

Circular Economy Innovation:

Advancing the SPECA

Network of Business Incubators and
Accelerators for Sustainable Development



**75 YEARS
OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
AND COOPERATION
IN THE REGION**

Transition to a circular economy is necessary in SPECA participating States



- **Resource extractive industries**, which form the foundation of economies in SPECA participating States, are primarily **governed by traditional non-linear business practices**.
- **Ecological deficit of 0.88**: SPECA participating States consume natural resources and use ecosystem services at a rate that exceeds the capacity of their local ecosystems to regenerate and provide those resources.
- SPECA sub-region is among the territories that are most **vulnerable to climate change**, presenting a threat to food security and the overall well-being of a large portion of the population.

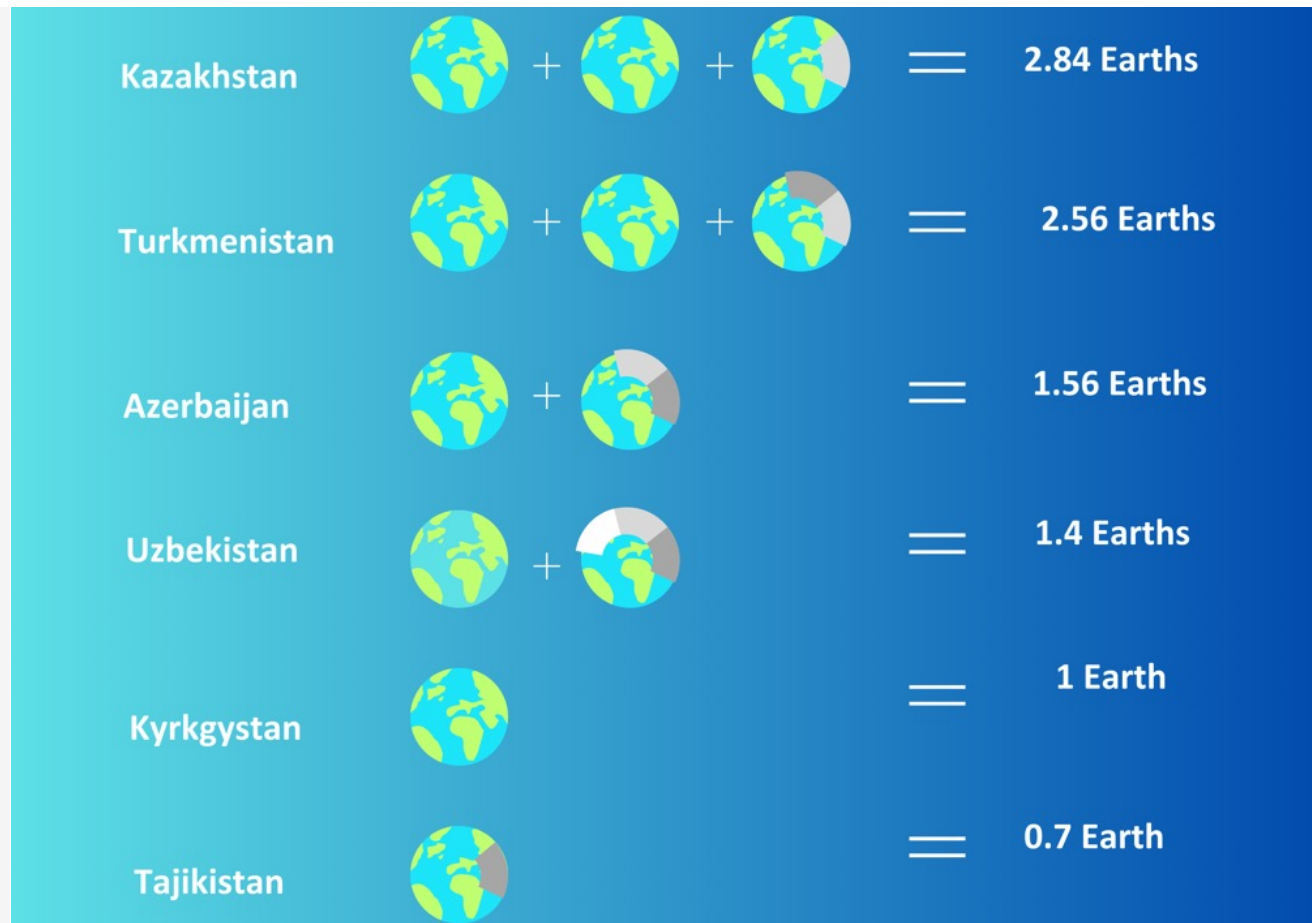
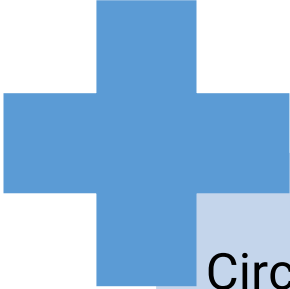



Figure 1. Ecological Footprint (number of Earths), 2022. Source: Author based on [Global Footprint Network](#).

Transition to a circular economy is necessary in SPECA participating States

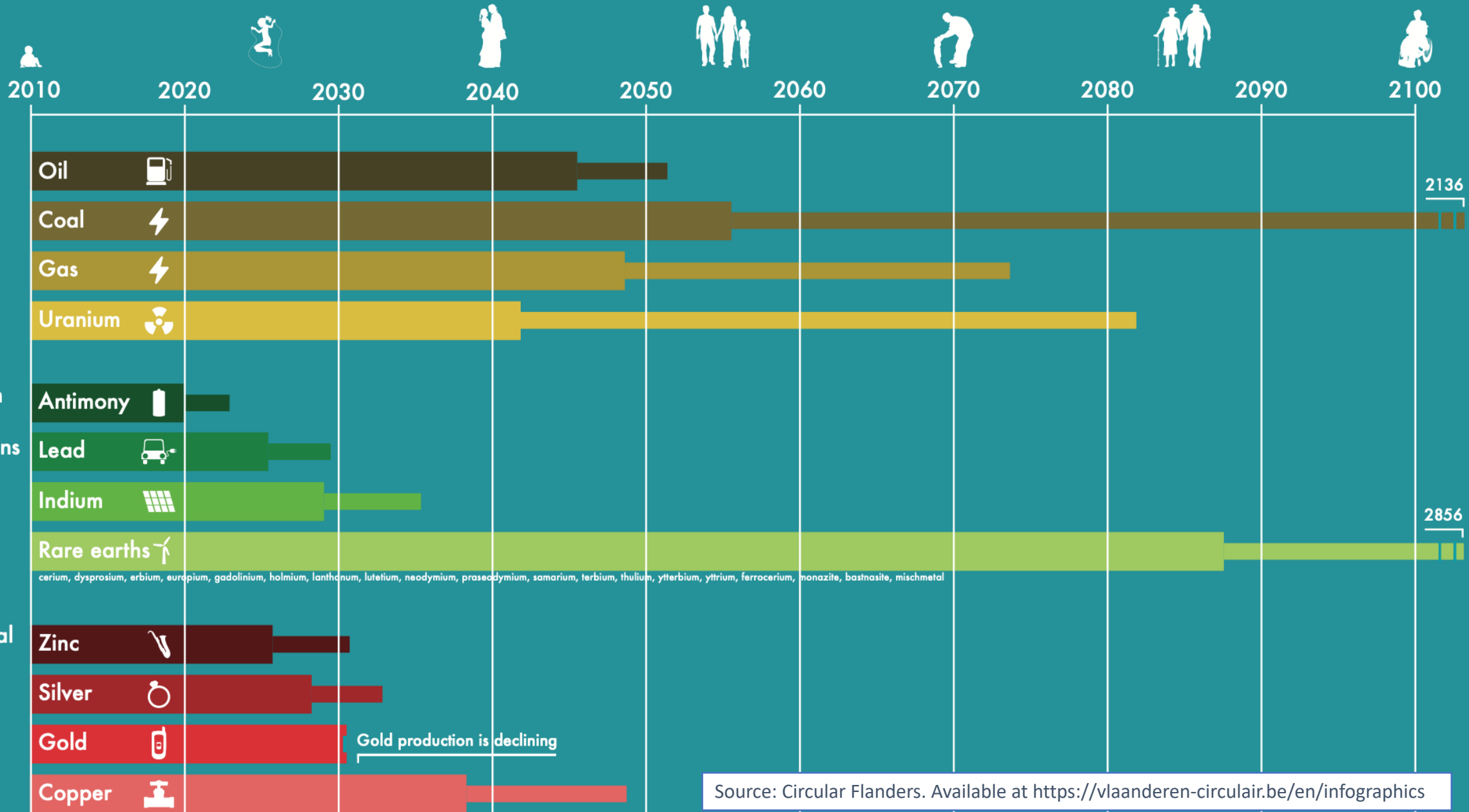


Circular economy transition reduces dependency on finite natural resources and promotes sustainable industrial development across the region.



Commitment of major oil and gas importing countries to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of the century underscore the significance of the structural transformation in the SPECA sub-region, with the circular economy at its core.

Born in 2010: How much is left for me?



Source: Circular Flanders. Available at <https://vlaanderen-circulair.be/en/infographics>

Circular economy*:

- "One of the current sustainable economic models,
- in which products and materials are designed in such a way that they can be reused, remanufactured, recycled, or recovered and thus maintained in the economy for as long as possible, along with the resources of which they are made, and
- the generation of waste, especially hazardous waste, is avoided or minimized, and
- greenhouse gas emissions are prevented or reduced."

* United Nations Environmental Assembly

Innovative approaches to regulation for the provision of incentives and elimination of barriers

Enabling frameworks and incentives for private innovation

Innovative solutions that transform industries

Material innovation
Business model innovation
Upstream innovation
Facilitating technology innovation
...

Source: Author based on the [Key Entry Points of the Circular Economy in State Policy for Enabling Innovative High-Growth Enterprises in the SPECA Sub-Region \(UNECE, 2023\)](#).

LINEAR ECONOMY



RECYCLING ECONOMY



CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Innovation for the circular economy

is possible in SPECA participating States



MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION,
SCIENCE AND INNOVATIONS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

INNO
week

INNOVATION FOR THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY: BRIDGING START-UPS & CORPORATIONS

B2B CONFERENCE



DATE

18 October, 2023



TIME

09:00 - 12:00 (Tashkent time)



UZBEKISTAN

7, UNIVERSITY STREET, ALMAZAR
DISTRICT, TASHKENT CITY

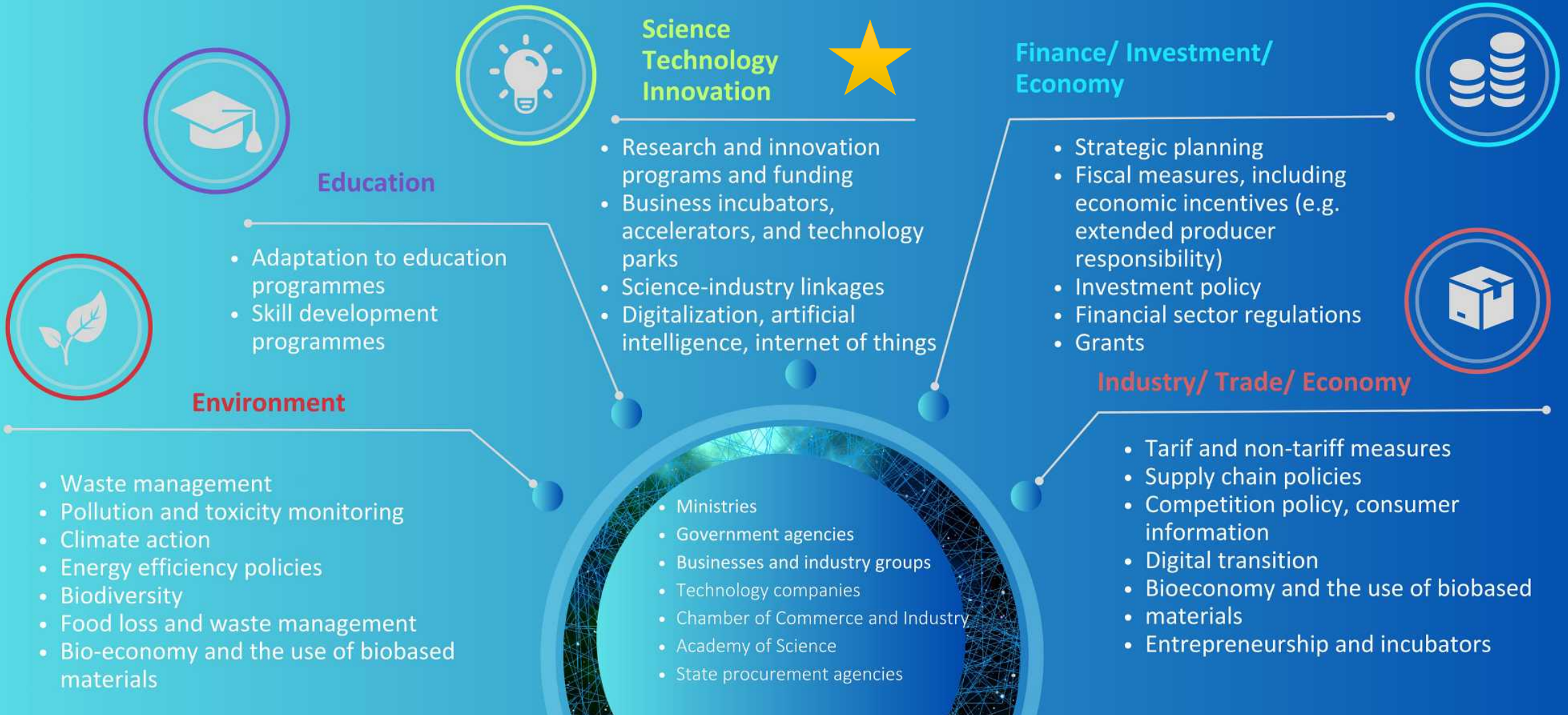
SCAN ME





Why me?

Innovation policy in the circular economy ecosystem



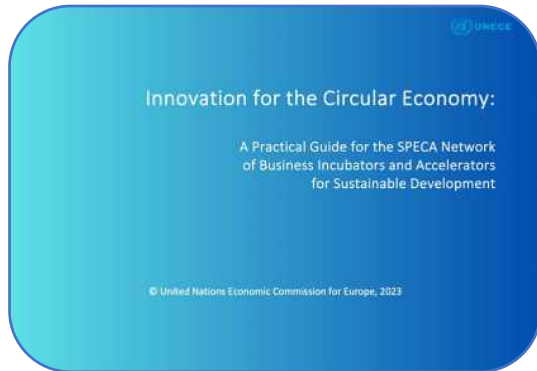
Theory of change



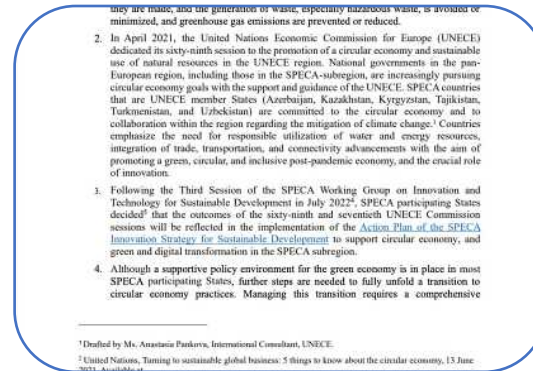
SPECA Network of Business Incubators and Accelerators for Sustainable Development (NBIASD):

- Accelerates the transition to a circular economy in the SPECA sub-region by **inspiring new circular ventures and start-ups**.
- It supports companies in **transformative innovation of their business** models towards the circular economy, which is designed to diminish waste and mitigate the depletion of natural resources.

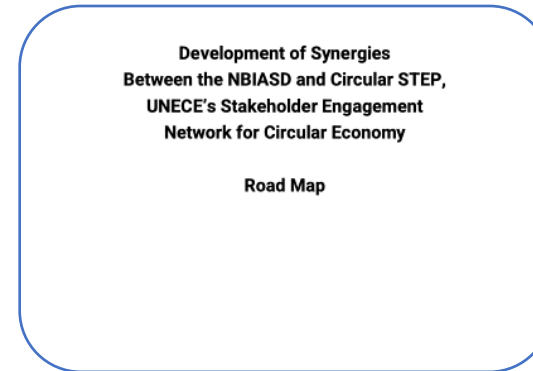
In 2023 UNECE developed knowledge materials and recommendations for NBIASD in the circular economy



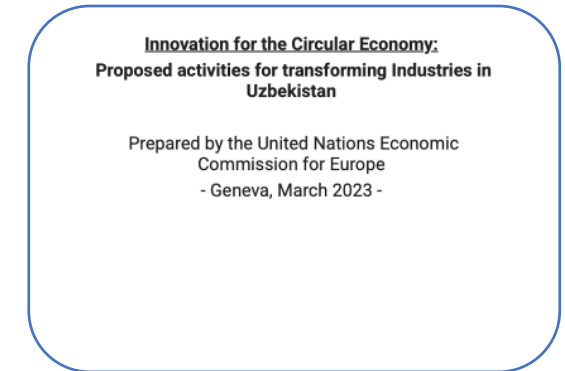
A Practical Guide for NBIASD: Innovation for the Circular Economy



Key Entry Points of the Circular Economy in State Policy for Enabling Innovative High-Growth Enterprises in the SPECA Sub-Region



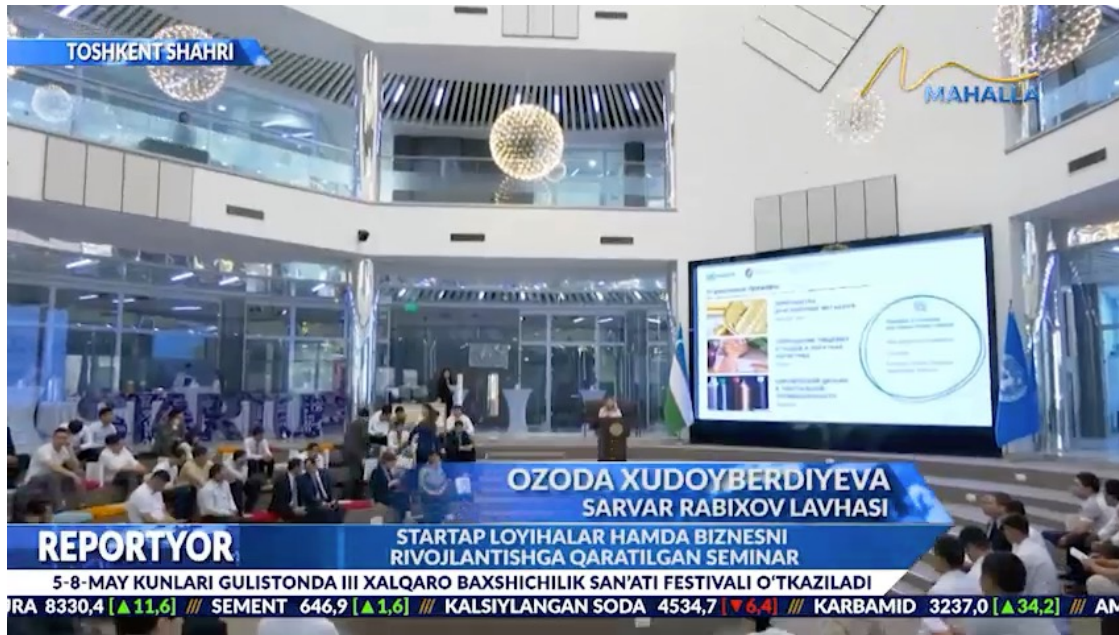
Road Map on Development of Synergies Between NBIASD and Circular STEP, UNECE's Stakeholder Engagement Network for the Circular Economy



Activities for Transforming Industries in Uzbekistan: Innovation for the Circular Economy

Available at: [Fourth Session of the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development and Subregional workshop \(2023\).](#)

In 2023 UNECE raised awareness among NBIASD members and partners



3 APRIL 2023
11.00 - 12.00 CEST,
ONLINE

FOSTERING CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS THROUGH INNOVATION

 Raphaël Masvigner, Co-Founder, Circul'R	 Irakli Kashibadze, CEO, Future Laboratory and Startup Central Eurasia Coordinator
 Ljupka Mitrinovska, Co-founder and Global Program Director, Accelerate2030	 Zhongyun Fan, Professor of Metallurgy and Founder and Director, BCAST at Brunel University
 Elisabeth Türk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE	 Aisuluu Mustapakulova, Head of the Innovation and Strategic Development Department, State Service of Intellectual Property and Innovation, Kyrgyz Republic

Moderator

Workshop “**Innovation for the Circular Economy**” for Chief Innovation Officers in Uzbekistan (May 2, 2023, Tashkent). [Event page.](#)

Policy dialogue “**Fostering Circular Solutions through Innovation**” (April 3, 2023, online). [Event page.](#)

B2B conference “**Innovation for the Circular Economy: Bridging start-ups and Corporations**” (October 18, 2023, Tashkent). [Event page.](#)

Circularity happens across value chains, sectors, and ecosystems. **Collaboration between start-ups and big companies** can speed up the shift towards a circular economy and accelerate the innovation process.

Governments should accelerate start-ups through **programs and partnerships with leading international research institutions and universities** to create profitable business models in the circular economy.

A consistent approach and a **whole-systems perspective** are crucial for circular technological and business solutions to reach scale, including through an active consultation process between private and public sectors.

Governments should **integrate the circular economy more deeply into the educational process**, especially in university-based business incubators and accelerators. **Universities and industries should work closely together** to transform processes and use more circular economy elements.

While it may take years for **new research and technology** to reach the business level, they will **have a huge impact on the circular transition**.

Commercialization of innovative ideas for the circular economy is a challenge in the UNECE region. The **promotion of collaboration between scientists and entrepreneurs** is required.

There is currently a **lack of focus on long-term scenarios in R&D for the circular economy**, which risks hindering progress in the future.

Source: Author based on discussions during the UNECE policy dialogue [Fostering Circular Solutions Through Innovation \(2023\)](#).



Thank you!

Anastasia Pankova
International Consultant

UNECE

Date 18-19 | October | 2023, Tashkent

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