



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

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Thirteenth session of the SPECA Governing Council

Almaty, Kazakhstan, 21 September 2018

**Roadmap for elaborating a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable
Development**

1. Background

The 2017 SPECA Economic Forum “Innovation for the SDGs in the SPECA region” (Dushanbe, 5 December 2017) reviewed the role of innovation as a vehicle for pursuing the SDGs in the SPECA countries and discussed a possible policy agenda to this effect. The Conclusions and Recommendations of the 2017 SPECA Economic Forum outlined a broad framework for promoting innovation policies for sustainable development in the region.

The SPECA Governing Council at its Twelfth session (Dushanbe, 6 December 2017) endorsed the outcomes of the above Forum and recommended the drafting and implementation of a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development to support the governments’ efforts towards the SDGs. This new initiative should draw on the Conclusions and Recommendations of the 2017 SPECA Economic Forum which stipulate that the SPECA innovation strategy (hereafter referred to as “SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development”) should identify possible innovation policies to realize regional synergies and economies of scale for the achievement of SDGs and SD targets and provide for sharing and exchanging innovation practices, initiatives and policies in pursuing SDGs.

The Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development should be a policy document of the SPECA countries, jointly agreed by their Governments, to guide their cooperative efforts towards the accomplishment of the above mission. It should target objectives and activities of common interest and would be implemented with the joint efforts of the SPECA countries. UNECE and ESCAP, the two UN regional commissions that jointly support SPECA, would also support the implementation of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development. The actual elaboration of the Strategy and its components (vision, objectives, actions, resources, timeline, governance) should be a demand-driven process run by the SPECA countries and reflecting their needs and priorities.

To facilitate the process, UNECE initiated the preparation of a Draft Outline of a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development that was submitted for consideration and discussion to the Regional Capacity Building Workshop on “Innovation Strategy,

Technology Applications and Infrastructure for the SDGs” and the Tenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (Baku, 4-5 July 2018).

The participants in the two events welcomed the initiative of the UNECE secretariat to prepare a Draft outline of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development. They welcomed the content of the Draft outline of the Strategy and made some proposals for enriching the document with some complementary initiatives and activities. The participants also underscored the need for wide-ranging consultation on the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development among all relevant stakeholders in the SPECA countries, requiring a gradual and structured approach to build the necessary consensus and networks as well as to secure necessary resources for putting the strategy into practice.

The thirteenth session of the SPECA Governing Council (Almaty, 21 September 2018) is invited to consider the next steps in the process as outlined in the proposed Draft Roadmap for elaborating a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development.

2. Draft Roadmap for elaborating a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development

1. Representatives of the SPECA participating countries inform their Governments of the initiative to elaborate a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development, its objectives and proposed activities. Governments nominate Focal Points for elaboration and implementation of the Strategy.

Desirable timing: October-December 2018

2. The national Focal Points in the SPECA countries, based on the existing outline and a questionnaire to be circulated, consult with relevant national stakeholders regarding the vision, mission, guiding principles, objectives, policy priority areas and governance of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development and consolidate necessary comprehensive inputs.

Desirable timing: January-June 2019

3. National Focal Points, supported by representatives of UNECE and ESCAP, meet to discuss a draft version of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development, which is then considered at the annual session of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development.

Desirable timing: June 2019

4. Based on these discussions, a final draft of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development is produced and submitted for consideration and adoption by the SPECA Governing Council at its annual session.

Desirable timing: July-December 2019

5. An Action Plan for implementation of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development is developed and adopted by the SPECA countries.

Desirable timing: January 2020 and onwards
