

The role of standards and regulations in promoting innovation for sustainable development

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Innovation for Sustainable Development



Neither the world nor the UNECE region are on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030. We need to accelerate progress by strengthening the means of implementation.

Target 17.6

- “Enhance [...] regional and international cooperation on, and access to science, technology and innovation”

Target 17.7

- “Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries [...]”

Target 9.5

- “Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors [...] encouraging innovation [...]”

Target 9.b

- “Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries [...]”

The Innovation Challenge



UNECE

Directionality

- Steer innovation efforts into areas critical for sustainable development

Opportunity & access

- Ensure that all 3 pillars of SD are pursued, ie that innovation creates econ opportunity in a sustainable way, and that innovations are accessible also in countries where they were not created

Maximize potential

- Create nurturing eco-systems where innovations can flourish potentials are fully exploited

How standards & regulations impact innovation for SD



Carrots & Sticks

- Businesses often cite a lack of demand for innovative products and services as a reason why they do not innovate (more)
- Particular issue re. Innovation for SD b/o market and coordination failures (externalities, public good issues, ...)
- Standards (& regulations) can create demand and thereby stimulate innovation (e.g. Net Zero Emission buildings) => «compliance innovations»
- Regulations can raise the cost of undesirable practices and hence stimulate innovations to avoid these costs => «circumventing innovations»

Potential Constraints

- Regulatory burden?
- Technological lock-in
- Regulatory capture

Question: How can standards and regulations and «traditional»/ «core» innovation policies best complement each other to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development?

Thank you!

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Secretary, Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs

More information is available on the UNECE website:

<https://unece.org/economic-cooperation-and-integration>

