Working with venture funds and business angels: UNECE practical online training for staff of business incubators and accelerators in the SPECA sub-region

🔗 **To participate in the training, register using this link.**

Date	Format
16 March 2023, 10:30-14:30 (Geneva)	Online

Background

Since 2020, in the context of a UN Development Account project titled "Strengthening innovation policies for SPECA countries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", **UNECE has been supporting participating countries of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia* (SPECA) to strengthen their capacities to implement innovation policy for sustainable development and enhance sub-regional cooperation**, including in the area of innovative entrepreneurship. Recent work has included a handbook on business incubators, online trainings, and a handbook on innovative high-growth enterprises in the SPECA sub-region (forthcoming).

Building on strong interest from the SPECA participating countries on the topic of business incubators, and to support implementation of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan, the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development on 20 July 2022 welcomed a proposal to set up a **SPECA Network of Business Incubators and Accelerators for Sustainable Development**. This Network is a platform for dialogue and exchange on issues, challenges and solutions, as well as best practices related to innovative entrepreneurship support through business incubators (BI) and accelerators (BA) in the SPECA sub-region. The Network aims to enable peer learning and to strengthen the capacities of BI and BA to effectively support innovative firms in the sub-region.

The first activities of the Network were:
1) A webinar on "Promoting innovative entrepreneurship through educational programs in the SPECA sub-region" on September 19, 2022;
2) An online training on "Effective operation and development of a business incubator and start-up accelerator" on September 27-29, 2022;
3) An online training on "Development of business incubators and start-up accelerators for university management" on February 21, 2023.

*Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Objective of this training

The purpose of the training is to **improve the practical skills of managers of incubators and accelerators for startups (IAS), including the administration of a startup training program in constantly changing circumstances and the conjuncture of the venture market**. The training will enable IAS managers to strengthen their ability to analyze current trends and requirements of the venture market, develop new solutions, enhance their understanding of the acceleration process, including the development of innovative startup ideas, and help them build relationships with the market, investors, and partners.

The project-based learning methodology used in the training process will help participants determine their existing ideas about the startup acceleration process and familiarize them with the principles of solving problems that ISA have been facing, using the method of practical involvement.

Participants

The training is primarily intended for **managers and employees of business incubators and accelerators located in SPECA countries**, as well as university administrators, including heads of departments and university management.

For more information, please contact Ekaterina Guznova at ekaterina.guznova@un.org.

Programme

09:15 - 10:30 (Geneva)	**Access to the session** Participants are recommended to join the meeting at least 15 minutes prior to its start.
10:30 - 10:40	**Sustainable development in the sub-region of SPECA: The role of business incubators and accelerators in the transition to a circular economy** Ms. Anastasia Pankova, International Consultant, UNECE
Trainer: Mr. Irakli Kashibadze, Innovation Policy Expert, CEO, Future Laboratory, Startup Central Eurasia	

Programme	
10:40 - 12:00	**Part I**

1. "Mind Mapping" - clarifying the current understanding of accelerator processes by IAS managers.
Participants use Google Docs/Word to provide a brief description of the 10 stages of the incubator and accelerator, as well as the main goals set by the accelerators.
2. Examples of successful accelerator programs around the world.
3. The main challenges that accelerators encounter in the process of working with startups.
4. Holding a vote to identify the three most significant issues in accelerator management processes.
Use of the chat and subsequent voting.

Work in groups (1)	Introducing participants to the initial group task: • Each participant in the group shares their experience in solving one of the three selected problems; • The group will select a team member to take notes and write down the recommendations presented; • The group will choose a representative to make a presentation of the recommendations during the general session.

Reviewing the results - teams reconvene in the main room, receive comments from the trainer on the effectiveness of their solutions, and which of them should be continued.

Work in groups (2)	Continuing the teamwork - group members brainstorm on how to improve the process of solving problems presented at the beginning of the teamwork: • The team will use brainstorming to generate 10 ideas to solve the problem; • The team will select the three most effective solutions for this problem; • The team will choose a representative to present these solutions during the general session.

Reviewing the results - receiving feedback from the trainer on the best approach for solving the identified problems for incubators and accelerators.

Programme	
12:00 - 12:20	**Coffee break**
12:20 - 14:30	**Part II**
Working with venture funds and business angels: • Why venture funds are interested in incubators and accelerators? • How to establish partnerships with venture funds to build effective collaboration?	
Work in groups (3)	A group task for all teams - identifying changes necessary for a startup to become attractive to a venture fund: • The team selects the three most impactful solutions for this issue; • The team selects a representative who will present the chosen solutions during the general session.
1. Presentation of the chosen solutions for making a startup attractive to a venture fund. 2. Discussion of the results and comments from the coach. 3. Review by participants of their own "Mind Mapping" formed at the beginning of the training, followed by process adjustment as a homework task.	
14:30	**Conclusion of the training**