



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

Eleventh Session of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development

(Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 27 June 2019)

REPORT

The eleventh session of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (WG on KBD) was jointly organized by UNECE and ESCAP at the invitation of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek on 27 June 2019. In conjunction with the session, UNECE and ESCAP organized a Regional Workshop on “Innovation and Technology Applications for Sustainable Development” in collaboration with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek on 26-27 June 2019.

Delegations from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan 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 eleventh session of the WG on KBD. The List of participants of the eleventh session of the SPECA WG on KBD and the Regional Workshop is attached (Annex VI).

Opening of the session

Mr. Iskandarbek Mamatov, Head of Department of State Affairs of the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic, welcomed session participants. Mr. Mamatov thanked UNECE and ESCAP for organizing the session, as well as the experts presenting during the Regional Workshop “Innovation and Technology Applications for Sustainable Development”. He highlighted innovation as being crucial to meet the challenge of continuing to improve living standards given resource scarcity and the need to ensure that growth is sustainable in the long run. He highlighted the SPECA WG on KBD as a crucial platform to help address such challenges in the SPECA countries, through sharing of experiences and policy dialogue. He identified a key future policy priority as being the ability to adapt and use new knowledge in the wider economy. A current priority for the Kyrgyz Republic is the development of the creative and knowledge-based economy,

including a working group on the creative and cultural industries. Mr. Mammatov highlighted the importance of creating the infrastructure to support these newly emerging sectors. He also identified cooperation with ECE and ESCAP as a priority area of international cooperation for the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mr. Christopher Athey, Economic Affairs Officer in the UNECE Innovative Policies Development Section, welcomed participants to the eleventh session and expressed his gratitude to Mr. Mammatov for chairing this session of the SPECA WG on KBD and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for their hospitality in hosting the eleventh session of the SPECA WG on KBD and the Regional Workshop on “Innovation and Technology Applications for Sustainable Development”. 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.

Mr. Tae Hyung Kim, Economic Affairs Officer in the ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division of United Nations ESCAP delivered a brief welcoming remark to participants, highlighting the importance of innovation strategy and innovative technology applications to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Election of officers and adoption of the agenda

The WG elected Mr. Iskandarbek Mammatov, Head of Department of State Affairs of the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic, as Chairperson of the eleventh session of the WG on KBD.

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

Outcomes of the Regional Workshop on “Innovation and Technology Applications for Sustainable Development”

The ESCAP and UNECE secretariats provided a summary of outcomes of the Regional Workshop on “Innovation and Technology Applications for Sustainable Development” on 26-27 June 2019

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

Updated terms of reference of the Working Group

Mr. Athey briefed delegates on the updated terms of reference of the Working Group, produced following the consultations at the previous session of the WG. Delegates expressed their satisfaction with and approved the draft updated terms of reference included at Annex III as better reflecting the main work areas of the WG and the focus on its role in delivering Agenda 2030 in the SPECA subregion.

The WG felt that the name “Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development” would better reflect the main directions and strategic priorities of work carried out under the Working Group. The WG requested that this proposed new name, along with updated draft terms of reference included at Annex III, be submitted to the next session of the SPECA Governing Council for adoption.

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 tenth session of the SPECA WG on KBD in Baku on 5 July 2018. The progress report on the activities of the WG on KBD since the tenth session can be found at Annex IV.

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

Review of the Programme of Work of the WG on KBD for July 2019-December 2021

Mr. Athey of UNECE and Mr. Kim of ESCAP presented the updated Programme of Work of the WG on KBD for July 2019-December 2021.

The delegation of Kazakhstan informed the WG of plans by QazTech Ventures to hold a Central Asia Forum on Business Incubators in Kazakhstan in 2020 and indicated that they would welcome the support of the WG to mobilize experts to participate in this activity.

The WG adopted the updated Programme of Work (Annex V) 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 2020 and that the exact date and venue of the twelfth 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 eleventh 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 eleventh session of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development and the Regional Workshop on “Innovation and Technology Applications for Sustainable Development”.

Delegates thanked the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for its warm hospitality and the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats for the excellent organization of the SPECA events in Bishkek. They highlighted the importance of the work of the WG on KBD to national policymakers, and for cooperation between SPECA countries on innovation to promote sustainable development in the subregion.

ANNEX I

DECISIONS OF THE ELEVENTH 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 and technology applications for sustainable development”, a summary of which will be included at Annex II of the Report of this session.
2. The WG reviewed the activities carried out since its tenth session and expressed its appreciation of the usefulness of these activities for the SPECA countries. Delegates noted with satisfaction the activities carried out by United Nations ESCAP and ECE secretariats within the framework of the WG.
3. The WG noted with satisfaction the draft SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development. It requested that the document be updated and further elaborated to reflect the comments made by delegates and submitted to the next SPECA Governing Council for consideration and eventual endorsement.
4. The WG emphasized that the implementation of such an innovation strategy would require dedicated efforts by SPECA countries, including some human and financial resources. Support from international donors to the implementation of the strategy will be welcome.
5. Appropriate governance arrangements within the SPECA framework will be key for the successful and efficient implementation of the innovation strategy. The WG recommended the nomination of national focal points for the SPECA innovation strategy as pillars of its governance structure, for an initial period of 3 years to coincide with the updated terms of reference of the WG. This would be in line with recommendations of the 2018 SPECA Evaluation Report to seek greater continuity in experts assigned to complete key working group tasks, “such as preparation of a regional strategy, conducting research and providing strategic recommendations, conducting a feasibility study, coordination of legislation and policies, etc.”
6. The WG further noted that the draft SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development responded to the recommendation of the 2018 SPECA Evaluation Report to identify the key regional issues, challenges and opportunities to be addressed.
7. The WG highlighted the important role of innovative technology applications as a key means to achieve sustainable development goals and requested United Nations ESCAP and ECE secretariats to continue working with SPECA countries to strengthen their systems and capacity in using innovative technology applications.

8. The WG expressed its satisfaction with and approved the updated draft Terms of Reference of the Working Group.
9. The WG felt that the name “Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development” would be better to reflect the main directions and strategic priorities of work carried out under the Working Group. The WG requested that this proposed new name, along with updated draft terms of reference, be submitted to the next session of the SPECA Governing Council for adoption.
10. The WG took note of the presentations on the Programme of Work of the SPECA WG on KBD for the second half of 2019 and 2020-2021 by the ECE and ESCAP secretariats. The WG requested the main points of the discussion be reflected in the content and policy recommendations of the report.
11. The WG on KBD adopted its Programme of Work for the second half of 2019 and 2020-2021.
12. The WG underlined the importance of partnerships with all stakeholders at the national and international levels. In this regard, the WG recommended that national representatives actively involve relevant stakeholders in the WG activities.
13. The WG agreed to hold its next session in 2020 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 the Kyrgyz Republic for the excellent organization of the events and the hospitality offered to participants.
15. The WG expressed its appreciation to the secretariats of ECE 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 and Technology Applications for Sustainable Development”

(Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 26-27 June 2019)

During the opening and session 2 of the Regional Workshop, Ms. Dinara Moldosheva, Chairperson of Kyrgyzpatent highlighted the national importance placed upon sustainable development by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the value of the recent UNECE Innovation for Sustainable Development Review in informing new policy developments to harness innovation to boost sustainable development.

Mr. Andrea Bagnoli, Resident Coordinator a.i., highlighted in particular the importance of partnerships to achieve Agenda 2030 (SDG 17). He emphasised that, given the pace of change in the modern world, standing still is not an option for policy makers. He briefed participant on the current UN development reform, and highlighted that the 2030 Agenda is increasingly focusing on transboundary and sub-regional issues. More specifically for Central Asia these are issues that (i) have priority importance for SDG implementation; (ii) can be better resolved through transboundary cooperation; therefore, SPECA can be considered as one of the natural vehicles to support addressing the SDGs through multi-agency engagement.

Mr. Ralph Heinrich of UNECE emphasised that Central Asia, like the world as a whole, is not on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. To get there, we need to step up our efforts. Innovation, broadly construed, will have to be central to this renewed effort, because without innovation, we would be constrained to produce the same goods, using the same technology and the same resources, and generating the same amount of pollution. To accelerate progress, we need to cooperate and learn from each other. The SPECA Strategy on Innovation for Sustainable Development could become a catalyst for this cooperation.

Mr. Tae Hyung Kim of ESCAP introduced participants and experts, and emphasised the importance of capturing modern techniques such as foresight and big data to address global challenges through global cooperation, while paying attention to ensuring no one is left behind.

Mr. Alexander Chulok of the Higher School of Economics in Moscow briefed participants on the scope of foresight to support proactive policies to boost regional and global sustainable development efforts. Mr. Mario Apostolov, regional adviser at UNECE, briefed participants on recent developments related to SPECA and praised the SPECA WG on Knowledge-Based Development for following the recommendations of the 2018 SPECA Evaluation Report to consider innovative ways of organizing such meetings through task-oriented panel discussions. Notably, the WG session will on this occasion focus on inclusive discussions on the finalization of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development, for consideration and

possible adoption by the SPECA Governing Council on 21 November 2019 in Ashgabat

Mr Rumen Dobrinsky presented the current draft of the SPECA Strategy on Innovation for Sustainable Development. The next steps in finalizing and then implementing the Strategy will be for SPECA countries to (1) complete the process of nominating national focal points, (2) provide further suggestions and requests for initiatives to be included in the Strategy where regional cooperation would add value, (3) to commit – mainly human – resources towards the implementation of the strategy and to work with the two regional commissions on raising additional financial resources, and (4) to develop and agree on an Action Plan to put the Strategy into practice.

The participants in the policy discussion in session 3 informed the Workshop about the efforts of their countries and governments in pursuing the SDGs, focusing on the role of innovation and innovation policies in achieving the SDGs in the SPECA region. All participants underscored the importance of SPECA as a platform for cooperation in this area among the countries in the region and stressed that the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development will provide supplementary opportunities for strengthening and deepening this cooperation.

In the context of the policy discussion, the participants stressed, among others, the role of the following cooperative efforts which could be part of the Strategy:

- establishing new opportunities for sharing of good practices among SPECA countries and of best international practice by international experts on innovation policy for sustainable development;
- establishing new opportunities for sharing of experiences among SPECA countries in the implementation of innovation projects targeting sustainable development;
- seeking synergies among SPECA countries in their technology transfer activities and in the practical implementation of innovation policy for sustainable development;
- organizing joint capacity-building events on innovation policy for sustainable development.

The participants welcomed the proposal to continue the joint efforts towards finalizing the Strategy, taking account of the discussions under Session 3, with a view to submitting it for consideration and endorsement at the 2019 session of the SPECA Governing Council.

Session 4 showcased good practices in innovative technology applications in support of the achievements of the SDGs. Participants noted good practices of applications of geospatial information systems in disaster monitoring, natural resource management and land management in Japan, Kazakhstan, and Korea. For example, participants noted good practices and its possible application of geospatial information system in addressing disaster risk reduction such as Tsunami, landslides and flooding, and

effective land management through building the Land Information Systems based on Geospatial Information System in the SPECA region.

Participants were informed of the current framework of statistics on SDGs and recommendations to strengthen statistics for effective monitoring the SDGs in Kazakhstan. In addition, participants noted an assessment of the SDG Index and Dashboard Report published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Foundation against real data in Korea and the emerging need to improve the methods of monitoring progress on SDGs indicators. In this connection, participants recognized the potential of spatial indicators as a supplementary means to assess progress in the implementation of the SDGs.

Following an informal briefing on the proposed updated TORs for the SPECA WG on KBD, under session 6 experts and participants discussed best practices in putting new knowledge into practice to deliver sustainable development. Mr. Dastan Dogoev, Chairman of the State Committee of IT and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic, briefed participants on the “Digital Kyrgyzstan” initiative. There are similar recent and planned policy initiatives in other SPECA countries to drive digitization, and this sharing of experiences was greatly appreciated. Experts from Georgia and Qaztech Ventures, Kazakhstan briefed participants on the practical aspects of establishing a TechPark and best practices in technology transfer and knowledge commercialisation, respectively. An expert from Korea briefed participants on applications of Wall Block technologies for disaster risk reduction, while an expert from Thailand spoke about innovative approaches for national scale multi-hazard risk assessment in Central Asia.

ANNEX III

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SPECA WORKING GROUP ON INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A. PREAMBLE

1. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia was established by the Tashkent Declaration on 26 March 1998, signed by the Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Executive Secretaries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan joined the Programme later.

2. The SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development (WG on ITSD) is a subsidiary body within the governing structure of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The WG on ITSD draws on previous forms of regional cooperation in related areas, in particular, on the work of the SPECA Project Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies for Development (PWG on ICT) and the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (SPECA WG on KBD).

3. The SPECA participating countries are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) provide overall support to the Programme.

4. The Working Group on ICT for Development was created by the decision 5 of the Special Meeting of the Regional Advisory Committee in 2005. In 2007, the Governing Council at its 2nd session took a decision to broaden the mandate of the Working Group and transform it into the Working Group on Knowledge-based Development.

5. At the 10th session of the SPECA Governing Council (11 November 2015, Dushanbe, Tajikistan) representatives of the SPECA participating countries adopted a Declaration reiterating their commitment to the Programme as a platform for promoting cooperation in the SPECA subregion and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. The SPECA Governing Council requested the SPECA WG on KBD develop a draft SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development,¹ while a SPECA Expert Meeting on SPECA review (11-12 June 2018, Almaty, Kazakhstan) recommended that the SPECA WG on KBD formulate where regional coordination is needed in relationship to the implementation of the SDGs in the thematic work areas of the Working Group.

7. These recommendations were discussed during informal consultations at the time of the 10th session of the SPECA WG on KBD (5 July 2018, Baku). These consultations highlighted a need to align the TORs with the SDGs, and determine a new name for the working group to more accurately reflect its priority areas of work.

B. OBJECTIVES

8. In line with the overall objectives of SPECA to support its participating countries in developing subregional economic cooperation, and integrating their economies into the world economy for their attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the WG on ITSD shall:

(i) Provide a platform for supporting progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on the SDGs directly related to innovation and technology development (including, but not limited to SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure; SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth; SDG 13 on combatting climate change and its impacts; and SDG 17 on partnerships).

(ii) Aim at improving awareness of SPECA countries on the innovation and technology development related SDGs, provide information and share best practice experiences with regard to the implementation of these SDGs, taking into account interlinkages between the SDGs;

(iii) Become a mechanism for identification, implementation and coordination of technical programmes and projects within the scope of Working Group competence thereby building capacity, promoting best practices and strengthening mutual trust at political level among the SPECA participating countries; and

(iv) Promote cooperation between SPECA countries on strategic approaches to harness innovation as a driver of future sustainable development in the sub-region.

9. The thematic orientation of the activities of the WG on ITSD will include, but not be limited to, areas such as:

(i) ICT for development;

(ii) Promotion of innovation and innovative technology applications;

(iii) Promotion of transfer and commercialization of innovative technologies;

(iv) Development of effective infrastructure for innovation support and financing, including through PPPs.

C. PARTICIPANTS

10. The WG on ITSD shall comprise National Representatives, nominated by the Governments of SPECA participating countries. The National Representatives shall be senior officials involved in the formulation and implementation or be aware of national policies and

¹ Decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/2) of the 12th session of the SPECA GC in Dushanbe underscored the importance of elaborating an innovation strategy for the SPECA region to achieve the SDGs, while Decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2018/3) of the 13th session in Almaty requested the SPECA countries, UNECE and ESCAP to finalize the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development for adoption by the Governing Council.

programmes, which affect national policies related to innovation and technology development in their respective countries and able to effectively follow up the recommendations and decisions of the WG on ITSD.

11. Each participating country shall also nominate, on a permanent or on an ad hoc basis as appropriate, experts on various aspects of innovation and technology for sustainable development as required.

12. Governments of the SPECA countries shall nominate focal points for the Working Group to ensure successful delivery of programmes of work, according to the adopted Terms of Reference.

13. Relevant subregional organizations implementing programmes related to knowledge-based development are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the Working Group as observers.

14. Neighbouring countries of the SPECA region are invited to nominate their representatives to participate as observers in the work of the WG on ITSD, especially when issues concerning cooperation with neighbouring regions are discussed.

15. Other United Nations bodies as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies and organizations operating on innovation and technology development issues in SPECA countries are invited to participate in the work of the Working Group as observers and to nominate liaison officers on matters related to its work.

D. MODALITIES OF OPERATION

16. The WG on ITSD is chaired by at least one SPECA country.

17. The WG on ITSD develops, agrees upon and approves its Terms of Reference and submits to the Governing Council session for adoption.

18. The two Regional Commissions shall provide substantive support to the WG on ITSD by:

- (i) Providing expertise as well as assistance to activities implemented by the Working Group; and
- (ii) Providing secretariat support to the preparation and organization of sessions and meetings of the Working Group, including preparation of documents and studies as well as maintenance of records.

19. The WG on ITSD shall hold its annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries any time before or concurrent to the annual sessions of the SPECA Governing Council.

20. The WG on ITSD shall draw important policy issues to the attention of the SPECA Governing Council.

21. The working languages of SPECA are Russian and English.

E. FUNDING

22. The operational costs of the WG on ITSD as well as the costs of participation of National Representatives and experts in its sessions shall as a rule be borne by the Governments of the SPECA participating countries.

23. In addition, the UNECE and ESCAP shall support, within their available resources, the functioning of the WG on ITSD.

24. The WG on ITSD shall also seek funds and technical assistance for its operations from multilateral and bilateral donors for the implementation of specific capacity-building projects falling under the scope of the approved work programmes.

F. PROGRAMME OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES

25. The WG on ITSD shall develop, agree upon and implement its annual work programme.

26. The WG on ITSD shall prepare its annual reports to the Governing Council sessions on progress made in their implementation.

27. The WG on ITSD shall draw up its biennial work programmes which are integrated into SPECA Work Plans.

28. The WG on ITSD shall formulate and agree upon specific projects and programmes and seek extrabudgetary resources for their implementation.

G. OTHER MATTERS

29. The current Terms of Reference shall be reviewed in 3 years or sooner if the SPECA participating countries so decide.

ANNEX IV

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECA WG ON KBD

This report contains activities organized by the UNECE and UNESCAP secretariats within the framework of the SPECA Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (WG on KBD) and to address topics within its thematic areas that were held since the tenth session of the SPECA WG on KBD in Baku, Azerbaijan, 5 July 2018. These activities are in line with the updated Programme of Work of the WG for 2018-2019, which was adopted at its tenth session. UNECE and ESCAP secretariats carried out the following capacity-building activities for the SPECA countries:

Implementation of the UNECE project “Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews”

- Within the framework of this project, *Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, 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).
- The *Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Kyrgyzstan* has been completed and the findings and policy recommendations presented to stakeholders in Bishkek on 28 February 2019. These policy recommendations will form the basis of future capacity building activities of UNECE secretariat to support implementation efforts by the Government of Kyrgyzstan, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

Implementation of UNECE and ESCAP capacity building activities in SPECA countries

- A Subregional Conference on “Innovation for Sustainable Development” was organized by UNECE with support of ESCAP in Bishkek on 26-27 June 2019, hosted by the State Service of Intellectual Property and Innovation under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, “Kyrgyzpatent”.
- A Roundtable in support of implementation of policy recommendations of the innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Kyrgyzstan was organized by UNECE and Kyrgyzpatent in Bishkek on 25 June 2019.

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

Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) Subregional Steering Group Meeting for North and Central Asia

- Through AP-IS, ESCAP has been supporting member countries in the North Central Asian subregion including SPECA countries to promote the development of broadband infrastructure and access that will improve broadband affordability, coverage, reliance and resilience, thereby addressing the digital divide.
- In line with this, ESCAP organized the “Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Subregional Steering Group Meeting for North and Central Asia” on 5 October 2018 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It was the first subregional meeting convened as part of the AP-IS, providing platform for sharing current development of broadband connectivity in the subregion and facilitating the discussion and building consensus on the future plan and activities of the AP-IS to be undertaken in the subregion. As a result, a number of activities and corridor approach were identified and targeted to support member countries in the implementation of AP-IS initiative, i.e. to promote broadband expansion.

Implementation of the ESCAP Development Account Project on “Addressing the transboundary dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific”

- The project aims at strengthening national capacity of selected countries to develop sustainable and inclusive policies and mechanisms for trans-boundary infrastructure connectivity within the context of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The project spans over four years from 2018-2021. Two SPECA countries, namely Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, were among the selected countries in the project.
- In the initial step of the project implementation, ESCAP organized the project inception meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 2 to 4 October 2018, to review the project concept and its plan of activities, ensuring that it's in line with the national priorities and needs. As a result, the project activities were discussed and agreed upon by the participating country representatives, noting importance of the project in the subregional and national development agenda. At the same time, the meeting also served as a platform for exchanging developmental views, sharing knowledge and good practices among policy makers, with the subject focus on (1) FOC co-deployment along passive infrastructure, (2) promoting

social inclusion and disaster risk reduction in cross-border infrastructure development, and (3) identifying feasible infrastructure financing modalities.

- After the inception meeting, ESCAP is now preparing subregional assessments and national studies on the three above-mentioned topics and developing guidelines and training modules for the capacity development workshops in each selected country. Two workshops per country are expected in 2019-2020.

Expert Group Meeting: Advancing Co-deployment Financing through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway in North and Central Asia

- ESCAP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication of Kazakhstan, organized an Expert Group Meeting on “Advancing Co-deployment Financing through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway in North and Central Asia” in Almaty on 31 January and 1 February 2019. This meeting has brought attention and raised awareness among participating representatives from ministries and government agencies on opportunities and challenges associated with infrastructure co-deployment and relevant financing modalities for broadband infrastructure. The participants also benefited from integrating infrastructure co-deployment approach and developing concrete plans of action, including policy updates and capacity development, within the framework of AP-IS.

Other AP-IS activities

- At the Eurasian Summit “Digital Agenda in the Era of Globalization 2.0: Eurasia Innovative Ecosystem,” held on 1 February 2019 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, ESCAP delivered a presentation in a session on Digitization in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. At the session, ESCAP shared its views on the role and importance of ICT in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development agenda 2030 as well as the approach it has been doing to support member countries including SPECA countries to fast forward the expansion of broadband internet network under the framework of AP-IS, particularly through infrastructure co-deployment between ICT and roads, railways, electricity power lines, etc., which could help significantly reduce costs and quicken the expansion of the ICT network within and across border. The expansion of broadband network would also facilitate the development and application of advanced emerging technologies and innovation for better economic, social and environment development of the subregion.

Implementation of the ESCAP Project on Disaster-related Statistical Geospatial Indicators for Monitoring the Implementation of the SDGs

- ESCAP supported SPECA countries through organization of three expert group meetings (EGMs) in Bangkok on 10 October 2017, in Almaty, Kazakhstan from 31 January to 1 February 2018, and in Almaty from 31 January to 1 February 2019. The key objective of the meetings was to discuss and develop the conceptual framework of disaster-related statistical geospatial indicators (and index) by reviewing relevant existing models and methodologies on disaster-related indicators, as analytical tools, for the SPECA countries to monitor and report the progress of the implementation of disaster-related SDGs.
- Proposed framework and indicators of disaster-related statistical geospatial data supported policymakers and technical officials of the SPECA countries to analyse disaster-related conditions, improve capacity to use combined statistical data and geospatial data, and prepare more effective policies and actions for reducing disaster risks, and preventing or mitigating human and economic and environmental loss. The proposed frameworks and disaster-related statistical geospatial indicators also contributed to improving statistical accuracy of the already established SDG indicators, the Asia Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development 2018-2030, the ESCAP Regional Roadmap for the SDGs and the UN global agendas such as the UN Global Statistical Geospatial Framework

Implementation of the ESCAP Project on Development of Decision-making Tool(s) and Applications for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning in Central Asia

- In January 2019, ESCAP started a new project to build capacity of Central Asian countries on geospatial information applications for drought monitoring and early warning. Kyrgyzstan and other drought affected countries in Central Asia will be the pilots. The project contributes to achievements of SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land), and supports the implementation of the Asia Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018-2030) and the ESCAP Regional Roadmap for the Implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.
- At the end of the project in December 2020, the customized drought monitoring system and a set of decision-making tools will be proposed to senior officials of SPECA countries for applications and the capacity to use space applications and geospatial data for drought monitoring and early warning will be strengthened.

KOICA-ESCAP Fellowship Programme 2018

- The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and ESCAP conducted a KOICA-ESCAP Fellowship Programme in the Republic of Korea from 29 October to 10 November 2018 inviting 19 government officials from SPECA countries. The key focus of the Programme in 2018 was to enhance knowledge and capacity to SPECA countries on use of space applications and geospatial information systems to find solutions for challenges of urban planning and disaster risk reduction. The Programme contributed to promoting the implementation of SDGs 11 and 15.
- The 2019 KOICA-ESCAP Fellowship Programme will be organized in Bangkok, Thailand with the theme on drought monitoring and early warning from 23 to 28 September 2019, inviting 20 government officials from Central Asian countries and ASEAN countries.

Representatives of the SPECA countries participated in the following events:

- Eleventh session of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies, Geneva, Switzerland, 1 - 2 November 2018.
- Second session of the UNECE Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships, Geneva, Switzerland, 20 - 21 November 2018.
- Thirteenth session of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships and its high-level segment on “Making a Difference – Measuring and understanding the Impact of Innovation policies and PPP projects on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”, Geneva, Switzerland, 25 - 27 March 2019.
- UNECE/UNCTAD International Policy Training on “Innovation for Sustainable Development: National Innovation Systems and Promoting Foreign Knowledge Transfer”, Geneva, Switzerland, 28 March 2019.
- Fourth UNECE International PPP Forum “The Last Mile: Promoting People-first PPPs for the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, Geneva, Switzerland, 7-9 May 2019.

ESCAP activities taking place outside SPECA countries where SPECA representatives participated

- Consultative Meeting on Data-Driven Governance, Bangkok, Thailand, 29 - 31 August 2018.
- Regional Training of Trainers on Data-Driven Governance, Incheon, Republic of Korea, 5-7 December 2018.

ANNEX V

PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE SPECA WG ON KBD FOR JULY 2019-DECEMBER 2021²

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 matched with available resources.

ACTIVITIES ENVISAGED FOR JULY 2019-DECEMBER 2021

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 2021);
- (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 Governments of SPECA countries.

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

Objectives:

² This programme of work covers the remainder of 2019 after the eleventh session, and the period 2020-2021.

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 2020 and 2021).

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:

- (i) 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; and
- (ii) Development of a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development, identifying innovative joint initiatives between SPECA countries with potential to support delivery of Agenda 2030 within the sub-region.

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 the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee meetings;
- (ii) Participation of stakeholders (policymakers, senior officials and private sector) from SPECA countries in subregional Steering Group meeting(s) of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway;
- (iii) Participation of stakeholders (policymakers, senior officials and private sector) from SPECA countries to the Expert Group Meetings and Subregional Capacity Development Workshop (planned in Kazakhstan) and National workshops (planned in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan);
- (iv) Subregional and national reports on Fibre-optic cable co-deployment to explore fibre-optic route diversification capitalizing on opportunities created by infrastructure sharing and co-deployment;
- (ix) Study on Operation Models of Trans-Border Terrestrial Cable Networks for the Implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway to foster building of consensus on cross-border, cross-sectoral fibre optic co-deployment;

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 capacity-building workshops on APCICT's flagship ICT for development programmes (e.g. training on Data-Driven Governance in Kazakhstan, tentative envisaged for last quarter of 2019);
- (ii) Development of localized versions of the APCICT training modules, targeted at SPECA countries;
- (iii) Provide advisory services to SPECA countries in areas related to ICT for socio-economic development, subject to funding and resource availability; and
- (iv) 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 and GIS for disaster risk reduction

Objectives:

Develop knowledge-based tools for disaster risk management and strengthen 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 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 use decision making tools for drought monitoring and early warning;
- (ii) KOICA-ESCAP Fellowship Programme: capacity building drought monitoring; and early warning by using geospatial information systems (GIS).
- (iii) ESCAP provides continued support on disaster risk reduction by promoting innovative technology applications including ICT and GIS.

7. Strengthen institutional capacity on integrating geospatial and statistical data, with a focus on land accounts in Central Asia

Objectives:

Enhance the institutional capacity of CA countries to integrate geospatial and statistical information to develop land accounts.

Rationale:

The project is in line with the objectives of the WG on KBD to support land-related SDG challenges including disaster risk reduction as specified in its Terms of Reference.

Proposed activities:

- (i) Conduct assessment of country profile on land accounts with a diagnostic tool and template (patterned after ESCAP's environment statistics diagnostic tool) to identify policy priorities, available information, data sources, stakeholders and institutional mechanisms necessary to develop or strengthen the land accounts.
- (ii) Organize an inception regional workshop and expert group meetings to discuss preliminary estimates of assessment on country land accounts in Central Asia region, and assist capacity building on using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and the framework for integration of the geospatial and statistical information;
- (iii) Organize a policy forum to share key findings and methodologies to assess disaster-related SDGs implementations.

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	July 2019-December 2021
Implementation of the UNECE project on Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews of selected countries	UNECE	July 2019-December 2021
Support to SPECA countries to foster innovation to deliver the SDGs	UNECE	July 2019-December 2021
Implementation of ESCAP activities in support to the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative	ESCAP	July 2019-December 2021
Enhancing national capacities to use ICT for socio-economic development	ESCAP	July 2019-December 2021
Capacity development on the utilization of ICT and GIS for disaster risk reduction	ESCAP	July 2019-December 2021
Strengthen institutional capacity on integrating geospatial and statistical data, with a focus on land accounts in Central Asia	ESCAP	July 2019-December 2021

ANNEX VI

**Regional Workshop on “Innovative and Technology Applications for SDGs”
and
Eleventh session of the SPECA WG on KBD
(Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 26-27 June 2019)**

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