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Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Programme of Work for 2025, Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2024–2025, and Recommendations on key components of the Programme of Work for 2026

Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2024-2025

Note by the secretariat¹

I. Introduction

1. This note is based on the programme of work of the Committee for 2024 (ECE/CECI/2023/5). It provides additional information on activities planned and proposed for the period between the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Committee. To facilitate discussion, this document presents activities grouped by the main thematic areas covered by the Committee, that is, Innovation and Competitiveness, and Public-Private Partnerships.

2. The plans and proposals reflect demand expressed by member States as well as the resources available to the secretariat at the time of writing. Delegates are invited to bring additional proposals and requests to the session.

II. Innovation and Competitiveness Policies

3. The work on innovation and competitiveness focuses on promoting a policy environment supportive of innovative development and knowledge-based competitiveness in support of the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Activities include policy dialogue, policy recommendations and good practices, analytical reviews, and capacity building, including workshops and seminars at national and subregional levels.

International policy dialogue and development of good policy practice

4. The sixteenth session of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies will be held in Geneva on 27 and 28 October 2024. As part of the session, an international policy conference will provide an opportunity for experts from across the ECE region to exchange experiences on innovation policy. The Bureau of the Team will decide on the specific topic in consultation with the Team members. A policy document synthesizing international good practice on the topic will be submitted to the eighteenth session of the Committee for adoption.

¹ This document has not been formally edited.

5. The fifth session of the Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development (WG on ITSD) of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) will be organized together with UNESCAP on 27 June 2024 in Bishkek. A subregional workshop on Digital Public Services for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in North and Central Asia will be organized on 26 June 2024, back-to-back with the session of the SPECA WG on ITSD.

6. The sixth session of the SPECA WG on ITSD will be organized in 2025 together with UNESCAP and held back-to-back with a subregional policy conference for the SPECA-participating States.

National and subregional policy analyses and recommendations

Innovation for Sustainable Development Review (I4SDRs)

7. The Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Ukraine will be completed. Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have requested ECE to carry out I4SDRs. These requests may be met subject to available resources.

Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO)

8. Work may begin in 2025 on an IPO for Central Asia, with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as beneficiaries, subject to available funding.

Capacity building

9. Regular policy dialogue meetings of the network of Innovation Policy Outlook national focal points will continue to be organized to exchange good policy practices and build government capacity to implement policy recommendations from the Outlook.

10. In follow-up to the national Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Armenia, ECE is working together with the Government of Armenia on potential capacity building activities to help implement the recommendations of the Review. In March 2024, ECE co-organised a workshop on the “Crafting Armenia’s High-Tech Industry Vision” together with the Ministry of High-Tech Industry of Armenia, UNIDO and USAID in Yerevan. Following the outcomes of the workshop, ECE staff and experts will support Armenia in developing the next strategic priorities for the country in STI. The aim is for the outcomes of the I4SDR and the workshop to feed into national strategic documents of the Armenian Government to be developed in the next two years.

11. Further capacity building activities to support implementation of recommendations from existing policy analyses at the national level may be undertaken upon request and subject to available resources.

12. Under the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development, ECE will continue to implement subregional capacity building activities, subject to demand and the availability of extrabudgetary resources. Based on strong interest from the SPECA-participating States, study tours, policy dialogues and trainings will continue to be organized under the SPECA Network of Business Incubators and Accelerators for Sustainable Development, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

13. ECE will continue contributing to the capacity building workstream of the UN Inter-agency Task Team on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Development as appropriate, subject to available resources.

14. Work on developing international good practice on transformative innovation policy and on building the capacity of national innovation agencies on this topic will continue under the auspices of the ECE Transformative Innovation Network (ETIN).

III. Public-Private Partnerships

15. The focus of the work on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) is supporting ECE member States' use of PPPs for the SDGs. In this context, work will address a range of issues relevant to the cross-cutting Commission themes. These include sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction, corruption in PPPs, pandemic preparedness and response, food

security, women's empowerment, and accelerating achievement of the SDGs in the ECE region. The ECE Guiding Principles on PPPs for the SDGs provide the normative basis for the work on PPPs.

International policy dialogue

16. The eighth session of the Working Party on PPPs will be held in Geneva on 25-26 November 2024.

17. The ninth edition of the International PPP Forum will be organised by ECE in May 2025.²

Standards, recommendations, guidelines, and best practices

18. The work on practical guides on green and sustainable PPP procurement; digital transformation in PPPs for sustainable development; and sustainable finance, launched in early 2023, will be finalised in 2024.

19. The work on standards and practical guides on gender equality and women empowerment; stakeholder engagement; off-grid rural electrification renewable energy PPP solutions;³ small-scale PPPs;⁴ and climate resilient infrastructure initiated in 2024, will continue based on existing resources.

20. The work on online training learning material for policy makers from ECE PPP policy documents and tools (the PPP and Infrastructure Evaluation and Rating System (PIERS): An Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs, in particular), launched in 2024, will continue based on existing resources.

21. The initiation of work on new topics for future standards and practical guides will be prioritised by the Working Party at its next session, on the recommendation of its Bureau.⁵

Capacity building

22. Capacity building projects⁶ to promote effective partnerships between the public and the private sectors through PPPs for the SDGs will continue to be implemented in 2024 and 2025 subject to available extra-budgetary resources.

23. Support will be provided by the secretariat to requesting Governments in self-assessing PPP and infrastructure projects using the PIERS methodology, including to quantify and monitor the wider environmental and socioeconomic value of these projects.⁷

24. The campaign to reach 500 PPPs for the SDGs case studies will continue to be promoted, and additional case studies will be collected and presented at the ninth International PPP Forum in 2025.

² The dates of the Forum will be fixed with UNOG Conference Services. A competition for the best PPP infrastructure projects that contribute to digital and green transformations in support of sustainable development will be organised by the secretariat at the Forum, and a letter of recognition will be given to the winners. The competition will contribute to expanding the database of case studies and to promote the use of the PIERS methodology.

³ The standard is being developed with input from the ECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, serviced by the Sustainable Energy Division.

⁴ At its meeting on 1 March 2024, the Bureau of the Working Party on PPPs agreed that the practical guide is developed as a joint ECE-WAPPP document to be submitted to the Working Party on PPPs at its next session.

⁵ The topics for new policy documents approved by the Working Party on PPPs are included in Annex II of document [ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2023/2](#).

⁶ Projects funded by the UN Development Account and/or from extrabudgetary resources approved by the ECE Executive Committee.

⁷ The secretariat will prepare terms of reference for the voluntary post evaluation of projects using PIERS to quantify and monitor the wider benefits of PPPs and infrastructure projects.