options to promote sustained economic growth, innovative development and greater competitiveness; (c) Enhanced national implementation of ECE policy recommendations and standards on promoting a policy, financial and regulatory environment conducive to sustained economic growth, innovative development and greater competitiveness.
Seventy-three percent of the respondents confirmed that the reviews served the needs of the main beneficiaries, i.e. innovation policy makers and other innovation stakeholders in the reviewed countries, to a high extent (e.g., gave them a ‘fresh and neutral external view’ on their NIS, and a ‘friendly’ indication of areas for improvement) (Fig. 2a). The responses of the international experts and the national representatives (Fig. 2b and 2c) show a similar pattern: 79% and 72% correspondingly rated the reviews as relevant. The percentage of respondents who gave the highest possible score was slightly higher in the group of national representatives (29% against 22%).

To conclude with, the reviews have been highly relevant to the national priorities and the needs of the main beneficiaries in the target countries. The reviews’ major achievements have been consistent with the ECE mandates (Terms of Reference of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnership, Mandate and Terms of Reference of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies, Subprogramme 4 of the Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2016-2017 and the Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018-2019), including relevant SDGs (SDG 9 targets 9.3-9.5 and 9.B-9.C, SDG 5 targets 5.5 and 5.C, and innovation generally recognized by the 2030 Agenda as one of the means of its implementation).
**Coherence**

According to the survey results, the *collected facts, the covered topics, and the suggested recommendations of the reviews were coherent*, i.e. the recommendations stemmed from the findings, and the findings were supported by the facts. This was confirmed by 82% of the surveyed programme participants (79% of the international experts and 86% of the national representatives, Annex 5, par. 7). The texts of the reviews reflect findings which are based on the facts collected during the desk review, fact-finding missions and follow up contacts, and the recommendations are formulated with regard to these findings.

All reviews were subject to the peer-review process. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents gave favourable responses about the validation of the findings and recommendations of the reviews by international experts; this includes more than 70% of both international experts and national representatives (Annex 5, par. 15). In oral interviews, international experts pointed out that normally peer-reviews were done at gathering events, orally and/or supported by presentation slides, sometimes via track changes in review chapters, and for the Georgian review – in the form of a written peer-review report (due to the travelling restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic), which has been confirmed by the UNECE.

The **consistency of the methodology and the policy recommendations of the reviews with international good practice** received high scores from the survey participants (86% of all respondents). Figure 3 reflects high shares of favourable responses from both international experts (3b) and national representatives (3c).

**Figure 3. Consistency of the review methodology and recommendations with international good practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>International experts</th>
<th>National representatives</th>
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<td>Na 9%</td>
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<td>50%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: 0 Not at all consistent – 5 Very consistent; NA – Not available (no answer)

*Source: Data obtained from the evaluation survey*

During the interviews, representatives of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan mentioned that the reviews had **influenced innovation policies development** in their countries (e.g. amendments to the action plan for the Concept of Science and Innovation Development of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan14, and preparation of the State Programme of Innovation Development of the Republic of Belarus15). It was pointed out that in Belarus the review had become a popular reference for scientific works in the innovation area. This aspect makes it even more prominent that peer review as a quality

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14 As reported in an explanatory note provided by Kyrgyzpatent. Kyrgyzpatent’s webpage dedicated to the Concept is available [here](http://www.kyrgyzpatent.gov.kg/concept/).

15 As reported in an interview, the review had been used as a reference for programme development. Beneficiary’s page dedicated to such programmes: [http://www.gknt.gov.by/deyatelnost/innovatsionnaya-politika/gpin/](http://www.gknt.gov.by/deyatelnost/innovatsionnaya-politika/gpin/).
assurance process is an example of good practice for development of a scientific and strategic document of national importance. The world-leading scientific publishers regard peer review as the “cornerstone of the scientific publishing process”.

The results of the survey show that the majority of the respondents believed that the cross-country perspective of a sub-regional outlook and the in-depth analysis of a national review do/can complement each other to a high extent. Sixty-four percent of all survey participants (Fig. 4a), 57% of the international experts (Fig. 4b), and 86% of the national representatives confirmed (Fig. 4c) that in their responses. Different comments provided by the respondents are demonstrated in Annex 5, par. 22. About 30% of them stated that the complementarity of the IPO and the innovation reviews was most prominent in the area of data and information, e.g., that while the reviews gave a deeper qualitative assessment, the IPO provided structured quantitative analysis allowing for the countries comparison, and that both projects were informing each other and the stakeholders.

Figure 4. Complementarity of the cross-country perspective of the IPO and national review analysis

![Figure 4](image)

Source: Data obtained from the evaluation survey

It is notable that all of the surveyed national representatives who had worked on the reviews were knowledgeable about the IPO, and the list of the IPO focal points and local experts partially overlaps with the list of focal points and local consultants for the reviews. The fact that same local stakeholders and experts were involved in both the IPO and the reviews was also mentioned in the interviews. Both initiatives had been going through the Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) and the State Committee on Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus. A representative of Armenia commented that “both reviews were developed in close cooperation with national authorities and other experts in Armenia”.

This may provide an opportunity for the local stakeholders and experts to gain a deeper understanding of different aspects of innovation systems in their countries and in the region, and strengthen national innovation networks and ownership of the process. It could also make the process smoother in terms of the national stakeholders’ understanding of the UNECE and their entire view of innovation systems.

Comments on how the methodologies and/or delivery processes of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks could be aligned better were provided by 70% of the survey participants.

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participants (Annex 5, par. 23). In general, these comments represent different opinions of international and national participants, and do not form a clear single pattern.

According to the information provided by the UNECE, the teams working on the IPO and the reviews invest a lot in **ensuring the alignment**: their policy analysts work on both projects; they continuously exchange information and ideas about their work, participate in missions and meetings, and use similar contractors for technical works.

The **coherence of the collaboration with other entities** (United Nations agencies, other international organizations, civil society, academia, etc.) in delivering on the expected accomplishments of the reviews was confirmed by 64% of the survey respondents (50% of the international experts and 86% of the national representatives – Annex 5, par. 28). The entities mentioned in the survey responses and the interviews included national academies of sciences, research institutes and universities, such UN agencies, as the UNDP, UNIDO, UNCTAD, as well as ADB, OECD, World Bank, EC, and GIZ.

According to the Project Manager, the UNECE **met with the national offices** of key development partners, including the World Bank/IFC, EBRD, ADB (for reviews of Central Asian countries) to get their views on the current situation and to obtain information on key programs they were running, particularly on those financing entrepreneurial activity or skills development. The information collected was reflected in the reviews. On several occasions, these entities served as chairs of the national donor coordination councils or thematic groups within the councils that were relevant to innovative development. The UNECE discussed with them the activities of the donor coordination councils as well. In one case (Kyrgyzstan), a session was held with key donors as part of the follow-up to the review to highlight policy recommendations and to encourage them to provide funding for implementation (details in the **Sustainability** section below).

National **UNDP offices** were active in terms of providing local support and assistance, including interpretation and transport services for the country missions. For all reviews, the UNECE met separately with the UNDP offices and/or resident representatives/coordinators during the preparatory and/or fact finding missions to introduce the project, get their views on the situation in the country, seek their support in arranging meetings with key stakeholders, and to get information on country-level UN activities with relevance to the reviews. This information was also reflected in the reviews. **Resident coordinators** were invited to speak at the openings of review-related in-country events, to launch events or peer-review events. An example of this is an international conference held in Minsk to take stock of the experience with the first round of the reviews, which was opened by the deputy resident representative17. On some occasions, the UNDP/resident coordinators provided premises for stakeholder meetings or other events. For instance, the launch event of the Armenia review was hosted at the UN House in Yerevan18.

At the desk research stage of the analysis, along with national documents, the experts used data and documents from international organizations (e.g., World Bank – cf. multiple references in the reviews). The reviews also benefitted from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics’ databases and reports; an international expert with a strong background in statistics particularly highlighted the UNESCO’s guidance on statistics provided to the countries of Central Asia and its influence on data quality. In Kyrgyzstan, WIPO financed the second year of follow-up activities on technopark establishment by paying the fees of a Georgian consultant19 with a strong record in this area (the follow-up mentioned in the **Sustainability** section). Data inputs from WIPO’s Global Innovation

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19 Confirmed by the representatives of Kyrgyzstan, the Georgian consultant, and the UNECE.
Index and statistical databases were also used by the experts for the UNECE’s reviews preparation – the reviews contain references to these sources.

Sixty-four percent of the survey participants confirmed that the engagement with partners and various stakeholder groups could be improved (Annex 5, par. 29). The suggestions on how it could be improved are cited in par. 30 of Annex 5: 36% of them are related to organization of joint activities and events with participation of stakeholders and partners in the process of the reviews preparation.

**Brief comparison with selected innovation policy programmes**

UNCTAD’s Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Reviews programme follows a logic very similar to that of the Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews programme of the UNECE. UNCTAD’s website provides a self-standing document explaining the methodology of their programme. Making a clear description of the methodology available at the website could benefit the UNECE’s programme of reviews as well, by increasing the UNECE’s approach transparency for potential partners, donors, programme participants, and the public. The methodology of UNCTAD includes a section on long-term assessment of policy development, going after the follow-up stage. Incorporating long-term assessment in the methodology might be an example useful for the UNECE, as it helps to collect information on how the countries implement recommendations and to adjust the methodology in response to this information. This is in line with the experts’ suggestions to introduce implementation progress check-ups in the reviews programme mentioned in the Sustainability section.

UNESCO’s Science, Technology and Innovation Policy programme can hardly be compared to the UNECE’s Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews programme due to its outstandingly large scale, however, its representation to the general public is a good example of communication about the programme development and achievements. Individual webpages are dedicated to capacity building, gender equality, and other issues. The role of UNESCO in the STI policy development is clearly stated. Enriching the UNECE’s innovation reviews webpage with individual sections on the UNECE’s role in the innovation development process, its achievements in this area, review follow-ups, and on addressing equality and inclusion issues in innovation could help to raise public awareness of the UNECE’s activities and improve the traceability.

The OECD Reviews of Innovation Policy programme, similar to the UNECE’s reviews programme in its nature and appearance, does not have information on its methodology at the website, however, some country reviews are published in local languages. For some countries, reviews written in their local languages could potentially increase their dissemination rate and improve reception by the governments.

WIPO’s Global Innovation Index (GII) presents the latest global innovation trends and the annual innovation ranking of 131 countries and economies around the world based on 80 indicator. This approach is opposed to a deep country review method, so it is not comparable with the UNECE’s

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26 https://www.wipo.int/global_innovation_index/en/
programme of reviews. Collaboration of the UNECE and WIPO could be envisaged in the form of mutual participation in events, sessions of the bodies, meetings of the committees and commissions dedicated to intellectual property matters, and exchange of information on current and planned activities. Webpages of the GII 2016 and some of the earlier GII issues provide infographics on the report findings\(^27\), which is a good way to convey the message ‘in one click’. The UNECE may wish to add some infographics on the reviews key findings to the corresponding webpages to help the readers, especially non-academic ones, get a grasp on its work.

Asked to compare the UNECE and their reviews programme with other international organizations and their programmes, 25% of the participants compared the UNECE’s innovation reviews programme with the EC’s Policy Support Facility and Policy Mix Reviews, and pointed out that the UNECE’s reviews covered more aspects of innovation development than these works by the EC. At the same time, the overall scale of the EC’s work and its financial capacity is incomparable with the UNECE. An interviewed expert knowledgeable about the approaches and processes of both the EC and the UNECE suggested that a relatively small improvement that could make substantial difference would be introducing interactive discussions with the target countries governments, where they could validate the reports as peer reviewers do. A feedback report from the governments could provide material for triangulation.

As the above analysis shows, a number of UN agencies other than the UNECE have produced documents on innovation development. While cooperation and information exchange between these agencies could enrich their works and help avoid duplication, joining their efforts to produce a single review on innovation instead of separate reviews would hardly be feasible for different reasons, including an enormous amount of time for coordination and harmonization that it would require. Each agency, having a unique expertise and its own niche in innovation development, might wish to perform comprehensive analysis of all recent innovation reviews of other agencies and organizations before initiating their own review. In particular, if the reviews cover the same countries, it is good to find out which national stakeholders have been surveyed and when, what outputs have been delivered and lessons learnt. **Avoiding duplication and enriching analysis** with data from other agencies and organizations (like in the case of the UNECE using UNESCO’s, WIPO’s, WB’s data, and consulting with other UN agencies during the missions, as described above) is important for producing an innovation review of high quality.

The conclusion is that the reviews have demonstrated coherence with international good practice, including the peer review practice for high-impact papers (validation by international experts at events or in written reports/track changes). The internal structure of the reviews was coherent. Collaboration with other entities took place in the form of consultations and data inputs for the reports and UNDP’s/resident coordinators’ assistance in the mission arrangement on the ground. Although a number of other UN agencies have produced reports on innovation development, joining their efforts to produce a single review instead of separate reviews would hardly be feasible. The collaboration however could be further enhanced. The cross-country perspective of a sub-regional outlook and the in-depth analysis of a national review complement each other: while the reviews give a deeper qualitative assessment, the IPO provides structured quantitative analysis allowing for the countries comparison. The teams of both projects work in close cooperation to ensure alignment.

**Effectiveness**

The objectives set in the project documents for the reviews\(^28\) can be summed up as ‘To assess innovation policies and performance against international good practice; to provide


\(^{28}\) UNECE Technical Cooperation Project Forms dated 09.09.2014, 11.02.2016, 10.10.2018; Technical Cooperation
recommendations for policy improvements; to transfer knowledge about international good practice and innovation policy analysis”\textsuperscript{29}.

More than half of the survey responses (55\% - all respondents, 57\% - the international experts and the national representatives) confirmed that the **reviews had achieved their objectives to a high extent** (Annex 5, par. 6). The texts of all reviews contain innovation policy and performance analysis and assessment against international good practice, and a set of recommendations for each chapter (topic). All reviews were produced in close cooperation with national stakeholders and presented at a public event - either in the capital of target countries, in Geneva (in presence of delegations from the target countries) or online in the form of webinars\textsuperscript{30}.

According to the survey results, the **relevance of the reviews programme outputs to the improvement of innovation policies in the recipient countries was high**. Figure 5 shows high scores given by 86\% of all respondents (5a) and the international experts (5b), as well as by 100\% of the national representatives (Annex 5, par. 2). In the interviews, representatives of Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia confirmed that **decision makers had taken the reviews into account for policy development** in their countries; a representative of Tajikistan stated that the recommendations were valuable and gave a ‘good vision’ to the government of the country.

The innovation reviews **were aligned** with the priorities of the countries in this area, e.g., technological and industrial development, human capital development, industry-science linkages and overall NIS development\textsuperscript{31}. The reviews were considered in the process of making amendments to the action plan for the Concept of Science and Innovation Development of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan\textsuperscript{32}; and preparation of the State Programme of Innovation Development of the Republic of Belarus\textsuperscript{33}.

Fifteen percent of the interviewed programme participants pointed out that the **recommendations provided in the reviews could have been improved**: made more concrete (less general) and more practical. The evaluated reviews contain recommendations for each chapter, quite a big number per review in total, and another step to the improvement might lie in the area of the **recommendations prioritization with a tentative timeline for their implementation**.

An interviewed international expert suggested that this could help policy makers in making decisions: according to him, some recommendations might be quickly and easily implemented, some might be crucial for innovation systems viability, while others might be adopted over a longer period. Further analysis on the implementation of recommendations is provided in the **Sustainability section**.

\textsuperscript{29} Formulated by the UNECE, approved for and used in the survey questionnaire – Annex 5, par. 6
\textsuperscript{30} Confirmed by the UNECE and the national representatives.
\textsuperscript{32} As reported in an explanatory note provided by Kyrgyzpatent. Kyrgyzpatent’s webpage dedicated to the Concept is available here.
\textsuperscript{33} As reported in an interview, the review had been used as a reference for programme development. Beneficiary’s page dedicated to such programmes: http://www.gknt.gov.by/deyatelnost/innovatsionnaya-politika/gpin/
The survey response on the extent to which the reviews (post-2015) and their follow-up supported the promotion of sustainable development included mixed ratings and comments (Annex 5, par. 14). This might be attributed to the fact that sustainable development is a long-term objective, especially in the countries that due to their current circumstances are mainly concerned with economic growth and catch-up. However, the post-2015 reviews contain explicit promotion of sustainable development in relevant chapters, e.g., Chapter 6 “Innovation for Sustainable Development” in the review of Kyrgyzstan. In their responses to the questionnaire, representatives of Kyrgyzstan agreed that recommendations of the review contributed to the promotion of sustainable innovation in their country. In Belarus, a Memorandum of Understanding between the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on collaboration to implement the recommendations of the review was signed in 2018. The Memorandum stated that the review had ‘identified areas with substantial potential for further improving the national innovation system and strengthening the role of innovation in achieving the priorities of Belarus under the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’.

The reviews preparation included missions to the target countries, where the experts were interviewing 10-15 stakeholders per day, and remote communication with them. The engagement of the reviews with all relevant innovation policy stakeholders was highly scored by 77% of all survey participants, 72% of the international experts, and 100% of the national representatives (Fig. 6) (Annex 5, par. 4). The extent to which the stakeholders were able to contribute their insights to the analysis was also rated as high (Annex 5, par. 5). Eighteen percent of the survey respondents and 21% of the interviewees pointed out that private sector engagement was limited, possibly due to the overall government-centric approach of the UN and/or to the common difficulties with getting hold of the private sector representatives in the countries. The fact-finding missions in selected countries included meetings with national Chambers of Commerce, unions of enterprises, and business incubators, but not enterprises.
Annex 5, par. 11 shows that the majority of the survey responses (55% - all respondents, 50% - international experts, 72% - national representatives) stated the **absence of recurrent challenges to achieving the objectives and expected accomplishments** of the national reviews. Annex 5, par. 12 provides comments of those who described the challenges that they had faced. Most often (22%), the unavailability of data and documents required for the analysis and the lack of the governments’ capacity (in terms of understanding of the innovation development concept and the implementation of the recommendations) were mentioned. These are related to internal circumstances of the countries.

Country-wise, the experts who participated in the mission to Tajikistan noted that interpreters were not always available to accompany them at the meetings with the local stakeholders. In Georgia, the meeting locations were rather remote from each other, and travelling between them took quite a long time. The experts made good use of this time in travel by exchanging the collected information, but it was pointed out that having joint meetings with a number of stakeholders in one location would have saved them more time for the analysis and helped to clarify certain issues as some stakeholders were giving contradictory information on the same topic.

The respondents’ suggestions on how the challenges could be addressed are shown in Annex 5, par. 13. The most popular options (29%) were making the mission arrangements earlier thus giving the experts more time to prepare, and improving the availability of data and documents for the analysis (which is often out of control of the UNECE). The availability issue was mostly related to the lack of national statistical data collected by the governments, slow digitalization process, and national documents not translated into English. Changing this situation is a slow process requiring strong commitment from the governments, capacity of staff, technology (platforms) and availability of funding. UNESCO Institute for Statistics has carried out training events in the region in order to help the countries improve their practices in this area.35

The conclusion is that the reviews have achieved their objectives and have been relevant to the improvement of innovation policies in the target countries, demonstrating a good level of effectiveness. The evaluated reviews contain recommendations for each chapter but no prioritization or tentative timeline for their implementation. National representatives admitted that the recommendations were pertinent but noted that they could be more concrete and practical. The

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reviews engaged with all relevant stakeholders, but the private sector engagement was limited, possibly due to the overall government-centric approach of the UN and/or to the common difficulties with getting hold of private sector representatives in the countries. The private sector engagement could be enhanced. The post-2015 reviews highlighted how innovation was the key to sustainable development.

**Efficiency**

In this section, the efficiency was analyzed along three main lines: time (duration of the reviews production), financial resources (budgets), and human resources.

**Duration**

The following table demonstrates the main milestones of the national innovation reviews’ production. The start month represents the preparatory mission of the UNECE secretariat to the country requesting the review.

**Table 1. Main milestones of the reviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Month started</th>
<th>Main project mission month &amp; year</th>
<th>Draft discussed month &amp; year</th>
<th>ENG version published year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARM</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td>Feb 2014</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TJK</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
<td>Feb/March 2015</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLR</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGZ</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>March/April 2017</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>November 2019</td>
<td>October 2020</td>
<td>2021 (expected)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis shows that it took the UNECE on average eight months to go from the preparatory mission to the public discussion of the first draft. This is quite fast, but during the following stages delays occurred. Though the exact month of publication is not shown in the reviews’ title (only the year), it could be estimated that it took at least 2-3 months to collect all comments and suggestions, edit, produce, and then publish the final English version of the review. The goal was to keep the process within the timeframe of “12 months from the main fact finding mission to the final version of the review submitted for publication”. However, the translation and publication of the reviews in Russian for the national authorities and other stakeholders in the CIS countries took a few additional months, and the overall duration of the process usually exceeded 1.5 years. In the case of Kyrgyzstan it reached two years. The evaluation Project Manager explained that the delay between the publication of the English original and the Russian translation depended on the capacity of the publication department of the UN Office in Geneva. For example, in the case of the Belarus review this delay was six months.

Given that the innovation policy in the CIS countries develops relatively slowly, but still is not static, and the UNECE recommendations should be relevant, acute, and of current interest, the production speed should be increased. Streamlining the approach and process to publishing the English version and the Russian translation for the CIS countries faster, ideally within one year, would have a beneficial effect on the reviews reception in the countries. Officially publishing the reviews as UN-publications in local, non-UN, languages at the expense of the UN is impossible due to the established procedures of the UN.

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Since the review chapters are written by different external experts, they require time for revision and harmonization (ensuring consistency, deleting repetitions, etc.) by the UN economic affairs officers. The diversity of backgrounds and experiences of the contracted experts who write these chapters contributes to the quality of the reports, but this factor could be also linked to the review production delays.

The interviewed donor representatives commented that the UNECE had been respecting the deadlines. In case more time was required for certain activities, a cost-neutral extension was requested and granted.

**Budgets, process and outputs**

The programme was funded both from extra-budgetary (XB) contributions and from the regular UN budget (staff time). There were three donors to the programme: Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) for the review of Armenia; Russian Federation for the reviews of Tajikistan, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan; and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for the review of Georgia. The EDB provided $116,900 for the Armenia review. The Russian Federation’s contribution was $110,000 for the Tajikistan review, $80,000 for the Belarus review, and $81,973 for the Kyrgyzstan review. SIDA’s contribution for the Georgia review was $120,000. The total budget for five reviews accounted for $508,873.

The regular UN budget covered the work of the UNECE staff; the Project Manager provided the following estimate: 1 month P-5, 2 months P-4, 2 months P-3, 1.5 months G-staff. Without the support of the UN regular budget, the reviews would have not been published: the work required thorough planning, organization, coordination, participation in the missions, editing, and harmonization of chapters. Taking into account these figures and adding up the cost of publication, the average budget per innovation review of the UNECE is roughly estimated as $150,000, which is significantly less than the average budget of similar OECD’s innovation policy reviews.

Typical budget lines included consultancy fees for international and national consultants (25-30% of costs), Daily Subsistence Allowances (25%), expert and staff travel (15-20%), peer reviewing, local transport, conference rooms, contractual services (interpretation and translation services, administrative support.

The programme followed a general logic described in the UNECE document titled “Explanatory note on the process”. It included the background, goal, scope, and the process of the national reviews. The process consisted of eight activities (‘steps’):

1. Preparatory mission by the secretariat to the requesting country.
2. Fact finding mission by a team of leading international innovation policy experts.
3. The expert team writes a draft review with findings and recommendations.
4. International peer review, in which findings and recommendations are validated by a second set of international experts.
5. The feedback from the peer review process is incorporated into the final version of the review, which is then presented to one of UNECE’s inter-governmental bodies for endorsement.
6. The review is published as an official UN publication.
7. The review is then launched in the country together with the government.
8. The follow-on capacity building and policy advisory support.

The outputs are represented by the following publications (English versions):

- Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Georgia (expected in 2020), final volume is unknown yet.

**Human resources**

Due to the limited programme budget and relatively low level of expert fees, only a small team of experts was mobilized by the UNECE for the reviews production. The stable 'core' team of permanent authors of the key reviews’ chapters included four external experts. Two international experts (Mr. Rumen Dobrinisky and Dr. Thomas Stahlecker) participated in all five reviews, Prof. Slavo Radosevic took part in four reviews, DSc. Annamaria Inzelt - in three reviews. Other “non-core” authors were involved when the need for specific experience or expertise appeared, e.g., the role of innovation in international economic integration, public procurement, etc. A group of 3-5 peer reviewers, who were not involved in the field missions, was usually invited to provide comments to each draft review. The total number of the authors and peer reviewers who participated in the work on the five reviews was 25. Mr. Ralph Heinrich and Mr. Christopher Athey from the UNECE led on the development of the conceptual framework of the reviews, contributed to drafting the chapters and overall editing of the publications, along with managing the whole process and leading the delegations in the field missions.

The survey results regarding the experts and the duration of the missions were positive. Fifty percent of the respondents confirmed that the duration and the number of the country visits were adequate (Annex 56 par. 8); 86% agreed that the size of the ECE team working on the reviews was adequate and the international experts participating in the work on the reviews were adequately qualified (Annex 5, paras. 9 and 10). In the interviews, 25% of the participants mentioned that the composition of the expert group could have been more balanced in terms of the experts’ understanding of the context of the target countries, sustainable development, and overall qualification. **Widening the pool of relevant experts**, including the local ones, for team set-up or emergency replacement could benefit the programme, along with modifying the review process for the UNECE officers to control the material produced by the experts and avoid lengthy editing.

**Sequencing with the IPO**

Fifty percent of the survey respondents rated the extent to which the efficiency of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks could be improved by implementing them in parallel or in close succession as high (Annex 5, par. 24). Representatives of the countries where the reviews were done before the IPO, i.e. before 2019, mentioned that the reviews were taken into account for the preparation of the IPO, which partially served as an update on the innovation development in these countries, and regarded that as a good practice. In Georgia, the UNECE IPO team started the IPO research with data collection, which was much more basic than the reviews, and then the review team used that data to have basis for their more comprehensive analysis. According to the UNECE, this approach also worked well. The IPO helped to find focus for the reviews, which is important with regard to the wide range of topics that they cover and different local contexts of the target countries.

The innovation reviews programme has been running since 2010 and is anticipated to be continued (e.g., with reviews of Uzbekistan and Moldova in 2021). The IPO is a later, independent workstream, which can complement the reviews or be complemented by them in terms of data and perspective. Ideally, the IPO would go first, and then its findings could be leveraged to proceed with the deeper national reviews (as in Georgia). However, the reviews are demand-driven, and it is possible that a country requests a national review but does not want to participate in an IPO (or

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37 This is a sensitive issue and, in general, experts prefer not to discuss it. However, 10% of the international experts mentioned this in the interviews, and 12% stated that the reviews were their side projects for ‘academic interest’ (as opposed to financial interest).
vice versa). Therefore, the reviews programme and the IPO could be regarded as parallel activities, flexible in terms of their succession when they cover the same countries and independent from each other when they cover different countries. Close coordination between the two teams is a must.

The conclusion is that with a limited budget, the UNECE has produced comprehensive innovation reviews for five countries, organized preparatory and data collection missions, peer reviews and presentations for each review. The duration of the missions was mostly satisfactory for the involved parties. The size of the UNECE team working on the reviews was adequate. The human and financial resources allocated to individual reviews were used efficiently and were commensurate with the project results. The duration of the reviews preparation process could be possibly cut down (see a suggestion in the Recommendations below). The composition of the expert group, generally well-qualified, could have been more balanced in terms of the experts’ understanding of the context of the target countries and sustainable development. The reviews programme and the IPO could be regarded as parallel activities, flexible in terms of their succession when they cover the same countries and independent from each other when they cover different countries.

**Sustainability**

The reviews have contributed to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners, according to 54% of the survey respondents (Fig. 7a). Fifty percent of the international experts and 71% of the national representatives supported this statement in the survey (Fig. 7a, 7b) (Annex 5, par. 25). For instance, Kyrgyzstan has been working on the development of technoparks, which corresponds to recommendation 5 of chapter 3 of the UNECE’s review of Kyrgyzstan: ‘Development of business services and intermediaries needed for a modern innovation system’.

**Figure 7. Contribution of the reviews to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>International experts</th>
<th>National representatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA 14%</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
<td>2 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 27%</td>
<td>5 29%</td>
<td>5 57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA 14%</td>
<td>2 7%</td>
<td>2 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 27%</td>
<td>5 29%</td>
<td>5 57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 29%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4 14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: 0 No contribution – 5 Very strong contribution; NA – Not available (no answer)

*Source: Data obtained from the evaluation survey*

After each review completion, a presentation event was held either in the target country or in Geneva (with participation of national delegations and stakeholders), or most recently by a webinar. Representatives of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan confirmed in the interviews that the policy makers of these countries considered the reviews in the development of national policies. The

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reviews were shared and discussed at the annual sessions of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships39.

According to representatives of Belarus, the search of donors for the implementation of recommendations started while the national review was yet in progress. In 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding between the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on collaboration to implement the recommendations of the review was signed. The Memorandum underpinned a more extensive programme for Belarus that, according to the interviewed representative, included organization of discussions and preparation of documents on innovation policies and innovation-related risks. Another discussion will take place in the autumn 2020, after which the final document will be completed and submitted to the government. In the interviews, it was also mentioned by a representative that, in the long run, a reformation of the institutional environment in Belarus would be necessary to enhance the implementation of recommendations.

According to the documents provided by the UNECE, the follow-up activities in Belarus have included a programme of capacity-building workshops in Minsk in 2018-2019, and a webinar in September 2020, supported by the UNECE and conducted jointly with the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus. The topics of the workshops included:

- “National Technology Foresight Methodology” (November 2018),
- “Science, technology and innovation policy and risk: raising awareness – recommendations for Belarus” (March 2019),
- “Science, Technology and Innovation Policy and Risk: access to finance for innovative business – bottlenecks and challengers” (May 2019),
- “Science, technology and innovation policy and risk: sharing international best practices” (November 2019),
- “Private-public venture capital funds for innovative projects” (December 2019), and
- “Capstone webinar: Options for delivering risk capital to innovative enterprises in Belarus” (September 2020).

On October 21, 23, and 27, 2020, the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies held informal consultations in the form of webinars (due to the COVID-19 epidemic and travel restrictions, the official annual session of the ToS ICP in Geneva could not be held). The agenda of the webinar on 27 October 2020 included discussion of the results and recommendations of the IPO and the review of Georgia. Since webinars require neither facilities for gathering nor budget to cover DSA and travel costs, they could be regarded as one of the cost-effective tools to enhance capacity building by organizing activities on a more regular basis (e.g., series of webinars as part of follow-up activities).

According to representatives of Kyrgyzstan, a meeting with the Development Partners’ Coordination Council was organized at the 11th SPECA session40 in order to seek funding for the follow-up of the review in Kyrgyzstan (2019). They also confirmed that a high-profile Georgian expert was hired after the review completion in order to provide advice on creating an Innovation


Centre and incubator in Bishkek as part of capacity building support by the UNECE, and later his additional support was funded by WIPO. In Armenia, a Policy Workshop and a Launch Event was held in 2014 with participation of national stakeholders and international experts. The interviewed representatives of Armenia confirmed that the authorities had taken the review into account for policies development.

It is important that these follow-up activities have been implemented but, as one can see, so far the follow-up has been on an ad hoc basis (except for Belarus, where the above-mentioned follow-up was intended to pilot a clear structure and process for this, which will be used for Georgia, Moldova, and the second-round Armenia review41). A more concerted, streamlined approach to the follow-up (including capacity building) could benefit the programme, as well as incorporating it in funding proposals. For instance, this could include regular (annual) report-back to ToS-ICP and CICPPP on the progress (without too many formalities), regular updates on the IPO and extension into other country groups, building on the follow-up pilot exercise currently concluded in Belarus, and following this process systematically after the reviews completion.

Collecting the information about follow-up activities at a single webpage and linking it with the reviews programme webpage could increase the follow-up transparency for the experts, (potential) donors, and the general public. Half (50%) of the interviewed international experts who had worked on the reviews of Tajikistan, Armenia, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan stated that the communication on the follow-up had been poor or simply that they did not have any information on that matter. Twenty percent of the international experts suggested that checking on the implementation progress of the countries (e.g., via special missions) would be desirable. This would benefit both the countries and the programme: the former would get an expert assessment of whether they are on track, and the latter would receive feedback for further methodology refinement and adjustment. An international expert who had been actively involved in the programme suggested revising the methodology by doing ‘a small research project on how we go’ in order to ‘be methodologically on the top level’.

To conclude with, the reviews have contributed to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners. To ensure effective implementation of the review’s policy recommendations, the UNECE offers to governments a follow-up consisting of capacity building and policy advisory missions and seminars, based on demand from the governments. The follow-up is subject to the capacity of the UNECE secretariat to deliver it and the available budget. So far, the follow-up has been provided on an ad hoc basis (except for Belarus). Sustainability of the results usually depends on the availability of donor assistance and national budget resources. Given the member States governments’ resources (financial and non-financial) are limited, the most proactive ones start searching for donor agencies and development banks to help implementing the UNECE recommendations while the innovation review is yet in progress, or immediately after its completion (e.g., organize meetings with the Development Partners’ Coordination Council, as in the mentioned case of Kyrgyzstan). Webinars organized instead of offline meetings due to the pandemic-related restrictions could provide a model for further follow-up capacity building activities when the availability of resources for offline events is limited.

Gender equality, empowerment of women, vulnerable groups, and human rights aspects

The relevance of the programme activities with regard to gender equality and empowerment of women has received mixed scores from the survey participants (Annex 5, par. 16). Eighteen percent provided high scores of 4-5, 32% stated that it was not particularly relevant (‘3’), and 27% abstained. Looking into the group-disaggregated responses, one can see that 43% of the

41 According to the UNECE
international experts gave the ‘not particularly relevant’ rating (‘3’), while 43% of the national representatives abstained. Answering the questions regarding the incorporation of the perspective of vulnerable groups and disability inclusion mainstreaming in the reviews, the vast majority of the survey participants either abstained (41% of all respondents, 43% of both international and national experts) or gave a negative response (from 29% to 57% across both groups).

Paras. 18 and 19 of Annex 5 show this distribution of scores and a few comments provided by the respondents, mostly stating that these issues played a marginal role in the reviews. The effectiveness of the reviews with regard to gender mainstreaming and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable received scores with no explicit single trend (Annex 5, par. 21), and over 40% of the respondents abstained.

Annex 5, paras. 17 and 20 display mixed survey respondents’ answers regarding the contribution of the reviews to the enhancement of gender equality, empowerment of women, and substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the most vulnerable groups. Such distribution of responses to these questions might be attributed to the fact that these issues were not the main subject of the reviews, and the programme participants mostly focused on the economic, scientific, and environmental aspects of innovations corresponding to the priorities of the countries in this area. No information about gender- or vulnerability-related challenges emerging in the process of the reviews preparation was submitted during the evaluation survey and interviews.

As the reviews programme has been progressing with time, the place of the gender equality and vulnerable groups related issues in the reviews has changed. Following the decision 2016-6.3 of the ECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships to explore ways to mainstream gender aspects into its future work, Kyrgyzstan was the first country to have received an Innovation for Sustainable Development Review under a revised framework to reflect the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 5 on gender equality. The next country was Georgia. In particular, the reviews were linked to the SDG 5 targets 5.5 and 5.C through addressing the issue of accessibility of education, science, and technology for women. The recommendations in the reviews of Kyrgyzstan and Georgia include explicit advice on improving gender equality in these spheres. This is also in line with Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights promoting equal access to education for all.

The number of male international experts participating in the preparation of the five reviews doubled the corresponding number of female international experts. Among all national representatives who have participated in the reviews, the ratio of female experts was 40%. This programme has taken measures to achieve 30% representation at least of both genders among participants and speakers to date.

There have been longstanding efforts at the UNECE to promote balance on all podiums and panels, but these are being further reinforced from January 2020. Representation of both male and female participants on all podiums and panels is viewed by default as desirable and achievable, recognizing that it may not be feasible in 100% of cases, given that some technical sectors are male-dominated. In the event that 50:50 representation is not achieved, no panel should proceed with 100% representation of one gender. The UNECE will indicate in writing its refusal to organize or participate to such panels. These measures are applied to all UNECE organized events.

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44 Lists of participants provided by the UNECE
from 1 January 2020, and this may be expected to further strengthen female participation in the activities.45

Other UN agencies also demonstrate efforts in addressing the issues of gender equality and the needs of most vulnerable, including disability inclusion. Some examples are provided below.

UNESCO’s Natural Sciences Sector runs large-scale programmes and works towards providing strong role models for women and girls in science throughout the world, building capacities of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).46 UNESCO also promotes the right to share in scientific advancement by enabling those in marginalized communities to contribute to and benefit from scientific progress.47

UNCTAD’s new methodology (2019) for their Framework for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) Reviews puts forward the following questions: (1) How can STIP Reviews help make STIP more inclusive and more sustainable? (2) How to strike the right balance between increasing productivity, promoting economic growth, stimulating diversification and structural economic transformation (the traditional focus of the STIP reviews) and the new areas of focus on inclusiveness and sustainability? (3) How to find practical ways to broaden the range of social actors engaged in the process of STIP reviews beyond those that were considered in the previous framework? With regard to the third question, the STIP reviews process has become more open; it involves more actors, including ‘stakeholders on inclusiveness (with an emphasis on gender) and sustainability’. 48

WIPO’s Global Innovation Index 2020 mostly focuses on rankings and economic aspects of innovation. Although inclusiveness is mentioned in the text of the report, its key findings, presented as a self-standing document49, do not contain an explicit analysis on this.

As an example of a non-UN organization, OECD offers Reviews of Innovation Policy with a comprehensive innovation system assessment for individual OECD member and partner countries, focusing on the role of governments. Analysis of nine recent reviews conducted from 2016 to 2019 shows that each of them has a specific focus relevant to the country. Gender issues and disability inclusion are not mentioned in the summaries of the reports.

New technologies developed through innovation can improve conditions of human living, including the most vulnerable groups. For example, in the field of medicine, synthetic biology could someday help physicians tailor treatments to the needs of individual patients with extraordinary precision. On-demand production of customized parts and devices through additive manufacturing (3D-printing), promises to tear down additional barriers in engineering and industry, accelerating progress even further.50

In June 2018, Development Ministers of G7 countries endorsed eight Whistler Principles to guide and accelerate innovation for development impact. The first principle is “Promote inclusive innovation”, with a focus on supporting the poorest and most vulnerable to have lasting development impact. Gender analysis is valuable in this regard. Women and adolescent girls, including those with disabilities, should play a decisive role in the design, testing, learning and adoption of innovative solutions.51 The International Development Innovation Alliance including

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45 Gender mainstreaming throughout the project. UNECE. Not dated
47 https://en.unesco.org/human-rights/science
51 Development Innovation Principles in Practice. Insights and Examples to Bridge Theory and Practice. International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA), 2018. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b156e3bf2e6b10bb0788609/t/5f030f528b89c14abf51f8e0/1594036075203/8
UNDP and UNICEF provides insights and examples on this in the document ‘Development Innovation Principles in Practice’.

Chapter 6 ‘Innovation for Sustainable Development’ of the UNECE’s review of Kyrgyzstan focuses on environmental sustainability and social inclusiveness. The chapter includes analysis on sustainable development gaps and priorities in the country, including gender equality, poverty reduction, inclusive education and growth. The recommendations of this chapter suggest providing ‘financial support to poor citizens to cushion the impact of price increases for fuel and utilities’, which is a step towards poverty reduction. Some innovation policies have the potential to initiate innovations directly benefitting vulnerable groups (“social innovation”).

In general, innovation policies contribute to improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable in an indirect way: more innovation leads to higher productivity, higher wages, higher profits, hence higher tax revenues, and thereby more fiscal space for the government to support vulnerable groups through policies that directly target them.

The above comparison with other agencies and organizations is an illustration of the fact that some put the equality and inclusion in the focus of their work on innovation, while others do not. In general, compared to these agencies and organizations, the UNECE’s reviews produced under the 2030 Agenda include these matters to a reasonable extent. The UNECE has taken measures to incorporate equality and inclusion issues in its innovation reviews produced under the 2030 Agenda and to achieve 30% representation at least of both genders among participants and speakers.

Conclusions and recommendations

The overall conclusion of the evaluation is that the programme has been highly relevant, coherent, effective, and efficient. The programme results have been moderately sustainable, depending on the availability of national budget resources and donors/development banks’ assistance. The reviews have contributed to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners.

The evaluation has reached the following conclusions:

1. The reviews have been highly relevant to the national priorities and the needs of the main beneficiaries in the target countries. The reviews’ major achievements have been consistent with the ECE mandates (Terms of Reference of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnership, Mandate and Terms of Reference of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies, Subprogramme 4 of the Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2016-2017 and the Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018-2019), including relevant SDGs (SDG 9 targets 9.3-9.5 and 9.B-9.C, SDG 5 targets 5.5 and 5.C, and innovation generally recognized by the 2030 Agenda as one of the means of its implementation).

2. The reviews have demonstrated coherence with international good practice, including the peer review practice for high-impact papers (validation by international experts at events or in written reports/track changes). The internal structure of the reviews was coherent. Collaboration with other entities took place in the form of consultations and data inputs for the reports and UNDP’s/resident coordinators’ assistance in the mission arrangement on the ground. Although a number of other UN agencies have produced reports on innovation development, joining their efforts to produce a single review instead of separate reviews would hardly be feasible.
3. The reviews have achieved their objectives and have been relevant to the improvement of innovation policies in the target countries, demonstrating a good level of effectiveness. The evaluated reviews contain recommendations for each chapter but no prioritization or tentative timeline for their implementation. National representatives admitted that the recommendations were pertinent but noted that they could be more concrete and practical. The reviews engaged with all relevant stakeholders, but the private sector engagement was limited, possibly due to the overall government-centric approach of the UN and/or to the common difficulties with getting hold of private sector representatives in the countries. The post-2015 reviews highlighted how innovation was the key to sustainable development.

4. With a limited budget, the UNECE has produced comprehensive innovation reviews for five countries, organized preparatory and data collection missions, peer reviews and presentations for each review. The duration of the missions was mostly satisfactory for the involved parties. The size of the UNECE team working on the reviews was adequate. The human and financial resources allocated to individual reviews were used efficiently and were commensurate with the project results. The UN regular budget covered the work of the UNECE staff coordinating the reviews production. The composition of the expert group, generally well-qualified, could have been more balanced in terms of the experts’ understanding of the context of the target countries and sustainable development.

5. The process of the reviews production in English and translation into Russian usually exceeded 1.5 years, and in the case of Kyrgyzstan, it reached two years. This time span is enough to lessen the modernity of the reviews to a certain extent, as the innovation development process is not static. The delays in the production were related to the review editing, translation and publishing processes. In spite of that, the UNECE have been respecting the deadlines set by the donors or requesting cost-neutral extension.

6. The cross-country perspective of a sub-regional outlook and the in-depth analysis of a national review complement each other: while the reviews give a deeper qualitative assessment, the IPO provides structured quantitative analysis allowing for the countries comparison. The teams of both projects work in close cooperation to ensure alignment. Same local stakeholders and experts have been involved in both the IPO and national reviews. The IPO has also helped to find focus for the reviews, which is important with regard to the wide range of topics that they cover and different local contexts of the target countries. The reviews programme and the IPO could be regarded as parallel activities, flexible in terms of their succession when they cover the same countries and independent from each other when they cover different countries.

7. The reviews have contributed to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners. The UNECE offers to governments a follow-up consisting of capacity building and policy advisory missions, based on demand from the governments and subject to the capacity of the UNECE to deliver it and the available budget. So far, the follow-up has been provided on an ad hoc basis (except for Belarus). Sustainability of the results usually depends on the availability of donor assistance and national budget resources. Given the member States governments’ resources (financial and non-financial) are limited, the most proactive ones start searching donor agencies and development banks to help implementing the UNECE recommendations while the innovation review is yet in progress, or immediately after its completion. Webinars organized instead of offline meetings due to the pandemic-related restrictions could provide a model for further follow-up capacity building activities.
8. The UNECE has taken measures to incorporate equality and inclusion issues in its innovation reviews produced under the 2030 Agenda and to achieve 30% representation at least of both genders among participants and speakers. Compared to other agencies’ and organizations’ innovation reviews, the UNECE’s reviews produced under the 2030 Agenda include the matters of equality and inclusion to a reasonable extent.

Recommendations

1. The coherence of collaboration with other 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 reviews preparation and implementation of recommendations. To avoid duplication, the UN agencies working on innovation reviews might wish to perform comprehensive analysis of all innovation reviews of other agencies and organizations before initiating their own review and, especially if the reviews cover the same countries, to find out which national stakeholders have been surveyed and when, what outputs have been delivered and lessons learnt. The peer review practice could be further upgraded by making written peer reviews collection (written reports/track changes) a standard procedure of the programme.

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.

3. Widen the pool of relevant experts, including the local ones, for team set-up or emergency replacement. Special attention should be payed to the experts’ understanding of the context of the target countries and the link between innovations and sustainable development. Special notes encouraging female experts to apply could be added to adverts published. Arranging interactive discussions with the member States governments, where they could validate the draft reports as peer reviewers do, and collection of feedback reports form the governments could provide material for triangulation.

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. An example of possible sequencing is provided in Annex 6.

5. To improve the methodologies and/or delivery processes of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks, 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.

6. Introduce a more streamlined approach to the follow-up (including capacity building) and incorporate it in funding proposals. This could include special missions to the target countries (once per 1-2 years), regular (bi-annual instead of annual) reporting on the progress to ToS-ICP and CICPPP (distribute informal brief reports of 2-3 pages max), regular updates on the IPO and extension into other country groups, building on the follow-up pilot exercises, and following this process systematically after the reviews completion. 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.

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.
Annexes
Annex 1. Abbreviations, tables, figures

Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>ARM</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
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<td>BLR</td>
<td>Belarus</td>
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<tr>
<td>CICPPP</td>
<td>Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>Corona virus decease 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSA</td>
<td>Daily Subsistence Allowance</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBRD</td>
<td>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDB</td>
<td>Eurasian Development Bank</td>
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<td>GEO</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
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<td>GITA</td>
<td>Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communication technologies</td>
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<td>IPO</td>
<td>Innovation Policy Outlook</td>
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<tr>
<td>KGZ</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIS</td>
<td>National Innovation System</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>SCST</td>
<td>State Committee on Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Science, technology, engineering and mathematics</td>
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<td>STI</td>
<td>Science, Technology, and Innovation</td>
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<td>TJK</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>TOS-ICP</td>
<td>Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIPO</td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Organization</td>
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Tables

| Table 1 | Main milestones of the reviews |

Figures

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<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Alignment of the review topics with national priorities</td>
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<td>Consistency of the review methodology and recommendations with international good practice</td>
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<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Complementarity of the cross-country perspective of the IPO and national review analysis</td>
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<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Relevance of the reviews program outputs to the improvement of innovation policies in the recipient countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Engagement of all relevant innovation policy stakeholders in the reviews</td>
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</table>
Annex 2. List of reviewed documents

Innovation Performance Reviews
5. Georgia Innovation for Sustainable Development Review (draft chapters), in English

Other documents:
4. Documents (capacity building programmeme, mission reports, news items, workshops’ and seminars’ agendas), covering follow up activities in Armenia (2016) and Belarus (2018-2019)
6. Evaluation Policy. UNECE. October 2014
8. Gender mainstreaming throughout the project. UNECE. Not dated
9. List of IPO focal point and local consultants (provided by the Project Manager), 18 August 2020
10. List of people to be contacted for the evaluation of the Programme of national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews (provided by the Project Manager), 18 August 2020
12. Other country-specific documents from the internal Google Drive repository. Access granted by the Project Manager, July 2020
26. Technical Cooperation Project Form, Promoting innovation policy capacities in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (November 2018 – May 2022), proposal to SIDA. UNECE
Annex 3. List of surveyed and interviewed participants

List of electronic survey participants

1. Apanasovich Natalja, Belarus State University Business School; Co-author, Belarus Review
3. Dobrinsky Rumen, European Innovation Alliance; Co-author, Reviews of Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia
4. Forsman Helena, University of Tampere School of Management; Co-author, Kyrgyzstan Review
5. Hesse Dieter, independent consultant; Peer Reviewer, Belarus Review
6. Inzelt Annamaria, IKU Innovation Research Center; Co-author, Reviews of Belarus, Tajikistan, Armenia
7. Ivanier Ariel, Resident Coordinator's Office Belarus; Co-author, Reviews of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan
8. Kaubasova Baktygul, State Service of Intellectual Property and Innovation under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzpatent), Local Expert
9. Khnkoyan Arevik, State Committee on Science, National Focal Point, Armenia
10. Krozer Yoram, University of Twente, Co-author, Kyrgyzstan Review
11. Marozau Radzivon, BEROC Economic Research Center; IPO National Consultant, Belarus
12. Meerovskaya Olga, Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support of S&T Sphere, National Focal Point, Belarus
13. Mengliev Bahodur, Independent Consultant, National Consultant, Tajikistan
14. Radosevic Slavo, University College London; Co-author, Reviews of Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia
15. Rakhatmatullin Ruslan, European Commission Joint Research Center (temporary UN ECE staff at that time), Co-author, Tajikistan Review
17. Severine Igor, former European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (temporary UNECE staff at that time); National Consultant and Co-author, Belarus Review
18. Spiesberger Manfred, Zentrum für Soziale Innovation, Co-author, Armenia Review, Peer Reviewer, Belarus Review
19. Stahlecker Thomas, Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research; Co-author, Reviews of Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia
20. Yegorov Igor, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Peer Reviewer, Kyrgyzstan Review
22. Zabala-Iturriagagoitia Jon Mikel, University of Deusto Business School, Co-author, Georgia Review

List of interviewees

1. Apanasovich Natalja, Belarus State University Business School; Co-author, Belarus Review
3. Athey Christopher, Economic Affairs Officer, Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE
4. Dobrinsky Rumen, European Innovation Alliance; Co-author, Reviews of Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia
5. Fexer Jakob Martin, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE, Project Manager IPO
6. Joensson Lars Anders, Head of Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE
7. Heinrich Ralph, Economic Affairs Officer, Innovative Policies Development Section UNECE, National Innovation Reviews for Sustainable Development Programme Manager, Secretary, UNECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships
8. Inzelt Annamaria, IKU Innovation Research Center; Co-author, Reviews of Belarus, Tajikistan, Armenia
10. Ivanier Ariel, Resident Coordinator's Office Belarus, Co-author, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan Reviews
11. Kaderabkova Anna, University of Economics and Management, Co-author; Reviews of Tajikistan, Armenia
12. Kalyuzhnova Yelena, University of Reading, Peer Reviewer, Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Georgia
15. Khunkoyan Arevik, State Committee on Science, National Focal Point, Armenia
16. Krozer Yoram, University of Twente, Co-author, Kyrgyzstan Review
17. Malikov Tavakal, former Head of Division of Social Sphere Development, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Republic of Tajikistan (now Head of Division of Coordination of Scientific and research works in the Academy of Science), Tajikistan
18. Marozau Radzivon, BEROC Economic Research Center; IPO National Consultant. Belarus
19. Meerovskaya Olga, Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support of S&T Sphere, National Focal Point, Kyrgyzstan
20. Mengliev Bahodur, National Consultant, Peer Reviewer, Tajikistan Review
21. Moldosheva Dinara, State Service of Intellectual Property and Innovation under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzpatent), National Focal Point, Kyrgyzstan
22. Mustapakulova Aisuluu, State Service of Intellectual Property and Innovation under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzpatent), TOS-ICP
23. Radosevic Slavo, University College London; Co-author, Reviews of Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia
24. Rakhamatullin Ruslan, European Commission Joint Research Center, Co-author, Tajikistan Review
25. Rosu Tatiana, UNECE, Innovative Policies Development Section, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, Consultant (IPO)
26. Sanna Leino, SIDA, Donor Representative for Georgia Innovation for Sustainable Development Review and Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO)
27. Severine Igor, former European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (now Independent Consultant), National Consultant and Co-author, Belarus Review
28. Shevchenko Yelena, former Science Fund Kazakhstan (now Head of Department, QazInnovations), Peer Reviewer, Kyrgyzstan Review
29. Soltobaev Aziz, KG Labs Public Foundation, National Consultant for Implementation Recommendations for Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Kyrgyzstan
30. Spiesberger Manfred, Zentrum für Soziale Innovation; Co-author, Armenia Review, Peer Reviewer, Belarus Review
31. Stahlecker Thomas, Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research, Co-author; Reviews of Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia
32. Tautiyeva Lyudmila, UNECE Consultant, National science, technology and innovation (STI) gap assessment of SPECA countries (including Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan)
33. Yefimov Leonid, Eurasian Development Bank, Donor Representative for Armenia Innovation Performance Review
32. Yegorov Igor, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Peer Reviewer, Kyrgyzstan Review
33. Zabala-Iturriagagoitia Jon Mikel, University of Deusto Business School, Co-author, Georgia Review
Dear programme participants,

The UNECE are currently conducting an evaluation of national innovation reviews produced under the Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews Programme in 2014-2020. The evaluation also considers synergies between the Programme and the sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook. We would be very grateful if you could contribute to the evaluation by completing this questionnaire. If you cannot answer a question or a block of questions, please feel free to move on to a more familiar question/block.

### Block 1. The Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews programme relevance and performance.

1. To what extent were the topics covered in the reviews aligned with national priorities of the recipient countries, including the national sustainable development priorities (where applicable)? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all aligned) to 5 (very well aligned).

   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   If you would like to provide more information, please use this space:

2. To what extent were the programme outputs relevant to the improvement of innovation policies in the recipient countries? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all relevant) to 5 (very relevant).

   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   If you would like to provide more information, please use this space:

3. How useful were the reviews for the needs of the main beneficiaries, i.e. innovation policy makers and other innovation stakeholders in the reviewed countries? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all useful) to 5 (very useful).

   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   If you would like to provide more information, please use this space:

4. How broadly did the reviews engage with all relevant innovation policy stakeholders? Please provide a rating from 0 (no stakeholders engaged) to 5 (all relevant stakeholders engaged).

   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   If you would like to provide more information, please use this space:

5. To what extent were the relevant innovation policy stakeholders able to contribute their insights to the analysis (as a part of the review activities)? Please provide a rating from 0 (no opportunity to contribute) to 5 (absolutely able to contribute).

   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   If you would like to provide more information, please use this space:

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52 Armenia, 2014; Tajikistan, 2015; Belarus, 2017; Kyrgyzstan, 2019; Georgia 2020: [www.unece.org/innovationforsustainedalevelopmentreviews.html](http://www.unece.org/innovationforsustainedalevelopmentreviews.html)
53 [www.unece.org/innovationpolicyoutlook.html](http://www.unece.org/innovationpolicyoutlook.html)
### Block 1. The Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews programme relevance and performance (continued)

6. To what extent did the reviews achieve their objectives\(^{54}\)? Please provide a rating from 0 (no objectives achieved) to 5 (all objectives achieved).

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If you would like to provide more information, please use this space:

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7. Are the collected facts, the covered topics, and the suggested recommendations coherent (i.e. do the recommendations follow from the findings, and are the findings supported by the facts)?

YES / NO

8. Were the number and length of country visits (made by the experts to collect facts for the reviews) adequate? Please provide a rating from 0 (too few/too short visits) to 5 (too many/too long visits). Please note that in this case 3 = ‘just right’.

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9. Was the size of the ECE team working on the reviews adequate?

YES / NO

10. Were the international experts participating in the work on the reviews adequately qualified?

YES / NO

11. Were there any recurrent challenges to achieving the objectives and expected accomplishments of the national reviews? Please select:

YES / NO

If you answered YES, please go to questions 12 and 13. If you answered NO, please go to question 14.

12. What were these recurrent challenges to achieving the objectives and expected accomplishments of national reviews? Please describe:

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13. How could these challenges be met more effectively? Please describe:

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14. To what extent did the reviews (post-2015) and their follow-up support the promotion of sustainable development? Please provide a rating from 0 (no support) to 5 (very strong support).

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If you would like to provide more information, please use this space:

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15. To what extent were the findings and recommendations of the reviews validated by international experts? Please provide a rating from 0 (no validation) to 5 (all findings and recommendations validated).

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\(^{54}\) Objectives of the reviews: to assess innovation policies and performance against international good practice; to provide recommendations for policy improvements; to transfer knowledge about international good practice and innovation policy analysis.
### Block 2. Equality and social inclusion.

16. How relevant were the review activities with regard to gender equality and empowerment of women? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all relevant) to 5 (very relevant).

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

17. Did the reviews contribute to enhancement of gender equality and empowerment of women? YES / NO

18. Do the reviews incorporate the perspective of vulnerable groups? YES / NO

19. Is disability inclusion mainstreamed in the reviews? YES / NO

20. Did the activities contribute to substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the most vulnerable groups? YES / NO

21. How effective were the reviews with regard to gender mainstreaming and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, including through disability inclusion? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all effective) to 5 (very effective).

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |


22. To what extent do/can the cross-country perspective of a sub-regional outlook and the in-depth analysis of a national review complement each other? Please provide a rating from 0 (no complementarity) to 5 (very high complementarity).

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   Please share your vision and ideas on how they do/can complement each other:

23. How could the methodologies and/or delivery processes of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks be aligned better? Please share your vision and ideas:

24. To what extent can the efficiency of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks be improved by implementing them in parallel or in close succession? Please provide a rating from 0 (this will not improve the efficiency) to 5 (this will improve the efficiency to a great extent).

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
Block 4. **International cooperation & good practice.**

25. To what extent did the reviews contribute to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners? Please provide a rating from 0 (no contribution) to 5 (very strong contribution).

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

26. To what extent were the methodology and the policy recommendations of the reviews consistent with international good practice? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all consistent) to 5 (very consistent).

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

27. To what extent were the reviews’ major achievements consistent with ECE mandates, including relevant SDGs, and more specifically with the mandate of the Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogrammeme55? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all consistent) to 5 (very consistent).

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

28. In delivering on the expected accomplishments of the reviews, does the collaboration with other UN agencies, IGOs, civil society, academia, etc. show coherence (i.e. create synergies, help avoiding duplication and exploiting different strengths and areas of expertise in a complementary way)?

YES / NO

Please specify the names of these collaborating organizations and their roles in the accomplishments delivery:

---

29. Could this engagement (collaboration) with partners and various stakeholder groups be improved? YES / NO

If you answered YES, please go to question 30. If you answered NO, please go to Block 5.

30. How could this engagement (collaboration) with partners and various stakeholder groups be improved? Please share your vision and ideas:

---

**Block 5. Additional information.**

*Is there anything else you would like to share with us?*

Please write your name and share your contact details:

---

**PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO MR. KONSTANTIN KARABANOV AT K.KARABANOV@GMAIL.COM**

**THANK YOU!**

---

55 The Subprogrammeme aims to promote a policy, financial and regulatory environment conducive to economic growth, innovative development and higher competitiveness in the UNECE region, with a particular focus on countries with economies in transition ([www.unece.org/oes/nutshell/2008/economic_cooperation.html](http://www.unece.org/oes/nutshell/2008/economic_cooperation.html)). The mandate of the Committee managing the Subprogrammeme: [www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/ceci/documents%24ToR/ToR.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/ceci/documents%24ToR/ToR.pdf)
Annex 5. Survey results

Note: The “NA” mark means that the respondent did not provide a relevant answer to the question.

1. To what extent were the topics covered in the reviews aligned with national priorities of the recipient countries, including the national sustainable development priorities (where applicable)? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all aligned) to 5 (very well aligned).

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Comments:

- There were some differences among the countries
- The scrutiny of national priorities has always been one of the starting points of the Reviews and these have been taken into consideration in the formulation of Review conclusions and recommendations
- Afterwards the Kyrgyzstan visit (for data collection), it became clear that several similar reviews with similar (or even more extensive topics) had recently been conducted by other organisations. The first step would have been to conduct a desk study for exploring what is already reviewed and what are the gaps for making a new review. The content of the Kyrgyzstan review repeated in many sections something that was published in earlier (more depth) reviews.
- The topic of public procurement was central to the innovation policy and the innovation strategy of Georgia and the Georgian government.
- Unfortunately, Sustainable Development Priorities were not really our concern ie experts were not familiar with. I presume that the UNEC staff have considered them when negotiating the Review structure. The point is that the SD should have been much more embedded in terms of reference for all reports including policy outlooks. Topics like greening of economy, inclusiveness, gender equality, issues related to ethics and human rights, indigenous knowledge, etc. are not explicitly or enough embedded in the conceptual frameworks of either reports. Why? Partly this is not trivial thing as these are countries primarily concerned with economic growth and catch up. Second, methodologically it is not easy to explore the link between innovation and inclusiveness or any other SDP issue.
- That is a bit hard to assess. National strategies and priorities are in the target countries of the reviews often pretty general. The reviews want to improve on the innovation policies, which have not always a very prominent position in the strategy documents. So, in this sense, they are not so much aligned, but want to put innovation policies more on the agenda. The reviews have however taken into account requests and priorities formulated by countries, e.g. business financing, green economy, so in this sense yes, they have been aligned to national priorities.
- For the Central Asian countries, just the issue of innovations taken separately from other aspects cannot be considered the central issue - perhaps I was rather cautious when answering. This is the first. Secondly, if we take some other countries, as far as I know, the EU and other organizations are actively working there, and their work overlaps.
- From what I recall, the structure of these reviews follows the same logic for all countries under review. However, in some cases where data is not available, certain elements have not been explored to the same extent.
- I am somewhat hesitant regarding the assessment. The fact is that the Review on Belarus began in 2017, when the UN did not yet have such a close linkage of its activities to SDGs as it has now. Moreover, there were no such goals in Belarus, where the formation of the SDG architecture (councils, groups, platforms, performance monitoring) took place later. And since this was the first experience of the UNECE in the series of Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews, it seems the authors were looking for new accents that should have been brought into the document so that it would become an overview of “innovation for SD”. It may have worked better in later reviews.
- In some cases not all the topics were priorities by national policy agendas, and this initiative triggered the process of bringing these issues to policy agendas of the countries under review.
- The document “Innovation for Sustainable Development: Review of the Kyrgyz Republic” provides an analysis of the national regulatory and institutional framework for innovation, as well as their impact on economic performance and sustainable development. Special attention is paid to: the concept of “innovation for development”, which means innovation-based initiatives that also address development challenges. Promoting innovation is one of the top priorities on the agenda of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Based on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in May 2017, Kyrgyzstan signed a new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period of 2018-2022. This document identifies the following priorities:
  • Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industrial, agricultural development, food security and nutrition
  • Good governance, rule of law, human rights and gender equality
  • Environment, climate change and disaster risk management
  • Social protection, health care and education

2. To what extent were the programme outputs relevant to the improvement of innovation policies in the recipient countries? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all relevant) to 5 (very relevant).

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Comments:

- This has always been one of the objectives in the Programme but the actual practical followup has been and is in the hands of local policy makers.
- In many sections, the recommendations were the same ones published earlier.
- Probably I am not the right person to answer this question, since I am not engaged into the policy making of the Georgian government, but I believe that the recommendations that were made in the review were straightforward and easy to adopt.
- Outputs were a compromise between different understanding of countries authorities and the UNECE staff. Also, profiles of experts were crucial in matching output with expected outputs. The match is not always guaranteed.
- All chapters are generally drafted by subject (innovation policy) experts for each country under review. Furthermore, generally, each chapter seemed to focus on policy areas that had the highest relevance in terms of their potential to improve innovation policies in the country under review. Some more information about follow up could be useful.
- The results of the Review were extremely useful for improving the innovation policy in Kyrgyzstan. Based on its recommendations, Kyrgyzstan is going to develop new policy tools in order to modernize its industry and improve innovation in the private sector. A road map has now been developed for the implementation of political reforms. Kyrgyzstan invited the UNECE to continue to provide the support in terms of improving the innovation policy in the country, including those in the area of legal and regulatory reforms. An expert from Georgia was involved in the process with the support of the UNECE.

3. How useful were the reviews for the needs of the main beneficiaries, i.e. innovation policy makers and other innovation stakeholders in the reviewed countries? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all useful) to 5 (very useful).

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Comments:

- Usefulness was strongly influenced by absorption capabilities of the beneficiaries.
- Needs assessment has also been one of starting points in the Reviews but as regards the perceived usefulness, this should be a question to the beneficiaries themselves.
- This question is better to answer based on what has been done in Kyrgyzstan since the review. However, when reading the report, I felt that a number of relevant recommendations were provided while “the big picture” remained fragmented.
- Again, here probably I am not the right person to answer this question, since I am not engaged into the policy making of the Georgian government, but I believe that the recommendations that were made in the review were straightforward and easy to adopt.
- It provided them with the fresh and neutral external view. There are big differences among countries in the extent to which they used results of the review.
- Very useful for sure, but implementation is then much more difficult and that needs to be improved.
- As an author of one such chapter as well as someone who works with innovation policymakers in a variety of countries, I feel that the UNECE reviews are extremely useful and address the key policy needs of innovation policymakers in target countries.
- Some more information about follow up could be useful.
- I think the main beneficiary could make better use of the review results. SCST is the beneficiary. There is a somewhat dismissive attitude towards the advice of international consultants among some decision-makers, they say, the recommendations are very general, we need more concrete
ones. Both reviews on Belarus (2011 and 2017) are high-quality analytical documents that give a lot to specialists. And those whose competence is not enough to understand what is written between the lines - what can be conveyed to them? There is a mixed perception of international advisory support. There is an understanding in Belarus that advisory support and recommendations can be used to promote correct decisions in the field of innovation policy, as additional reasons to convince officials or the president. The leadership of the State Committee for Science and Technology sometimes asks to highlight certain things. For example, in the IPO - the need to bring legislation on public procurement into line with the practice of scientific and technical activities, i.e. they learnt to use it in a good way for their own purposes. This is an additional leverage, well-grounded argumentation in negotiations with the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation, for example. Objectively speaking, based on the implementation of the 2011 and 2017 reviews recommendations, as a specialist, I can see that the country has not made much progress. The recommendations were not used to a high degree. More could have been done.
- Management of innovation activities in the Kyrgyz Republic is segmented and distributed among several institutions that need clarification of the strategy, qualified personnel and resources to carry out their functions.
- Too early to tell for Georgia
- I can see that the review has been useful in Belarus (worked with them on capacity building).

4. How broadly did the reviews engage with all relevant innovation policy stakeholders? Please provide a rating from 0 (no stakeholders engaged) to 5 (all relevant stakeholders engaged).

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Comments:
- Key innovation policy stakeholders have been engaged in the Reviews from the very start, to the peer review process and till the end when the final Reviews are presented locally. In most cases they have also been engaged in follow-up implementation activities in the respective countries.
- The parties close to policy making where involved. More insights would have been necessary to collect from the enterprise sector, also from those who had something critical to say.
- During the mission we managed to meet all the stakeholders we were interested in interviewing and visiting, so I think that the goals were achieved.
- Very good engagement with almost all public sector stakeholders. However, often not very strong engagement with the private and business sector actors.
- I was in the Armenia review fully participating, and can say for this one that we had a comprehensive set of meetings with all different stakeholders. Business side was a bit less covered than others, but that is always more challenging because of the time constraints of business representatives.
- I am not sure I understand what is meant here by ‘engage with stakeholders’.
- I give it this score because there is never too much in this matter. In addition, expert missions are time-limited. Thus, the stakeholders with whom face-to-face meetings were held was still limited.
For example, it was not possible to travel to the regions to assess the regional aspects of innovation policy on the spot.
- In accordance with the instructions by the Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Pankratov O.M., the State Service for Intellectual Property and Innovation under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzpatent) is responsible for coordinating the meetings of the UNECE Mission with the ministries and departments of the Kyrgyz Republic, universities, international organizations and business community. Fifty-one meetings were held in accordance with a schedule previously agreed with stakeholders proposed by the UNECE representatives. After this meeting, Kyrgyzpatent worked closely with representatives of the UNECE for two months. Additionally, at the request of the UNECE, information on the activities of some ministries and departments of the Kyrgyz Republic was sent by e-mail
- Engagement mostly with public stakeholders. Limited private sector engagement.

5. To what extent were the relevant innovation policy stakeholders able to contribute their insights to the analysis (as a part of the review activities)? Please provide a rating from 0 (no opportunity to contribute) to 5 (absolutely able to contribute).

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Comments:
- Differences among the countries are important. However the contribution was limited everywhere.
- All Review activities entail active solicitation of advice from local stakeholders
- Their role should be stronger along with the whole process, now the stakeholders were heard during the visit. Providing insights once only seldom leads to action.
- The insights, opinions and experience of the contacted stakeholders were essential for the identification of the policy gaps that should be targeted by the Georgian government.
- Expert team members are very open to dissenting views and generally to articulate views of stakeholders. Maybe there should have been a more structured mechanism to articulate their views rather than only through oral interviews. Probably written testimonies would have been a good addition.
- There were several opportunities to validate the results and conclusions presented in my chapter.
- Were freely allowed
- Not all stakeholders have been able to provide insights – more efforts need to be made to target the right interviewees

6. To what extent did the reviews achieve their objectives? Please provide a rating from 0 (no objectives achieved) to 5 (all objectives achieved).
Comments:

- The Reviews undertaken so far have achieved all their major declared objectives. The full answer to this question would require a feedback from the beneficiaries.
- The Kyrgyzstan report was a bit like “toothless”. The degree of newness was low (repeating something that was already known). It would have been important to start the process by conducting a desk study what is already known based on the earlier reviews and clarify why these reviews had not led into action in Kyrgyzstan. As one critical person said “please do not waste our time by coming to ask the same questions that have already been answered so many times”.
- According to the comments I got from the people from UNECE, I think that the goals of the review were satisfactorily achieved.
- This is assessment of analytical objectives. In terms impact on policy making in the country it varies too much so that average mark would not mean much.
- You can look at the goals in the review itself and analyze. I looked at some of the goals and rates of Kyrgyzstan (there are CIS statistics on science): as far as I can judge, the goals were not achieved. First of all, it applies to modernization of the scientific system and innovation infrastructure. Yes, it takes a lot of work, but the government does not make any efforts.
- As an author of one such review chapter, I am unable to answer this question as I would not be able to judge that.
- The follow up could be clearer.
- In our country (Tajikistan), the goal was not achieved due to insufficient funding. Along with a critical situation due to the pandemic, the situation has worsened. However, a broad shift in the State policy in view of the pandemic can be seen.
- Kyrgyzpatent in cooperation with UNECE developed a roadmap for the implementation of the Review's recommendations:
  - With the assistance of the UNECE, a national expert was involved to assess the achievements of the Review's recommendations.
  - With the assistance of the UNECE, an international expert from Georgia on innovation was invited.

7. Are the collected facts, the covered topics, and the suggested recommendations coherent (i.e. do the recommendations follow from the findings, and are the findings supported by the facts)?

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Comments:

- Quite a number of ‘eyes’ were involved and there is a high degree of coherence in reports. However, there are always exceptions.
- Yes, but this could be improved with more quantitative evidence

8. Were the number and length of country visits (made by the experts to collect facts for the reviews) adequate? Please provide a rating from 0 (too few/too short visits) to 5 (too many/too long visits). Please note that in this case 3 = ‘just right’.

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Comments:

- Mainly yes, with some exceptions
- If independent international experts not from the UNECE are being involved, those who have never worked with the country, have never worked in the countries of the region, then their coming for a week taking part in 10-15 meetings is not enough. They certainly study literature before that, and yet. For this category of experts, especially representatives of Western countries, who have different culture and conditions, this is not enough. The efficiency is low. There is always a part of the team - those who already has the experience – that may be enough for them. It strongly depends on the topic. For example, experts in venture financing, but where can we get them from then, from Israel? The new legislation adopted on this topic in Russia should be a good trigger for changes in Belarus, which usually imitates Russia. There was a topic on creating a single scientific and technical space in Russia and Belarus within the EAEU, but it is hard to tell how it will go.
- Timing was right, but time could have been used more efficiently in Georgia.

9. Was the size of the ECE team working on the reviews adequate?

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10. Were the international experts participating in the work on the reviews adequately qualified?

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Comments:

- Yes, in general. But, of course, as the composition of the expert group changes from one Review to another, there have been cases when the qualification of some experts was not entirely up to the needed level.
- Based on what was visible to myself, only two of the experts had records that are valued among the academic community, according to private discussions, not anyone had outstanding experience in business community and I wonder if the participants had (insider) experience in country-level policy design or implementation.

11. Were there any recurrent challenges to achieving the objectives and expected accomplishments of the national reviews?
12. What were these recurrent challenges to achieving the objectives and expected accomplishments of national reviews?

- Preparatory work for visits was not very sufficient. The requested meetings rarely were arranged in advance. Many relevant national documents were not available in English or Russian.
- I would change to process by starting with “a review of earlier reviews”. On the other hand, the contracts with experts should have been signed much earlier so that s/he will have time enough to make her/his own desk study for crystallising the interview questions. In my case I even visited in Kyrgyzstan for one week without contract or idea about compensation (I felt it as voluntary work). The organisations and persons to interview should be able to publish much earlier than along with the visit (in the worst case it was published a few hours prior to the visit). Finally, It took two years to publish the report (the content may be old when published) and the event for presenting the results was more a less boring characterised by poor time management and spiritless atmosphere. As an innovation review, the process and outcome were less innovative.
- The (poor) quality of the data limited the depth of the research that we needed to conduct. When economies are semi-developed or middle low income experts may not always get the specificity of innovation activities in such countries and the main drivers of productivity
  - 1. Overestimated capacity of the government in terms of providing financial support to the R&D sector
  - 2. Lack of effort in stimulating private initiative development in the sphere of innovations
  - 3. Political changes in some countries, which interrupted the continuity of individual decisions in the spheres of innovations and science
- Innovation as a policy concept not always clear for national stakeholders; no or limited data on R&D and innovation activities; innovation strategies and respective measures too often not implemented
- Government agencies are not interested in implementation of the review recommendations
- There are no qualified professionals

13. How could these challenges be met more effectively?

- The relevant national documents have to make available either in English or Russian. The pre-requested visits and consultations have to arrange in advance.
- I recommend changing the process of review. Better preparation both at organizational (UNECE) and personal (Experts) levels prior to data collection phase. This should lead to more specific questions and more accurate data. On the other hand, “the water brought to the well doesn’t stay in there”, the local parties should be involved in data collection, visits, analysis and conclusion drawing. After publishing the report everyone should read it by her/himself and the final presentations should be delivered by local stakeholders with a focus on how each stakeholder starts developing their activities. The over-long presentations by outsider experts are efficient ways to kill thinking. Finally, some of the experts had been involved in a number of similar reviews building a strong network of experience that can generate “a prison for new ideas or questions”.

49
- Difficult to mitigate in the short run, but the national statistical office is aware of it and is working on improving the quality of the data.
- Party through more appropriate analytical framework and partly by selection of appropriate experts
- 1. Budget revision
  2. Implementation of the recommendations suggested in the review (organizational support, tax policy revision etc.)
- Organizing educational trainings in the filed of innovations

14. To what extent did the reviews (post-2015) and their follow-up support the promotion of sustainable development? Please provide a rating from 0 (no support) to 5 (very strong support).

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Comments:

- The promotion of sustainable development is a long-term objective, so it is too early to make a judgment.
- As I said earlier, I am not the right person to answer this question, since I am not engaged into the policy making of the Georgian government.
- The reviews gave support, but there are three issues I would like to mention in this context:
  - There are quite a lot of recommendations formulated per each chapter of the reviews. It would be good to prioritize them and give a tentative timeline when an issue should be addressed. Some recommendations are easy and quickly to implement, some are very important to be addressed, so these ones should go first. Others are more long term measures. Making a hierarchy here would help policy makers in their decisions.
  - The recommendations are usually a bit general, which is a result of the mandate of the reviews and of the role of UN / UNECE. Having them more concrete would be good, but difficult to do.
  - Implementation of recommendations is a challenge in the context of the target countries. A follow-up would be good, e.g. follow-up missions by UNECE or the experts to the country, annually or bi-annually to check which recommendations have already been implemented and what the status of others is. That would put more pressure on the countries for implementation. Coordination with donors could also be an option, e.g. with UNDP, EU, to see whether instruments for implementation can be devised.
- There are slightly different goals for innovation and for sustainable development. After all, we talked about innovations and those are primarily related to the commercialization of scientific results. Whereas SDGs mostly focus on socioeconomic development. Commercial structures have different goals.
- The review for Tajikistan did not have a strong focus on sustainability aspects of innovation policies.
- Follow up was unclear
- The recommendations of the Review contribute to the promotion of sustainable innovation, such as: promotion of new technologies improving energy and resource efficiency; reducing emissions and pollution, and preventing the loss of biodiversity.

15. To what extent were the findings and recommendations of the reviews validated by international experts? Please provide a rating from 0 (no validation) to 5 (all findings and recommendations validated).

![Graph showing validation ratings]

Comments:

- Actually the international experts who are part of the Review team are those who draft the Review findings and recommendations. Then there is a separate round of validation by another group of international experts who take part in the peer review process.
- I do not know anything about the validation. If done, it should have led to the revised versions of expert reports.
- I gave it 3 as this was most often oral feedback given at the feedback event in Geneva. A 5 would be if you ask for written review. The outcome was that the quality varied largely from reviewer to reviewer. Also, commenting it publicly in 10-15 minutes or writing written feedback are two different things. Publicly you do not go into details and give broad brush usually critical and constructive but positive assessment

16. How relevant were the review activities with regard to gender equality and empowerment of women? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all relevant) to 5 (very relevant).
17. Did the reviews contribute to enhancement of gender equality and empowerment of women?

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Comments:

- This aspect has been part of the Review conclusions and recommendations but given the very nature of the Reviews, it only has a marginal role.
- Not that I am aware of, since this was not the goal of the review
- Probably not relevant to this issue?

18. Do the reviews incorporate the perspective of vulnerable groups?

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Comments:

- This aspect has been part of the Review conclusions and recommendations but given the very nature of the Reviews, it only has a marginal role.
- Not that I am aware of, since this was not the goal of the review
- Probably not relevant to this issue?
19. Is disability inclusion mainstreamed in the reviews?

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<th>All respondents</th>
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Comments:

- This aspect has been part of the Review conclusions and recommendations but given the very nature of the Reviews, it only has a marginal role.
- Not that I am aware of, since this was not the goal of the review
- Probably not relevant to this issue?

20. Did the activities contribute to substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the most vulnerable groups?

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Comments:

- This aspect has been part of the Review conclusions and recommendations but given the very nature of the Reviews, it only has a marginal role.
- Not that I am aware of, since this was not the goal of the review
- Probably not relevant to this issue?

21. How effective were the reviews with regard to gender mainstreaming and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, including through disability inclusion? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all effective) to 5 (very effective).

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Comments:

Probably not relevant to this issue?

22. To what extent do/can the cross-country perspective of a sub-regional outlook and the in-depth analysis of a national review complement each other? Please provide a rating from 0 (no complementarity) to 5 (very high complementarity).

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Comments:

- Complementarity has been among the objectives but the Innovation Policy Outlook is a relatively new activity and probably it is too early to make strong judgments
- I have only been involved in one review (Georgia), but I consider that there are positive externalities between the conduit of reviews at multiple levels of analysis, due to the multi-level governance setting in which most countries operate.
- Policy outlooks cannot be relevant unless grounded in in-depth analysis and assessment of innovation capacity. I cannot imagine one without the other. See proposal of my initial methodology for outlook produced for the UNECE
- I have not seen the results of the sub-regional policy outlook, I am only aware that it is ongoing. So cannot assess it. In general I think it is very useful and is complementary.
- Generalizing the experience of different countries with similar starting conditions is usually helpful
- I have not been involved in the Innovation Policy Outlook activities.
- More explicit dimension in the preparation. During the preparation, it would have been better if I were involved slightly earlier to bring my own issues to the table, which are not the same as financing R&D etc. Then I could have done more preparation.
- I think they do. Moreover, I think that the structure of the sub-regional Review (49 indicators) could be used (at least partially) to structure certain sections of the Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews (e.g. strategic policy frameworks, tools, etc.)
I think the both documents can complement each other in several aspects. First one is the date. As far as the Innovation Performance Review of Armenia was developed in 2014 and the IPO had been launched in 2019, the latter may involve the recent developments and be more updated. Second one is the comparative analysis, as the IPO describes the innovation performance not only in Armenia but also in the other countries of Eastern Europe and Caucasus; it may be valuable in the sense of comparison.

- Sub-regional outlook could contribute to evidence-based policy measures and monitoring of implementation of policy recommendations via providing reliable quantitative and internationally comparable indicators.
- In addition to the Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews, which are focused on the most relevant practices and tools, the Innovation Policy Outlook sets a wide range of parameters and provides a framework for analyzing and comparing conditions for innovation in different countries.
- Both reviews were developed in close cooperation with national authorities and other experts in Armenia. The Innovation for Sustainable Development Review provided insight into reflecting and general understanding of the situation in the country, as well as the final assessment, justification and proposal of recommendations for the innovation sphere development. The objective of the Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook was to compare progress on innovation policy and institutional reform; assess and compare countries' performance in various areas; monitor, identify and assess policy priorities and its support needs; as well as to encourage more effective policy dialogue through a general assessment framework and facilitate interagency coordination, public and private sector consultation. With that said, these two reviews complement each other very well.
- The UNECE Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook will foster intergovernmental coordination and increase public and private sector consultations on innovation policy. The aim of the project is to assess the range and quality of innovation policy, institutions and processes in six countries of Eastern Europe and the Trans-Caucasian region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). In particular, the project aims to identify strengths and weaknesses of innovation development, improvement of innovation policy, institutions and processes; as well as to increase the competitiveness of the economies of the target countries in general. The study of these aspects of innovation development is planned to be carried out using a specially developed tool for this purpose - the Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook - which consists of about 50 indicators structured within three components: innovation management, innovation policy tools, and innovation policy process. Data harvesting in order to assess the components of the Outlook will be administered via a questionnaire that includes questions on each indicator. The questionnaires will be completed as part of a “self-assessment” by the republican State bodies and other organizations in each country. In parallel with the “self-assessment”, the UNECE experts will conduct an independent assessment. Results of the questionnaire and comparison of the two assessments will form the basis of the Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook.
- The IPO analysis has been taken into account by the national review team to some extent. There was also an internal cross-checking exercise undertaken to ensure there are no contradictory statements in both publications. But the process could be improved. Limited time and resources are probably the reasons behind this.
- Often similar issues and areas for improvement, recommendations

23. How could the methodologies and/or delivery processes of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks be aligned better?
- They should be informed by each other and to the extent possible, complementary. A regional outlook should help provide a perspective, but should acknowledge the findings of national reviews.
- This will be better understood when one takes stock of the results of the current (first) round of the Innovation Policy Outlook
- It would be possible to identify local/regional failures/needs for which local/regional authorities do not have the required political competences and hence, the intervention from the national level would be justified.
- Organize a Forum of the reviewed countries. Involve experts from the countries under review in the preparation of reviews for other countries
- National Review should be the first step and after its delivery and approval it should be followed by the policy outlook. However, in this case the final policy recommendations would come at the very end of this two stage process.
- Use more relative indicators to allow for correct comparison of countries of different size
- There seems to be a very long list of innovation reviews carried out by various UN agencies. These vary to some extent to reflect the policy interest of each agency. In case of UNECE, the innovation review could benefit from having an improved and logical structure that is explained (perhaps with good examples) in some written form (a guide, etc.)
- More explicit dimension in the preparation
- Use of the same conceptual and empirical basis and basic definitions.
- In general, the methodology is adequate for the assessment of the situation and takes into account contexts of the individual countries. However, it is necessary to enhance the overview of the special features of the countries, as well as their reaction to the innovations development.
- I think they do. Moreover, I think that the structure of the sub-regional Review (49 indicators) could be used (at least partially) to structure certain sections of the Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews (e.g. strategic policy frameworks, tools, etc.)
- I think they are rather aligned.
- They are in good alignment and synergy
- When assessing the innovation policy index of a country, one may wish to consider the relevance (weight) of individual innovation policy practices and tools based on expert opinions
- The structure of the reviews could have been improved by including more chapters dedicated to specific innovation policy issues that are of particular interest to the country.
- The easiest way to align them is to use questionnaires (IPO has one, the national review does not). The questionnaire should serve as a checklist for alignment and as concrete guidelines how to carry out the review. As different experts work on the national reviews’ chapters, it is easy to deviate into very different policy directions, which is challenging for the structure of the publication. This would also help transfer experts’ knowledge to in-house ECE staff. Another idea is to organize meetings with the 2 teams to discuss the findings at length (not the final drafts). This could be done in a ‘board’ setting to ensure that the both teams are on the same page and that the recommendations are aligned.

24. To what extent can the efficiency of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks be improved by implementing them in parallel or in close succession? Please provide a rating from 0 (this will not improve the efficiency) to 5 (this will improve the efficiency to a great extent).

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25. To what extent did the reviews contribute to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners? Please provide a rating from 0 (no contribution) to 5 (very strong contribution).

Comments:
- Dissemination was restricted to narrow government circle and some selected stakeholders. Also, dissemination in Geneva is highly formal.
- The problem is that these countries have slightly different legislation systems. This is a point that I try not to emphasize, but here it is important to use pilot projects to put the thing into practice, because it is unclear how these or those forms of organization will behave. And using the “pilot” you can estimate the level of fiscal support and other things and see how it all interacts with other laws and regulations. About 10 years ago, we created a law on venture funds, created up to 1000 such funds, but none of them provided financing to innovative activities. Because of the law gaps, they only financed construction. Then they were eliminated. Incentive measures do not always work as well, for example, with regard to patents - in our country only 10-15% of activities are carried out through the sphere of patent law. The rest is in the field of agreements on joint activities. It has its own specificity; you cannot just transfer the regulatory practices back and forth.

26. To what extent were the methodology and the policy recommendations of the reviews consistent with international good practice? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all consistent) to 5 (very consistent).
Comments:

- I would assess the process based on the academic practice which I think was quite poor in this case. Based on the reviews published earlier, the content of UNECE review was undetailed based on the selected interviews, limited opportunity to prepare for questions and ask the questions and a limited number of facts.

27. To what extent were the reviews’ major achievements consistent with ECE mandates, including relevant SDGs, and more specifically with the mandate of the Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogramme? Please provide a rating from 0 (not at all consistent) to 5 (very consistent).

28. In delivering on the expected accomplishments of the reviews, does the collaboration with other UN agencies, IGOs, civil society, academia, etc. show coherence (i.e. create synergies, help avoiding duplication and exploiting different strengths and areas of expertise in a complementary way)?
Comments:

- UNDP - through it’s sustainable development portfolio of projects and innovation agenda
- UNCTAD - Investment Policy Review (IPR) programme
- National private sector associations - promoting the interests of the grassroots to provide a more objective view, as opposed to the government-centric view which has to be supported by UNECE
- The key partner was the State Committee on Science and Technology, it was well suited to provide all necessary contacts in Belarus
- Collaboration with the local UNDP offices has been especially helpful for the efficient implementation of the Review programme.
- I don’t see myself capable of responding to this question, since it is beyond my knowledge.
- Not real collaboration It is ‘war of tugs’ among the UN agencies
- EU Commission, UNIDO
- Several organisations were met for accomplishment, e.g. ADB, GIZ, Academy of Science. There were meetings for interviews, no intensive collaboration. On my side, at least. I don’t know about the UNECE and the collaboration between the organisations
- Different from country to country, e.g. OECD, WorldBank, EU, Asian Development Bank, different other donors
- UNDP, European Commission, OECD
- Collaborating organizations in the process of the development of Review had been the national Academy of Sciences, research institutes in the system of the Academy, other research institutes, universities, Ministries, Agencies.
- Generally yes, but it could better aligned with other similar initiatives focusing the region, for instance H2020 Policy Support Facility
- National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan State University, Russian-Armenian (Slavic) University, National Polytechnic University of Armenia, Innovation Center of the Yerevan Research Institute of Mathematical Machines, “Enterprise Incubator” Foundation, Union of Advanced Technologies Companies, National Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship of Armenia, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), etc.
- Due to innovative technological orientation of their activities, all of the above scientific organizations, universities, foundations and companies make a tangible contribution to the promotion of engineering, IT and ICT spheres; to provision of services in the field of expertise; they also actively participate in the process of development of different innovation policy aspects and in laying the groundwork for innovation activities in the Republic of Armenia.
- UNECE

29. Could this engagement (collaboration) with partners and various stakeholder groups be improved?

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30. How could this engagement (collaboration) with partners and various stakeholder groups be improved?

- UNECE should more proactively engage with civil society / grassroots / private sector. Limiting its exposure to government authorities only creates the risk of not representing the public interests, but those of the national authorities, which may not be aligned (e.g. in Belarus)
- Even when collaboration is efficient there is always room for improvement, e.g. in better coordination through advance planning
- Initiate a new review (Belarus). Organize forums, round tables under the auspices of the SCST and stakeholders. Establish a public council on innovations development
- A more collaboration and different perspectives of other UN agencies would improve outcomes. Possible, joint or coordinated assessment by Investment division or UNIDO and the UNECE. Also, sometimes a country specific issue should be nominated in advanced and explored in depth through the report. It can be industry specific issue. There is too much staying within generic innovation policy which has its significant limitations.
- Coordination with donors and international organisations on the ground.
- When writing country reviews, it is necessary to involve experts from these countries more actively
- Through a more consistent and transparent stakeholder consultation process over the course of conducting each review.
- Early communication of the objectives of the missions and general involvement in the conceptualization and empirical analysis
- There is coordination in this sphere, but the peculiarity of the local bureaucratic processes slows this process down.
- It is necessary to sustain the work with the technical assistance donors. Innovative activities and innovation policy are not traditional areas for technical assistance. But it is possible to educate and 'train' the donors.
- The engagement with partners and various stakeholder groups can be improved if their interests are increased.
- May be it would be good to possibly elaborate tools and mechanisms to assist governments in ensuring adequate implementation of derived recommendations through finding appropriate sources of resources on international level (i.e. for implementation of national programmes to address highlighted weaknesses, etc.)
- Organizing business events of different formats.
- Organizing different events at the regional level.

31. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

- In general, the reviews are not critical enough, but I understand how complex this issue is for the UNECE
- I would like to give a clarification regarding Block2, as I have rated it lower. I think the Review didn’t have social inclusion and gender equality tasks. The main goal of the Review was the
assessment of national innovation system and providing recommendations which could contribute to innovation performance and policy development. I am truly convinced that the Review had completely achieved its goals.
Annex 6. Example of possible modification of the review process (outline)

Produce a general concept note for the experts (review’s aim; beneficiaries and how they are supposed to use the review; requirements to the analysis structure, text; etc.)

Request a list of priorities from the government

Identify topics corresponding to the priorities

Give the list of topics to the experts and ask them to complete it in accordance with the desk review and their expert opinion

Produce a list of chapters on the basis of the amended list of topics

Produce lists of questions the answers to which each chapter should contain

Give these lists to the experts to guide them through the mission and chapter writing
I. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the methodology and selection process of, and follow up to, UNECE’s programme of national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews from 2014-2020 and the synergies between the programme of national Reviews and the sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook.

The results of the evaluation are expected to contribute to a longer-term vision for supporting national innovation policy reforms, assessing options for streamlining the review process, and to further strengthening synergies between sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlooks and national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews.

The outcomes of the evaluation can be used to enhance the outreach to policymakers and other major stakeholders to strengthen their engagement in intergovernmental processes and to improve the methods and processes of intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration that support innovation and competitiveness policies.

II. Scope of activities for evaluation

The evaluation will cover the methodology and process of carrying out national Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews (previously called Innovation Performance Reviews), as well as follow-up support for the efforts of countries to put review recommendations into practice.

The evaluation will explore the innovation reviews prepared by the Innovative Policies Development section during the period from January 2014 to September 2020. The activities cover the following publications:

- Innovation Performance Review of Armenia (2014)
- Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Georgia (2020)

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated into all stages of the evaluation, in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group’s revised gender-related norms and standards. Therefore, the evaluation will assess how
gender considerations were included in the process and it would make recommendations on how gender can be better included in the process.

### III. Background

ECE’s Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships is mandated inter alia to promoting the knowledge-based economy and innovation in the ECE region by:

- providing a platform for policy dialogue, the exchange of experience and good practices;
- developing guidelines and policy recommendations for Governments on the basis of the above; and
- providing a basis for demand-driven policy advisory services.

As part of this mandate, UNECE has been conducting a programme of national innovation reviews starting in 2010. The purpose of these reviews has been to analyse national innovation performance, systems, policies, and institutions of member States against international good practice as developed under the Committee, and to make targeted recommendations on how innovation policies and institutions can be improved to enhance innovation performance.

Before 2015, the scope of the reviews was restricted to the contribution of innovation to economic development, and the reviews were called Innovation Performance Reviews. Since 2015, the scope has been broadened to also analyse how innovation can contribute to national sustainable development objectives more broadly, reflecting the central role science, technology and innovation play as means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Starting with the second review of Belarus (published in 2017), the reviews were re-named Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews to reflect this modification of scope.

Reviews are carried out on request of Governments and in close cooperation with national authorities. The findings and recommendations are presented to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships for endorsement before being published. The analysis going into the reviews is supported by extra-budgetary funding. UNECE offers follow-on policy advice and capacity building to support the implementation of policy recommendations on request.

In 2017, exploratory work was started on a possible sub-regional Innovation Policy Index. In 2018, extra-budgetary funding was secured for this new project. For both technical and political reasons, it was decided not to attempt to construct a quantitative index that would rank participating countries, but to rather identify and analyse strengths and weaknesses at a qualitative level. The project was therefore re-named Innovation Policy Outlook. Starting in 2019, the new sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook has been piloted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The purpose of this Outlook is to provide a comparative perspective on innovation performance and policies across a set of countries at broadly similar levels of institutional and economic development, to identify common trends and lessons and to facilitate mutual policy learning.

### IV. Issues

The evaluation will answer the following questions:
Relevance
20. To what extent were the reviews’ major achievements consistent with ECE mandates, including relevant SDGs, and more specifically with the mandate of the Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogramme?
21. To what extent were the topics covered in the reviews aligned with national priorities of recipient countries?
22. To what extent did the reviews serve the needs of the main beneficiaries, i.e. innovation policy makers and other innovation stakeholders in the countries reviewed?
23. How relevant are the activities with regards to gender equality and empowerment of women?
24. Do the reviews incorporate the perspective of vulnerable groups? Is disability inclusion mainstreamed?

Coherence
25. To what extent were the methodology and the policy recommendations of the reviews consistent with international good practice? To what extent were findings and recommendations validated by international experts? To what extent do/can the cross-country perspective of a sub-regional outlook and the in-depth analysis of a national review complement each other? Are the facts collected, the topics covered and recommendations coherent?
26. How coherent is the collaboration with other entities (United Nations, other international organizations, civil society, academia, etc.) in delivering on expected accomplishments? Could this engagement with partners and various stakeholder groups be improved?
27. How could the methodologies and/or delivery processes of national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks be aligned better?

Effectiveness
28. To what extent did the reviews achieve their objectives? To what extent were the programme outputs relevant to improving innovation policies in recipient countries? To what extent did they support the promotion of sustainable development?
29. To what extent did the reviews engage with all relevant innovation policy stakeholders? To what extent were they able to contribute their insights to the analysis?
30. What were recurrent challenges to achieving the objectives and expected accomplishments of national reviews? How could these challenges be met more effectively?
31. How effective were the reviews with regards to gender mainstreaming, and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable including through disability inclusion?

Efficiency
32. Were the resources allocated to the individual reviews appropriate to the scale of the projects?
33. Were the human and financial resources allocated to individual reviews used efficiently and commensurate to the project results?
34. Were individual reviews implemented in an efficient manner?
35. To what extent can efficiency be improved by carrying out national reviews and sub-regional policy outlooks in parallel or in close succession?

Sustainability
36. To what extent did the reviews contribute to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices and policy recommendations among national policy makers and practitioners?
37. Did the reviews contribute to enhancement of gender equality and empowerment of women?
38. Did the activities contribute to substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the
most vulnerable groups?

V. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluation consultant, who will be responsible for the design of the evaluation methodology, on the basis of:

1. A desk review of all relevant documents over the period including:
   - All reviews issued during the period
   - Documents related to the programme of national reviews and the pilot Innovation Policy Outlook
   - All relevant documents including materials developed in support of the activities (background documents, final reports and publications)
   - Reports of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships and its Bureau; Reports of the Team of specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness
   - Proposed programme budgets covering the evaluation period
   - Relevant UN and ECE resolutions on the matter.

2. An electronic questionnaire will be developed by the evaluator in consultation with ECE to assess the views of stakeholders: international experts involved in the reviews and the pilot Innovation Policy Outlook as authors or peer reviewers; members of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships; members of the Team of specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness; staff from ECE involved in the project; relevant counterparts in the United Nations System and other international organizations.

3. The questionnaire will be followed by interviews of selected stakeholders (methodology to be determined by the evaluator in consultation with ECE). These will be carried out via phone or other electronic means of communication. Results of the survey will be disaggregated by gender.

The report will summarize the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. An executive summary (max. 2 pages) will sum up the methodology of the evaluation, key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

All material needed for the evaluation, will be provided to the consultant. In addition to the documents mentioned above in 1), the Project Manager will provide the list of persons to be interviewed by telephone. ECE will provide support and further explanation to the evaluator as needed.

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the ECE Evaluation Policy. A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data techniques are selected. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

VI. Evaluation schedule

A. Evaluator selected (1) 1 May 2020
B. Delivery of inception report including survey design: 29 June 2020
C. Feedback on inception report by the programme manager: 6 July 2020

56 Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator
D. Launch of the questionnaire survey: 24 July 2020
E. Phone interviews: 10-24 July
F. Data Analysis: July/August 2020
GE. Draft Report: 22 September 2020
F. Comments on Draft report: 6 October 2020
G. Final Report: By 1 November 2020

VII. Resources

Mr. Ralph Heinrich will manage the evaluation with the support of the Innovative Policies Development section staff. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) will provide guidance to the Project Manager and evaluator as needed on the evaluation design, methodology and quality assurance of the final draft report.

VIII. Intended use / Next steps

The evaluation will be consistent with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. The results of the evaluation will be used to further improve the methodology and process of delivering future reviews. It will also be used to further strengthen synergies between the programme of national reviews and future sub-regional innovation policy outlooks.

A management response to the evaluation will be prepared by ECE, and relevant recommendations implemented as scheduled in the management response. Progress on implementation of recommendations will be available on the ECE public website.

IX. Criteria for evaluation

The evaluator should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in relevant disciplines, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, economic and social statistics.
- Knowledge of and experience in working with economic policy and its monitoring.
- Relevant professional experience in design and management of evaluation processes with multiple stakeholders, survey design and implementation, project planning, monitoring and management, gender mainstreaming and human-rights due diligence.
- Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations.
- Fluency in written and spoken English and Russian.
- Experience in the Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asian sub-regions

Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to ECE before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any point where such conflict occurs.