



Background

Recognized as a cross-cutting means of implementation, innovation is central [to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) of the 2030 UN Agenda](#) – in particular to SDG 9, which calls for countries to “build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”. Developing and emerging countries urgently need to build institutions and capacities to become competitive in an increasingly knowledge-based economy, while reaching sustainable development.

In many countries, this will not happen automatically – well-designed, targeted public support will be pivotal to correct market failures, to compensate for externalities, to guide the private sector and to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination. Doing this well requires a continuous process to develop and update a solid understanding of the national and regional “innovation system” to serve as the basis for developing and strengthening a productive, flexible role for the public sector. The Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews (I4SDRs), a UNECE flagship publication, fills this gap through a calibrated assessment and recommendations for policy and structural reform, based on international good practices and a firm understanding of national and regional specificities.

The Review process: from advice to action

Initiated at the request of the national authorities, the review process engages national experts, public officials and policy makers to ensure local ownership. UNECE also supports subsequent reform efforts through policy dialogue and capacity building tied to the recommendations and priorities of the report.

The analysis of the I4SDR is structured around three parts (figure 1), based on which, it elaborates recommendations and measures to stimulate innovation activity, enhance innovation capacity among stakeholders, and improve the efficiency of the national innovation system – all conducive to sustainable development.

Part I



Chapter I - Economic Overview

These chapters look at the overall economic development and innovation performance of the country, based on input and output metrics, in particular – outlining the opportunities and challenges that policies related to enabling and promoting innovation should address.



Chapter II - Innovation Performance Overview

Part II



Chapter III - Innovation Policy Governance and the National Innovation System

This chapter outlines and provides a succinct review the national innovation system in general and innovation governance in particular, analysing how and to which extent public policy and existing intervention mechanisms serve to nurture the innovation system and address these opportunities and challenges.



Part III



Chapter IV - [Elective Topic I]

Chapter V - [Elective Topic II]

Chapter VI - [Elective Topic III]

Two to three in-depth chapters on chosen topics most relevant to the country, such as science-industry linkages, innovation in specific sectors, innovation-enhancing procurement, start-up support, and diaspora engagement, and engaging leading experts in the field.



Structured action plan for reforms based on recommendations

Figure 1: Structure of the I4SDR

The Review uses policy analysis and research, multi-stakeholder meetings at national level for fact-finding, awareness raising and consensus building and a peer review.

Following publication, ECE typically supports the country through capacity building and policy dialogue to support return effects. After 3-5 years, at the request of the national authorities, a second review assesses progress and re-evaluates priorities.

The five steps of the review process

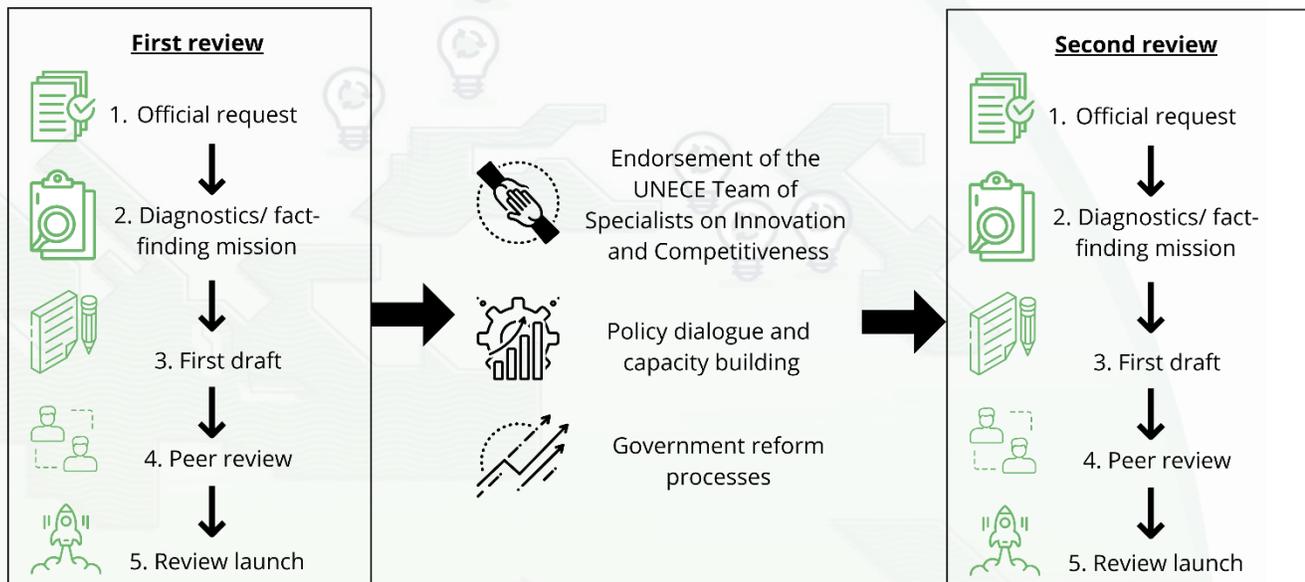


Figure 2: The five steps of the review process

Results at a glance

[The Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Georgia \(2021\)](#) included elective chapters selected in consultation with the national authorities to reflect national priorities for sustainable development. The topics selected were industry-science linkages and collaboration in the innovation process; public procurement as a driver of innovative development; and innovation and growth dynamics in Georgian enterprises. Following the review, innovation-enhancing procurement was identified by stakeholders as a key area for future capacity building support. A handbook on this topic is under development, with plans for activities including a study trip for public procurement practitioners and training events to build capabilities for innovation-enhancing procurement. The Review also contained a number of policy recommendations to strengthen the institutional capacities and policy tools of Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA), which plays a key role in the on-going development of the Georgia's innovation ecosystem.

[The Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Kyrgyzstan \(2019\)](#) was followed by targeted capacity building support to Kyrgyzpatent to develop the concept for an Innovation Centre in Bishkek, including co-working spaces and a Fabrication Laboratory ("FabLab") to support start-ups with prototyping efforts. Policymakers also plan to support development of a number of university-based business incubators across the country. To support Kyrgyzstan and other countries participating in the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), UNECE has developed [a handbook for policymakers on Business Incubators for Sustainable Development in the SPECA Sub-region](#). Support was also provided to the national authorities on the sequencing of strategic reforms to support efforts to promote innovation for sustainable development in the country, with work ongoing on [a Roadmap for the Development of the Innovation Ecosystem of Kyrgyzstan](#).

To learn more about the I4SDR, please contact Christopher Athey: christopher.athey@un.org

To stay up-to-date with the latest I4SDR developments, please visit our website: <https://unece.org/innovation-sustainable-development-reviews-i4sdrs>

