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## Assessment Framework and Measurement Methodology for the Sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook

### I. Objectives of the Sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook

The UNECE Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook aims to assess the scope and quality of innovation policies, institutions, and processes across up to six countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) and publish the results in a UNECE publication in the summer of 2020.

The project serves to identify strengths and weaknesses, to enlarge the evidence base for mutual policy learning, and to improve innovation policies, institutions and processes, and enhance their productivity and competitiveness.

The Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook is a new, SIDA-funded initiative, aiming to find quantifiable indicators to cover the scope and quality of policy processes and institutional capacities for implementation.

The Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook is also based on a solid understanding of the economic, political, structural, historical, and institutional factors that strongly influence innovation-led development in ECE countries.

As many ECE countries in transition share features that set them apart from other countries at comparable output levels, such as strong institutional legacies, high levels of educational attainment, and a legacy of frontier research, there is a clear need for indicators that capture these specificities to guide policy and institutional reform efforts.

The main objectives of the Outlook are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Objectives of the UNECE Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook**

<i>Structured assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluate progress in innovation policy and institutional reform on a comparative, regional basis</li> <li>- Assess and compare countries' performance across multiple areas</li> </ul>
<i>Targeted support for improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify, monitor, and evaluate policy priorities and support needs</li> </ul>

<i>Regional collaboration and policy dialogue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage more effective policy dialogue through a common evaluation framework thereby enabling peer learning and sharing good practices</li> <li>- Foster inter-ministerial and inter-agency co-ordination</li> </ul>
<i>Public and private sector involvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer a transparent and straightforward communication tool for all innovation policy stakeholders</li> <li>- Establish public/private consultation</li> </ul>
<i>Planning and resource allocation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate medium-term planning, particularly for pillars that require multi-year programs</li> <li>- Provide a tool for resource mobilisation and allocation</li> </ul>

## **II. Measurement Methodology**

The Innovation Policy Outlook is composed 55 indicators, which are structured around three pillars:

1. Innovation Governance
2. Innovation Policy Tools
3. Innovation Policy Process

Each pillar is broken down into key themes (sub-pillars) that are relevant for the pillar in question.

The three pillars combined aim to capture not so much input and output measures for innovation policy, but rather central mechanisms that translate inputs to outputs, such as institutional capacities and policy design. As innovation policy often involves targeted public support for specific projects, these issues are of utmost importance to ensure that scarce public resources are put to optimal use with minimal distortion.

The first Pillar, Innovation Governance, assesses the overarching strategic, institutional, and legal framework for innovation policy, as well as the competences of and co-ordination among government bodies involved in innovation policy. It reveals, if the governance of innovation policy is sound and well structured.

Its sub-pillars include:

- Framework
- Co-operation

The second pillar, Policy Tools to Foster and Support Innovation, takes stock of policy tools that are put in place to support innovation demand and supply. The pillar does not merely examine the scale and scope of these policy tools, but also their quality and implementation status.

Its sub-pillars include:

- Knowledge Absorption
- Innovation Promotion
- Relationships and Linkages
- Knowledge Diffusion
- Research and Education

The third pillar, The Innovation Policy Process, examines the underlying process for innovation policy. It looks at the details and, even more importantly, the evidence of data-driven consequences in decision-making and subsequent policy design. It follows the policy-making path from its outset (agenda setting and rationale) through policy design, implementation, evaluation and learning.

Its sub-pillars include:

- Preparation
- Design
- Implementation
- Post-implementation

The indicators in each sub-pillar are transposed into questionnaires, containing multiple questions per indicator. These questionnaires will be filled out in a government self-assessment by government bodies co-ordinated by a National Government Focal Point in each country; they will also be filled in by UNECE in parallel with the support of independent, local experts. This approach was inspired by the OECD SME Policy Index methodology.

The filled-out questionnaires will form the basis of the Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook assessment and will reveal countries performance and enable cross-country comparisons.

Findings and actionable policy recommendations will be published in a subregional UNECE report in the summer of 2020.

### **III. Timeline**

The UNECE Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook is structured around four phases:

Phase I (October 2018 – February 2019) develops the concept and methodology and initiates and promotes the project in the region. It includes detailed discussions and partner country endorsements at the November 2018 11th Session of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies and culminates in the drafting of the questionnaires that will be applied during Phases II and III.

Phase II (February – April 2019) consists of evaluating the methodology by applying it to Georgia, including the project questionnaire, which forms the basis of the data mining. The evaluation results will be used to perfect and finalise the methodology. This Phase is structured around an initiation research mission and stakeholder focus group meetings to test the methodology and questionnaires.

Phase III (May – September 2019) is the assessment phase, where data is mined through research missions, collaborations with local research teams and government self-assessments, which are based on the project questionnaire. It culminates in a post-summer regional meeting to take stock of the process.

Phase IV (September – December 2019) focuses on consultations with innovation stakeholders to discuss first findings and fill final information gaps. This phase involves another round of country missions with large stakeholder consultation meetings and ends with a regional meeting to discuss and validate key regional findings and recommendations.

Phase V (January 2020 – July 2020) consists of the drafting of the publication manuscript, consultations with stakeholders and experts, peer reviews, professional editing, translation, and preparing the final manuscript.

Phase VI (Summer 2020) prints, publishes and launches the UNECE publication “Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook 2020”.

## IV. Assessment Framework

Table 2 below presents the draft assessment framework of the Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook.

It lists the pillars, sub-pillars and indicators, which will be applied to up to six countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) within this project. Each indicator is described in detail.

The assessment framework is currently being transposed into a questionnaire. This questionnaire will be piloted in Georgia through the end of March and April. It will subsequently be adjusted and applied to the remaining five countries through May and June.

**Table 2: The draft assessment framework of the Subregional Innovation Policy Outlook**

#	Indicator	Description
<b>PILLAR I: INNOVATION GOVERNANCE</b>		
The first Pillar assesses the overarching strategic, institutional, and legal framework for innovation policy, as well as the competences of and co-ordination between key government bodies involved in innovation policy. It reveals, if the governance of innovation policy is sound and well structured.		
<b>Sub-pillar i. Framework</b>		
1	<b>Agenda Setting</b>	Agenda Setting refers to initial stage in the policy making cycle at high political level, aimed at defining broad priorities and objectives for establishing innovation policy. It underpins the scope of and approach to the concept of innovation, determines its relevance for a country's overall economic development, and expresses aspirations of various stakeholders. It precedes and interims the development of an Innovation Strategy.
2	<b>Innovation Strategy</b>	An Innovation Strategy is an overarching, guiding policy document, which defines the government's vision, objectives and resource-commitments for innovation policy development. It helps coordinate activities across the numerous government bodies involved in innovation policy making and prioritises policy action, targeting existing challenges whilst leveraging countries' opportunities and resources. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of innovation and the various government actors involved in it, strategic policy documents related to innovation are considered particularly useful.
3	<b>Complementarity with the National Strategy for Sustainable Development</b>	Fostering innovation is part of the 9 <sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and under Agenda 2030 each country is supposed to identify their priorities among the SDGs. Given the importance of innovation to sustainability, each country's National Strategy for Sustainable Development should be coordinated and complementary with its innovation policy, to avoid duplication of work and resources.
4	<b>Complementarity with the National</b>	The majority and increasing proportions of innovation is performed in the private sector and the general business environment needs to be conducive to innovation to avoid a policy failure. It is therefore important that a country's entrepreneurship policy incorporates innovation policy concerns.

	<b>Entrepreneurship Strategy</b>	
5	<b>Institutional Framework</b>	Innovation policies are designed and implemented by a wide range of government bodies. Clear definition of roles and responsibilities assigned to relevant organisations are needed to steer funds and other resources in the established strategic direction while minimizing the risk of activity fragmentation and overlap.
6	<b>Legal Framework</b>	The legal framework is comprised of legislative acts and regulations addressing innovation. It establishes conditions, requirements and guarantees for the initiation and implementation of innovative activities by domestic and foreign investors and entrepreneurs.
<b>Sub-pillar ii. Co-ordination</b>		
7	<b>International Co-ordination</b>	The International dimension to innovation has been increasingly incorporated into innovation policies due to the globalisation of trade and investment, the international mobility of human resources, and the global rules-setting agenda in areas such as intellectual property. International co-ordination, including concessional finance instruments, joint research programmes, technical cooperation, enables to join forces in creating, sharing, exploiting innovation to address national, regional and global challenges.
8	<b>Policy Co-ordination at Central Government Level</b>	Given the transversal character of the institutional framework related to innovation and related policies, policy coordination mechanisms, such as high-level science and technology policy councils, facilitate the management and structuring of these various inputs.
9	<b>Coordination between Central, Regional and Local Government</b>	Sub-national regions and entities are gaining significance in innovation policy making; they often understand the local landscape well and can tailor policy interventions. Coordinated approach helps avoid overlapping, duplicating or omitting actions required for successful implementation of innovation policy. The establishment of channels and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation at central, regional and local levels can help track the policy implementation.
<b>PILLAR II: INNOVATION POLICY TOOLS</b>		
	The second pillar takes stock of the innovation policy mix, the various mechanisms and instruments of public support for innovation (policy tools) that are put in place to support innovation demand and supply. The pillar does not merely examine the scale and scope of these policy tools, but also their quality and implementation levels.	
<b>Sub-pillar i. Knowledge Absorption</b>		
10	<b>Promotion of Private Sector Organisational and Managerial Practices</b>	The development of organisational and managerial competencies is generally used to improve efficiency and productivity of working processes. However, the application of good practices in management and organisational operations also serves as an important complementary factor for innovation absorption in organisations and firms.
11	<b>Promotion of Public Sector Organisational and Managerial Practices</b>	
12	<b>Schemes to Support Development of Technical and Business Services</b>	Support schemes for development of technical and business services assist enterprises to introduce and implement innovative activities in their production processes. Provided on a commercial or semi-commercial basis, those services equip firms with practical knowledge and expertise to improve performance of specific tasks that are supplementary to innovation development.

13	<b>Incentives for Knowledge Capital</b>	Tax incentives are a common tool of indirect policy support implemented by the government to stimulate demand for new technologies. Fiscal and other support is applied to encourage investment in new knowledge creation as well as in acquisition and adjustment of already existing knowledge capital through, for example, purchase or licensing procedures.
14	<b>Measures to Foster Cross-border Knowledge Absorption</b>	Cross-border knowledge absorption is a process of learning and gaining expertise from other countries through different channels and mechanisms. Research institutions tend to establish representations in target markets to leverage international network and acquire advanced knowledge and practices from foreign partner institutions.
<b>Sub-pillar ii. Innovation Promotion</b>		
15	<b>Business Plan Competitions</b>	The organisation of business plan competitions aims to promote innovative idea generation among already existing firms and encourage potential entrepreneurs to innovate. Apart from the promotional effect, the competition opens up networking and financial opportunities exposing participants to wider audience, including public and private investors.
16	<b>R&amp;D Subsidies</b>	R&D subsidies are a commonly used financial instrument to offset costs arising from the innovation process. By setting certain requirements for obtaining financial support, the government can steer research activities of selected organisations in the prioritized direction and monitor their results.
17	<b>R&amp;D Loans</b>	R&D loans provide innovative public and private organisations with access to funding under preferential conditions, in particular setting lower interest rates and allowing a longer payment period. The loan encourages investment in knowledge generation and targets innovative start-ups and already existing enterprises, willing to introduce or expand their innovative products, services or processes.
18	<b>VAT Exemptions</b>	Innovation tax reliefs, in particular VAT exemption, are granted to enterprises to stimulate production of innovative goods and services in order to enhance/maintain business competitiveness and growth. This indirect support for innovation can be applied to specific type of firms and/or specific field of innovation activities depending on the country's established innovative orientation and objectives.
19	<b>Technology Incubators</b>	Technology incubators and accelerators gear towards stimulating the growth of technology-based start-ups and early-stage companies. Incubators provide enterprises with workspace under preferential conditions, facilities/infrastructure, and business support services, while the work of the accelerator is based on months-long intensive programmes with mentorship, possible office space, resources, and access to capital/investment.
<b>Sub-pillar iv. Relationships and Linkages</b>		
20	<b>Innovation Voucher Schemes</b>	Innovation vouchers provide financial impetus to firms on a non-competitive basis (unlike cooperative R&D grant) to introduce small-scale innovations by establishing linkages between SMEs and public research institutions. They serve a dual purpose of directly encouraging knowledge exchange while also building a long-term relationship between the industry and knowledge providers.
21	<b>Cooperative R&amp;D Grants</b>	Cooperative R&D grants are provided to public and private organisations on a competitive basis to implement research project in prioritized fields of innovation. This type of grant schemes usually requires collaboration of R&D institutions with business representatives, aiming to strengthen linkages between academia and the industry.
22	<b>SME Voucher Schemes</b>	Voucher schemes provide small amounts of public subsidy to SMEs to help them access external support for the development of specific competencies. Reviews of international experiences with voucher schemes suggest that they can help SMEs by improving their innovation capabilities and in helping overcome specific barriers to their development, such as risk aversion.
23	<b>Industry Research Networks</b>	Industry research networks connect a group of business researchers to share knowledge, expertise and address common concerns of business development through joint research activities. The promotion of research communities supports the consolidation of the industry by establishing stronger cooperation between firms and contributes to a more integrated approach to knowledge generation and sharing.

24	<b>Supplier Matching Services</b>	Business matching services enable buyers to find supplier partners in a wide range of fields according to their needs and preferences. Supplier matching support expands organisational capabilities by leveraging supplier skills and knowledge. Given limited capacities and resources of SMEs, the provision of these services, both online and offline, can accelerate innovation, benefitting buyers and suppliers.
24b	<b>S&amp;T Parks</b>	Science and technology parks provide services and business infrastructure to knowledge-based institutions to promote research activities, technological upgrade/development, and innovation. They support the development of technological entrepreneurship and create conditions, which allow unleashing their science and industrial potential.
25	<b>Innovation Spaces</b>	Innovation spaces are designed to promote collaborative approach to driving innovation by bringing together professionals from different sectors, disciplines and backgrounds. They tend to provide not only physical space and facilities, but also organize events, trainings and resources to facilitate communication and foster innovative activities.
26	<b>Supporting Business Networks</b>	Business networking communities, both online and offline, function as platforms to establish business contacts and referrals, raise visibility, keep up with latest market conditions and trends. They provide opportunities for knowledge/expertise sharing and problem solving. Based on a cooperative and inclusive approach, the interaction between business partners may result in the generation of ideas and joint projects for innovation development.
27	<b>Stimulating Clusters</b>	Clusters represent the concentration of competing and cooperating companies and institutions that operating in a particular sector and region. They aim to stimulate technology transfer, networking and information dissemination by promoting intensive interactions, sharing facilities and exchanging knowledge and expertise among cluster participants.
28	<b>Technology Accelerators</b>	Used to commercialise research results
29	<b>Promoting Mobility Between Academia and Industry</b>	Public research institutions represent the main driving force of research activities in Eastern Europe and Caucasus, but often work in isolation from the private sector. Governments encourage mobility between public sector and private organisations to create synergies between fundamental and practical knowledge and meet industry needs. Mobility options include traineeships/internships/temporary placements, vocational programmes developed in partnership with the business community, staff exchange initiatives, and consultancies by field experts.
30	<b>Encouraging Researcher Evaluation Between Academia and Industry</b>	The inclusion of indicators on the level of cooperation with industry in researcher performance evaluation stimulates the establishment of business-academia networks and linkages. Stronger involvement and cooperation of individual researchers with private sector enables them to acquire relevant, market-driven sets of skills and capabilities, building human capital for innovation-driven economic development.
31	<b>Leveraging Diaspora Networks</b>	Diaspora networks are an integral part of national scientific and professional potential, accumulated by their representatives through access to foreign education, economic and social systems. Countries tend to support the mobilisation of diaspora human and financial resources, as well as technology in order to facilitate knowledge exchange and to strengthen innovation connections between nations.
32	<b>Gender</b>	Better use of female skills is critical for innovation policy, with rising proportion of female tertiary degree graduates, professionals and technicians. However, participation of women in the labour force remains too low. Social and labour market policies, as well as overcoming gender stereotypes are crucial.
<b>Sub-pillar v. Knowledge Diffusion</b>		
33	<b>Information and Brokerage Schemes for Technology Upgrading</b>	Information and brokerage schemes offer a range of support services aimed at planning and implementing innovation activities. The scope of support schemes covers the provision of market/sector analysis, technological assessments, search of suitable collaboration partners, assistance in the project development process, and identification of potential funding opportunities.

34	<b>Standards, Testing and Certification Instruments for SMEs</b>	Quality and productivity instruments, in particular related to standards, testing and certification, facilitate the diffusion and adoption of technology-based processes among enterprises. They help develop a systemic approach to incorporate new technologies and techniques into business operation for enhanced competitiveness, growth and sustainable development.
35	<b>Industrial Technology Assistance Programs/Extension Services for SMEs</b>	Industrial technology programmes and services are oriented towards established SMEs that pursue the technological modernization in their production processes. The assistance targets the improvement of both hard and soft skills by providing relevant market intelligence services, technical assistance and consultancy, trainings and mentoring. Depending on the level of project complication, services may also include coordination support for projects design and implementation.
36	<b>Public Procurement for Innovation</b>	Public procurement provides an additional source of innovation promotion through the introduction of the innovation component in a statement of requirement. Depending on the government's needs and capabilities, innovation can be included as one of the selection criteria incorporated in tender specification as well as a standalone item of procurement.
<b>Sub-pillar vi. Research and Education</b>		
37	<b>Policies to Increase the Number of STEM Graduates</b>	Recognizing the requirements of today's labour markets and fast-evolving technological environment, governments have designated a multidisciplinary approach to education, based on the priority to support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). STEM graduates are adequately equipped with a new set of core knowledge and skills to successfully work with technological processes and generate new ideas. Policies to encourage STEM programmes often include the increase of scholarships/state-funded places and additional quotas for related specializations.
38	<b>Policies to Create an Appropriate Balance Between Fundamental and Applied Research</b>	Depending on a spectrum of factors, ranging from existing technological challenges to future aspirations for innovation-driven economy, countries adopt policies to create balance between fundamental and applied research. The government tends to be a principal funder of the basic research, which is generally more comprehensive in scope, while technological development is mainly funded by the industry.
39	<b>Policies to Foster Cross-border Cooperation in Research</b>	Cross-border cooperation in research is an important development tool that can improve innovative ability of involved countries by facilitating technology spill overs. Countries develop special programmes with allocated budget to enable knowledge and experience sharing and to undertake joint research activities in tackling common concerns in border areas.
<b>PILLAR III: THE INNOVATION POLICY PROCESS</b>		
The third pillar examines the underlying process for innovation policy. It looks at the details and, even more importantly, the evidence of data-driven consequences in decision-making and subsequent policy design. It follows the policy-making path from its outset (agenda setting and rationale) through policy design, implementation, evaluation, and learning.		
<b>Sub-pillar i. Preparation</b>		
40	<b>Innovation Foresight</b>	Innovation foresight captures future trends and perspectives for research activities that are subsequently incorporated or adjusted in a long-term strategic direction of the country's innovation development. As "discovery process" and collective "learning activity", innovation policies are based on certain assumptions and the understanding of potential change scenarios.  The ultimate output of foresight exercise is to inform decision making by exploring future trends and potential discontinuities.



41	<b>Rationale</b>	The rationale behind an innovation policy decision refers to the identification of an underlying problem, intended interventions to address this problem and consideration of possible alternative measures. Countries conduct analysis to identify and prioritize the most binding constraints and market failures to set strategic goals and elaborate evidence-based assumptions for relevant interventions.
<b>Sub-pillar ii. Design</b>		
42	<b>Ex-ante Evaluation</b>	The assessment of a policy prior its adoption is an increasingly useful tool applied by the government in parallel with or as a part of the policy design process. Ex-ante evaluation tends to cover problem analysis and needs assessment, objective setting, alternative delivery mechanisms and risk assessment, lessons learnt from similar implemented policies/programmes, future monitoring and evaluation and cost-effectiveness. Based on the evaluation results, policy measures can be continued or modified accordingly.
43	<b>Planning</b>	The Planning process evolves through rounds of consultations with inputs from multiple stakeholders representing public sector, business, academia, trade and investment support institutions. As a result, the plan of action defines activities to achieve strategic objectives, timeframes, required resources, and implementing organisations.
44	<b>Decision-making</b>	Decision making at the policy design stage is related to the choice of concrete initiatives, programmes, and instruments to achieve strategic vision and objectives. Characterized by an interdisciplinary nature, the innovation policy design requires involvement of experts and stakeholders from different domains to identify and address existing bottlenecks and constraints.
45	<b>Private Sector Consultation</b>	Public-private consultations are an integral part of the policy design process to ensure policy relevance to market and private sector needs and to confirm commitment to its implementation by relevant stakeholders. Private sector represented by various sectors and fields is encouraged to systematically provide inputs at every stage of policy design by communicating existing concerns and submitting proposals for their mitigation or elimination.
47	<b>Coherence</b>	Innovation policy is a supplementary component of a country's overarching strategy that contributes to the achievement of broader vision and objectives of socio-economic development. Its priorities and activities should be consistent and coherent with relevant "non-innovation" policies, in particular the ones addressing sustainable development.
<b>Sub-pillar iii. Implementation</b>		
48	<b>Amendments of Policies</b>	Recognizing the risk of unforeseen contextual issues, governments establish mechanisms and processes for systematic and continuous policy updates. Fast-evolving technological environment requires policy flexibility provided by a quick, and yet considerate and informed response to arising challenges and opportunities.
49	<b>Administrative Capacity</b>	The quality and efficiency of implemented activities as well as timely response to unforeseen challenges is highly dependent on the availability of required administrative capacities. Skilled public administration personnel with relevant educational background and work experience is a driving force of the policy implementation process.
50	<b>Continuity</b>	Continuity implies coordinated and consistent approach to policy implementation undertaken by multiple implementation bodies for the achievement of common strategic objectives. The complementarity of activities under national, regional and local programs and plans results into significant contribution to established policy targets and indicators.
51	<b>Review of Innovation Strategy Against its Action Plan</b>	Targets and timeframes defined in the action plan provide basis for a regular implementation progress review. Analysis of intermediate progress helps identify administrative, institutional and technical challenges faced during the implementation process and take necessary measures, including activity adjustment and re-allocation of resources.
<b>Sub-pillar iv. Post-Implementation</b>		

52	<b>Consistency</b>	Policy is expected to be consistent in two major dimensions: horizontal and vertical. Vertical consistency refers to the complementarity of programmes and plans tailored for the achievement of established policy objectives. Horizontal dimension requires consistency within the wider policy spectrum and across various policy fields to ensure contribution to a wider socio-economic development. Governments can build broad-based political support to ensure continuity and utilise mechanisms to guarantee a long-term funding perspective, such as ring-fencing of budgets.
53	<b>Ex-post Evaluation</b>	Ex-post evaluation is completed after the implementation of the action plan and based on actual results rather than forecasts. Post-implementation examination helps establish the impact of policy activities on the industry in general, specific fields or beneficiaries. The results serve as a basis to determine the effectiveness of an intervention against expected outputs and identify encountered barriers to better design future interventions.
54	<b>Adaptation</b>	In the light of acquired implementation experience, governments introduce necessary adjustments to innovation policy measures to better target new or already established policy objectives. This adaptation process enables decision-makers to correct or discontinue current interventions based on a thorough assessment of their effectiveness and impact.
55	<b>Policy Learning</b>	Policy learning builds on a continuous, multi-level and transparent monitoring and evaluation (both ex-ante and ex-post), which provides knowledge and understanding of policy driving factors and their effects. Lessons learnt are derived throughout the innovation policy cycle and allow re-designing the policy or its certain chapters in a more efficient and targeted way.