



**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME
FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA (SPECA)**

**Tenth Session of the SPECA Working Group
on Knowledge-based Development**

(Baku, Azerbaijan, 5 July 2018)

REPORT

The tenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (WG on KBD) was jointly organized by ESCAP and UNECE at the invitation of the Government of Azerbaijan in Baku on 5 July 2018. In conjunction with the session, ESCAP and UNECE organized a Regional Workshop on “Innovation Strategy, Technology Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs” in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of Azerbaijan in Baku on 4-5 July 2018.

Delegations from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan participated in the session along with representatives of the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats. Representatives from other United Nations member States, international and regional organizations, as well as the business and academic community also participated in the Regional Workshop and the tenth session of the WG on KBD. The List of participants of the tenth session of the SPECA WG on KBD and the Regional Workshop is attached (Annex V).

Opening of the session

Mr. Elmir Velizade, Deputy Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of Azerbaijan, welcomed session participants. Mr. Velizade thanked ESCAP and UNECE for organizing the session, as well as the experts presenting during the Regional Workshop “Innovation Strategy, Technology Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs”. He highlighted that regional cooperation on innovation will be essential to achieve the SDGs, and that countries should seek new opportunities to expand joint activities in these areas. Mr. Velizade also highlighted that there is a growing need for knowledge-based development strategies in SPECA countries, for which there has been valuable support to national policy initiatives from a range of organizations in the UN system.

Mr. Hirohito Toda, Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, welcomed the delegates of SPECA countries and experts at the tenth

session. He thanked the Government of Azerbaijan for their continued support of knowledge-based development, including through the organization of these events. He also expressed his appreciation to the Deputy Minister, Mr. Elmir Velizade for making time in his busy schedule for the SPECA events in Baku, which is testament to the importance of the topic. Mr. Toda also thanked UNECE, as the longstanding partner to ESCAP, for their substantive support for SPECA. He highlighted in particular the emphasis placed in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind. He encouraged delegates to participate in the second session of the ESCAP Committee on ICT and Science, Technology and Innovation (Committee on ICTSTI) in Bangkok on 29-31 August 2018.

Mr. Christopher Athey, UNECE Secretary to the WG on KBD and Economic Affairs Officer in the UNECE Innovative Policies Development Section, welcomed participants to the tenth session and expressed his gratitude to the Deputy Minister for chairing this session of the SPECA WG on KBD and the Government of Azerbaijan for their hospitality in hosting the tenth session of the SPECA WG on KBD and the Regional Workshop. He thanked delegates and experts for their active participation and discussion during the Regional Workshop, and ESCAP for their valuable cooperation and partnership in delivering SPECA activities.

Election of officers and adoption of the agenda

The WG elected Mr. Elmir Velizade, Deputy Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of Azerbaijan, as Chairperson of the tenth session of the WG on KBD.

The WG on KBD adopted the agenda for its tenth session.

Outcomes of the Regional Workshop on “Innovation Strategy, Technology Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs”

The ESCAP and UNECE secretariats provided a summary of outcomes of the Regional Workshop on “Innovation Strategy, Technology Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs” on 4-5 July 2018, including discussion of the draft outline of an innovation strategy to promote sustainable development in the SPECA region, and innovative technology applications for the SDGs.

The Chairperson highlighted the need for an innovation strategy to promote sustainable development in the SPECA region to capitalize on opportunities for cooperation between SPECA countries. He emphasised the importance of identifying concrete joint projects and initiatives of common interest to promote knowledge-based development, and the continued value of support from the international donor community.

A summary of the Regional Workshop is included in Annex II.

Review of the activities of the WG on KBD since its last session

Mr. Athey and Mr. Tae Hyung Kim of the ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD) of the secretariat of ESCAP reported on activities carried out by UNECE and ESCAP since the ninth session of the SPECA WG on KBD in Bishkek on 23 June 2017. The progress report on the activities of the WG on KBD since the ninth session can be found at Annex III.

Delegates expressed their satisfaction with progress and achievements in implementation of the Programme of Work for 2018-2019.

Review of the updated Programme of Work of the WG on KBD for 2018-2019

Mr. Athey of UNECE and Mr. Kim of ESCAP presented the updated Programme of Work of the WG on KBD for 2018-2019 that includes new activities initiated since the ninth session of the WG on KBD.

The WG adopted the updated Programme of Work (Annex IV) and agreed that the details of the envisaged activities could be further elaborated in consultation with the host countries of these future activities.

Date and venue of the next session of the WG on KBD and other business

The WG agreed to hold its next session in 2019 and that the exact date and venue of the tenth session of the WG would be decided through consultations with the SPECA countries.

Adoption of decisions

The proposed draft decisions were adopted by the delegations of SPECA countries in attendance. The decisions of the tenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development are attached to this report (Annex I).

Closing of the session

The Chairperson of the session thanked the ESCAP and UNECE secretariats for their support to the organization of these important events. He thanked delegates and experts for their active participation in the work of the tenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development and the Regional Workshop on "Innovation Strategy, Technology Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs".

Delegates thanked the Government of Azerbaijan for its warm hospitality and the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats for the excellent organization of the SPECA events in Baku. They highlighted the importance of the work of the WG on KBD to national policymakers.

ANNEX I

DECISIONS OF THE TENTH SESSION OF THE SPECA WG ON KBD

1. The Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (WG on KBD) noted with satisfaction the discussions and outcomes of the Regional Workshop “Innovation strategy, technology applications and infrastructure for the SDGs”, a summary of which is included at Annex II.
2. The WG took note of the progress made and challenges faced by SPECA countries in integrating innovation policies and strategies into their sustainable development strategies, and in promoting innovative technology applications for sustainable development. The WG noted the recommendations by delegates of the SPECA countries and regional experts.
3. The WG reviewed and appreciated the value of the programme of work and activities of the SPECA WG on KBD since its ninth session. Delegates noted with satisfaction the activities carried out by the United Nations ESCAP and ECE secretariats within the framework of the WG.
4. The WG recognized the activities and outputs of the ESCAP secretariat on Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, which aims to promote regional connectivity and integration towards knowledge economy in the SPECA region. The WG also recognized the ESCAP activities and outputs on the Asia Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018-2030), which aims to develop the regional plan to support the implementation of SDGs. The WG also recognized other activities and outputs by ESCAP to promote statistical geospatial data management in assessing, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of disaster-related SDGs.
5. The WG welcomed the draft outline of an innovation strategy to promote sustainable development in the SPECA region. The WG noted the active and productive discussion of the draft outline of the Strategy that took place during the regional workshop, and requested the ESCAP and UNECE secretariats reflect these discussions in a draft outline of a Strategy to be submitted to the next session of the SPECA Governing Council for its consideration, which will be held in Almaty, 21 September 2018.
6. The WG emphasized that the full elaboration and implementation of such an innovation strategy would require significant political commitment from SPECA countries, including financial and human resources. Support from international donors may be one source of resources to support such an innovation strategy.

7. Appropriate governance arrangements should be provided for the innovation strategy within the SPECA framework. The WG recommended the nomination of national focal points for the innovation strategy.
8. The WG took note of the recommendations of the SPECA Expert group meeting, which took place on 11-12 June 2018 in Almaty, and exchanged views on where regional coordination is needed in relationship to the implementation of the SDGs in their areas. Current activities under the SPECA WG on KBD requiring regional coordination include those outlined in the draft outline of an innovation strategy to promote sustainable development in the SPECA region.
9. The WG agreed to review its Terms of Reference on the occasion of its eleventh session to reflect newly arising SPECA priorities under the SDGs.
10. The WG took note of the presentations on the Programme of Work of the SPECA WG on KBD for 2018-2019 by the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats. The WG requested that the main points of the discussion be reflected in the content and policy recommendations of the report.
11. The WG on KBD adopted its updated Programme of Work for 2018-2019.
12. The WG underlined the importance of partnerships with all relevant stakeholders at the national and international levels. In this regard, the WG recommended that delegates actively involve relevant stakeholders in the WG activities.
13. The WG agreed to hold its eleventh session in 2019 and that the exact date and venue will be decided through consultations with the SPECA countries.
14. The WG expressed its sincere gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan for the excellent organization of the events and the hospitality offered to participants.
15. The WG expressed its appreciation to the secretariats of UNECE and ESCAP for their efforts in organizing these events, and their active work to support the activities of the WG on KBD.

ANNEX II

Summary of the Regional Workshop on “Innovation Strategy, Technology Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs” (Baku, Azerbaijan, 4-5 July 2018)

The delegates and experts welcomed the initiative of the UNECE secretariat to prepare a draft outline of a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development in response to the decisions of the twelfth session of the SPECA Governing Council (Dushanbe, 6 December 2017) during session 3 Innovation policies for sustainable development of the regional workshop on “Innovation Strategy, Technology Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs”. Participants shared their countries’ experiences on innovation and reported recent developments on how innovation could contribute to sustainable development. The participants commended the content of the draft outline of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development as submitted by the ECE secretariat and made proposals for enriching the document with some complementary initiatives and activities.

In particular, experts and policymakers from the SPECA countries highlighted the need for a SPECA Innovation Strategy to focus on areas where there is scope to develop concrete cooperation projects, particularly at an early stage for “quick wins”. These can be based upon existing examples of successful cooperation between one or more countries in the region, as well as existing and previous examples of international cooperation initiatives within other frameworks.

Participants agreed that the draft strategy is not a substitute for national sustainable development programmes, but should complement them with regional initiatives where cooperation would provide additional benefits. The Governments of the SPECA countries will be the main actors in this process, with a key role for national focal points.

Participants highlighted the importance of “mission oriented” innovation and research policies that seek to respond to key societal challenges. Such a focus can play an important role in ensuring policymakers and the general public understand the crucial role of innovation in supporting sustainable development. There is a need to initiate and develop innovation actor networks and platforms, establishing close linkages among stakeholders. Instruments and mechanisms for risk sharing, monitoring, evaluation and learning all have an important role to play. Possible initiatives could include a sub-regional innovation observatory or innovation policy index. Pursuing the SDGs must become not only good practice, but also good business, for both private enterprises and public research organisations (PROs). To achieve this, there is a crucial need for policymakers to provide favourable framework conditions (incentives, programmes) for PROs and companies.

During session 4 and 5, delegates presented recent progress and challenges in promoting knowledge-based development in SPECA countries. The delegates

highlighted the importance of innovative technology applications in supporting the implementation of knowledge-based development and the SDGs, aligned with national innovation strategies and discussed how the promotion of innovative technology can be harnessed to support the implementation of sustainable development agendas.

Workshop participants noted great progress and achievements of the State Automated Information System, such as the emergency call system (ECAD), which started in 2016, for accidents and disasters in Kazakhstan, which is similar to the 911 emergency operation system in the USA. The delegate from Kazakhstan also shared good cases of modern space technology applications in Kazakhstan for navigation, traffic management, management of golden hours after accidents and disaster risk management.

The delegate from Kyrgyzstan reported participants that the Government of Kyrgyzstan has made good progress in building national unified early warning systems, including the establishment of the 112-emergency calling system, similar to ECAD in Kazakhstan. The Web Portal and database have also played key roles in sharing data and information, resulting in the faster management and operation of emergency situations, including drought and earthquakes. New technologies and software such as mobile phone, drone-based applications, and ArcGIS for monitoring and forecasting emergency situations have also been used.

The delegate from Tajikistan reported to delegates of SPECA countries that the Government of Tajikistan has endorsed the Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan to 2030 and the Mid-term Development Programme of Tajikistan for 2016-2030, which aims to set forth robust regulatory frameworks to support human capital development, ensure macroeconomic stability, increase industrial production, and increase export of national products. Since 2016, the Government of Tajikistan has also promoted innovative technology applications to best fit the rapidly changing external market environment and improve innovation in diverse sectors, such as, increased exports and electricity supply, a transport route system connecting Europe and Asia, water supply systems, infrastructure, security, soil management, climate conditions, resilient vegetables, and construction materials.

The delegate of Uzbekistan confirmed the commitment of the Government of Uzbekistan to the implementation and the roadmap to achieve the SDGs through the establishment of the Development Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021, which is an all-encompassing regulatory framework. The delegate also emphasized the important roles of innovative technology development to support the implementation of the SDGs, including space technology applications and data for monitoring and supporting disaster risk reduction, impacts on agriculture and environmental issues such as water pollution, chemical and biological pollution, ecosystem degradation, with examples of disasters in the Aral Sea. The delegate also informed the participants that the Government of Uzbekistan plans to revitalize a space agency and community to address disaster impact and protect people and the environment, through active use of space technology applications for geo positioning,

monitoring and tracking, early warning systems, remote sensing, climate change, land erosion, human diseases, and river ecosystems.

The delegates and experts recognized good practices in innovative technology applications and institution building in agriculture, ICT development and disaster risk reduction in the Asia Pacific region, which were presented by regional experts. An expert from Singapore shared good cases of technology applications for improving food security. The global discussion on the role of science and technological innovations in ensuring food security has increased with recognition of the need to feed nine billion people by 2050. Twelve transformative technologies have been identified with potential to be globally scalable and deliver sustainable and efficient food systems, nutrition and health, and benefit stakeholders across food systems.

An expert from Korea presented the tentative outputs from a study on developing statistical geospatial indices to assess and prepare disaster risks such as drought, floods, sand and dust storms, and air pollution, in particular focusing on the Central Asia region. Other expert from Korea briefed good applications of remote sensing technology in diverse SDG sectors such as water resource management, agriculture, transportation and disaster risk reduction.

An expert from the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan & United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Asia and the Pacific (UN GGIM-AP) made an introductory briefing on the key roles of UN GGIM-AP. He shared the latest trends in the field of surveying and mapping, and shared recent activities including Geospatial Infrastructure as a promoter of innovation on Geospatial Information Technology and Applications, which were implemented by the Government of Japan. The expert also briefed participants on several concrete examples such as probabilistic seismic hazard maps and maps of real-time-forecasts of river flux by the governmental agencies of Japan.

During session 6, the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats briefed delegates on the recommendations of a SPECA Expert group meeting, which was held in Almaty, 11-12 June 2018, in particular the recommendation that the Thematic Working Groups on Knowledge-based Development (WG on KBD), Statistics, and Gender and Economy, should formulate at their next sessions, with support from UNECE and ESCAP, where regional coordination is needed in relationship to the implementation of the SDGs in their areas of activities.

Delegates of SPECA countries emphasised the value and usefulness of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development since its establishment and supported the continuation of its activities. Delegates agreed that the current framework of the SPECA WG on KBD may need to strengthen regional coordination as outlined in the draft Innovation Strategy through nominations of national focal points, which would play a key role in promoting regional coordination and cooperation. There was consensus that the 11th session of the WG on KBD would be a suitable occasion to update the Terms of reference (TOR) of the WG on KBD to reflect

newly arising needs for policy coordination, as well as the requirements to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA countries.

ANNEX III

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECA WG ON KBD

This report contains activities organized by the ESCAP and UNECE secretariats either within the framework of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (WG on KBD), or addressing topics within its thematic areas that were held since the ninth session of the SPECA WG on KBD in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 23 July 2017. These activities were in line with the Programme of Work of the WG for 2018-2019, which was adopted at the ninth session. ESCAP and UNECE secretariats carried out the following activities for the SPECA countries from July 2017 to June 2018:

Implementation of the UNECE “Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews”

- Within the framework of this project, *Innovation Performance Reviews of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and other CIS countries* have been completed. Reports are available in English and Russian. The Review process and structure has been updated to reflect the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the reviews becoming Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews.
- Within the framework of the preparation of the *Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Kyrgyzstan*, the peer review of policy recommendations took place during the *International Conference “Making innovation work for the SDGs”* in Bishkek on 22-23 June 2017, with the findings and policy recommendations discussed at the tenth session of the UNECE Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies in Geneva on 19-20 October 2017. The UNECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-private Partnerships at its twelfth session on 26-28 March 2018 welcomed the findings and policy recommendations and invited the Team of Specialists to support the Government of Kyrgyzstan in the implementation of the policy recommendations, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. The Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Kyrgyzstan is currently being edited for release as an official UN publication.

Implementation of joint ECE-ESCAP capacity building activities in SPECA countries

- Upon request from the Government of Kazakhstan, a *sub-regional Workshop on Strengthening Technology Transfer in Countries in Central Asia* was carried out jointly by ECE and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) of ESCAP in Astana on 30-31 May 2018, with the support of the National Agency for Technological Development (NATD) of Kazakhstan. A total of 178 participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and over 150 organizations benefited from this activity.

Implementation of ESCAP activities in support to the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) initiative

- Based on the feedback and discussions at the *Regional Workshop on Resilient ICT Connectivity for the Knowledge Economy, SDGs and the WSIS Goals*, 20-22 September, 2016 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, ESCAP finalized a study titled *Building a Resilient Digital Economy: Fostering SMEs in Central Asia*¹ which discussed natural disasters that affect SPECA countries, with particular emphasis on their effects on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and how resilient ICTs (e-resilience) can promote inclusive and sustainable digital economy for the achievement of the SDGs. ESCAP's Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, which aims to promote seamless regional broadband connectivity across the Asia-Pacific region, was highlighted as a way forward.
- ESCAP carried out a study titled *The Belt and Road Initiative and the Role of ESCAP*,² which examined China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including ICTs as a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The study examined the existing fiber-optic corridors and their capacity, and identified missing links in the cross-border fiber-optic routes in the SPECA countries.
- ESCAP delivered technical on presentation on the preliminary findings of its ICT studies ("Building a Resilient Digital Economy: Fostering SMEs in Central Asia in SPECA countries" & "The Belt and Road Initiative and the Role of ESCAP") during a subregional workshop titled, "Enhancing regional integration of landlocked developing countries in North and Central Asia through

¹ Available from <http://www.unescap.org/resources/building-resilient-digital-economy-fostering-smes-central-asia>

² Available from <http://www.unescap.org/resources/study-ict-connectivity-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-enhancing-collaboration-china-central>

infrastructure connectivity”, 6–7 September 2017, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan. As a result, SPECA countries enhanced their awareness and interest on ESCAP’s effort towards enhancing broadband connectivity in the sub-region, through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative. In addition, ESCAP held informal consultations with potential subregional partners in the implementation of the AP-IS initiative for SPECA countries.

- ESCAP delivered a presentation on the preliminary findings of its ICT studies (“Building a Resilient Digital Economy: Fostering SMEs in Central Asia in SPECA countries” & “The Belt and Road Initiative and the Role of ESCAP”) during the “5th Regional Internet Government Forum”, Baku, Azerbaijan, 7 December 2017. As a result, participants enhanced their knowledge and awareness on ESCAP’s effort towards enhancing broadband connectivity in the subregion, through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative.
- In preparation for the High-Level Dialogue on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration (RECI) for Enhancing Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP carried out a subregional study of *North and Central Asia as a Transit Hub: Potential, Challenges and the Way Forward*; and a regional study, *Enhancing Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific*, which called for enhancing regional ICT connectivity through RECI, which could offer enormous potential in generating trade, growth and employment, improving social outcomes and managing environmental risks and shared vulnerabilities.

Statistical Geospatial Indicators for Monitoring the Implementation of the SDGs

- ESCAP supported SPECA countries through organization of two expert group meetings (EGM) in Bangkok on 10 October 2017 and in Almaty, Kazakhstan from 31 January to 1 February 2018. The key objectives of the meetings are to discuss the conceptual framework of statistical geospatial indicators, and relevant existing models and methodologies on indicators, as analytical tools, for the SPECA countries to monitor and report the progress of the implementation of disaster-related SDGs. Draft framework and indicators are expected to support policymakers and technical officials of the SPECA countries to prepare more effective policies and actions in support of reducing disaster risks, preventing or mitigating human suffering and economic and environmental damages. The indicators also contribute to statistical accuracy of the already established SDG indicators, the ESCAP Regional Roadmap for the SDGs and the UN global agendas such as the UN Global Statistical Geospatial Framework.

Representatives of the SPECA countries participated in the events:

- ESCAP-KOICA Fellowship Programme 2017: Capacity-building on spatial data and technologies for urban planning and disaster management for Central Asia” in the Republic of Korea from 28 August to 8 September 2017.
- First session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) Steering Committee”, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1-2 November 2017.
- Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Group Meeting, 12 December 2017 and Joint Session of Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Group Meeting and Seventh Meeting of the Working Group on the Asian Highway Network”, 13 December 2017, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Tenth session of the UNECE Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies and its Substantive segment “Towards the Circular Economy - Innovation Policies for Sustainable Production and Consumption”, Geneva, Switzerland, 19 - 20 October 2017.
- First session of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships, Geneva, Switzerland, 21 - 22 November 2017.
- Expert group meeting on development of statistical geospatial indicators for monitoring the SDGs, 31 January - 1 February 2018, Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- Twelfth session of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships with its high-level substantive segment on “Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Consumption and Production”, Geneva, Switzerland, 26 - 28 March 2018.
- UNECE International Forum on people-first PPPs for the Sustainable Development Goals, Geneva, Switzerland, 7-9 May 2018.

ANNEX IV

PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE SPECA WG ON KBD FOR 2018-2019

The activities to be carried out by the Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (WG on KBD) are demand-driven, focused on a limited number of priority topics and are subject to available resources.

ENVISAGED ACTIVITIES (July 2018 - December 2019)

1. Capacity-building on policy options and practical instruments to promote knowledge-based development

Objectives:

To strengthen the national capacity of the SPECA countries to advance knowledge-based development by developing relevant substantive skills, increasing the organizational capacity of the institutions involved, promoting regional cooperation and fostering investment in modern infrastructure.

Rationale:

The project is in line with the objectives of the WG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Implementation is subject to the availability of UNECE extrabudgetary funds.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Organization of a regional/subregional capacity-building event on knowledge-based development, possibly in conjunction with the annual session of the WG on KBD (tentatively envisaged for 2019);
- (ii) Participation of experts from SPECA countries in UNECE policy-oriented meetings and capacity-building events on promoting knowledge-based development for policymakers and practitioners; and
- (iii) Policy advisory services and other events promoting knowledge-based development at the request of the Governments of SPECA countries.

2. Implementation of the UNECE project on Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews of selected countries

Objectives:

To increase the role of innovation in promoting further economic development of the SPECA countries.

Rationale:

The project is in line with the objectives of the WG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Implementation is subject to the availability of UNECE extrabudgetary funds.

Proposed activities:

Undertaking Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews and supporting implementation of policy recommendations in selected countries of the SPECA region (envisaged for 2018 and 2019).

3. Support to SPECA countries to foster innovation to deliver the SDGs

Objectives:

Policy advisory support to SPECA countries to stimulate the private and public sector innovation required to deliver the SDGs.

Rationale:

The project is in line with the objectives of the WG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Implementation is subject to the availability of UNECE extrabudgetary funds.

Proposed activities:

Capacity-building activities upon request from SPECA countries, for example on integrating innovation policies into national strategies for sustainable development and supporting participation of SPECA countries in wider UN initiatives in support of Agenda 2030.

4. Implementation of ESCAP activities in support to the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative

Objectives:

To enhance regional cooperation and strengthen connectivity through implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative.

Rationale:

The project is in line with the objectives of the WG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Implementation is subject to the availability of ESCAP extrabudgetary funds.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Participation of stakeholders (policymakers, senior officials and private sector) from SPECA countries in a development account subregional workshop for fact-finding and develop gaps analysis for integrated, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable infrastructure development along selected SPECA countries. ;
- (ii) Based on country requirements and situation analysis produced from subregional workshop, further conduct 1) a multi-sectoral assessment of transport, energy and ICT infrastructure, including co-deployment, along the selected regional connectivity corridors and identify financing options and 2) a multi-sectoral assessment of underserved urban areas and rural communities access to local, national or regional networks/markets through regional connectivity corridors to propose inclusive access to such infrastructure.

5. Enhancing national capacities to use ICT for socio-economic development

Objectives:

To enhance the capacities of policymakers, government officials and other relevant stakeholders to promote, adopt and utilize ICT for achieving national sustainable development goals.

Rationale:

The project is in line with the objectives of the WG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. The activities will be funded through the extrabudgetary resources of APCICT and co-funding mobilized through national and subregional partners.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Conduct of capacity-building workshops for government leaders and civil servants in SPECA countries on the use of ICT for sustainable development, subject to funding and resource availability;
- (ii) Conduct of capacity-building workshops on the use of ICT for women entrepreneurship in SPECA countries (e.g. launch of the Women ICT Frontier Initiative - APCICT's ICT training programme for women entrepreneurs - in Uzbekistan, tentative envisaged for 2019);
- (iii) Development of localized versions of the APCICT training modules, targeted at SPECA countries;
- (iv) Provide or support advisory services to SPECA countries in areas related to ICT for socio-economic development, subject to funding and resource availability; and

- (v) Conduct-capacity-building workshops on the application of ICT tools for renewable energy resource assessments at the national level in SPECA countries, subject to funding and resource availability (APCTT).

6. Capacity development on the utilization of ICT for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

Objectives:

Develop knowledge-based tools for disaster risk management and build resilience into development policy and planning of SPECA countries.

Rationale:

The project contributes to the objectives of the WG on KBD as specified in the Terms of Reference, in particular to the objective of knowledge-based disaster risk reduction and management. Implementation will be financed from the ESCAP extrabudgetary funds.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Assist SPECA countries to access cooperation mechanisms such as RESAP and RIMES;
- (ii) Conduct activities on measuring resilience; and
- (iii) ESCAP provides continued support on DRR and climate change adaptation in the context of the Ministerial Regional Conference on disaster risk reduction.

7. Support to SPECA countries to use space technology applications and geospatial data for the SDGs

Objectives:

Assist SPECA countries to enhance knowledge and capacity in using space technology applications and geospatial data in support of the implementation of SDGs.

Rationale:

The project is in line with the objectives of the WG on KBD to support the use of innovative technologies and data for knowledge building as specified in its Terms of Reference.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Organize a regional workshop around September 2018, consisting of around 15-20 government officials from SPECA countries and regional experts from UN

entities and regional organizations to discuss on how to use statistical geospatial data and space technologies to monitor the status and progress of the implementation of the SDGs, focusing on disaster risk reduction as a pilot.

SUMMARY TABLE

| Area of Activity | Lead Executive Agency | Timeframe |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities. | | |
| Capacity-building on policy options and practical instruments to promote knowledge-based development | UNECE | 2018-2019 |
| Implementation of the UNECE project on Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews of selected countries | UNECE | 2018-2019 |
| Support to SPECA countries to foster innovation to deliver the SDGs | UNECE | 2018-2019 |
| Implementation of ESCAP activities in support to the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative | ESCAP | 2018-2019 |
| Enhancing national capacities to use ICT for socio-economic development | ESCAP | 2018-2019 |
| Capacity development on the utilization of ICT for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation | ESCAP | 2018-2019 |
| Capacity building in using statistical geospatial data for monitoring and reporting SDGs implementation | ESCAP | 2018-2019 |

ANNEX V

**Regional Workshop on “Innovation Strategy, Technology
Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs”
and
Tenth session of the SPECA Working Group on
Knowledge-based Development
(Baku, Azerbaijan, 4-5 July 2018)**

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