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**Promoting support policies for innovative, high-growth enterprises in
Eastern Europe and South Caucasus**
Webinar Series, 15 and 17 September 2020

Rationale

Globalisation, increasingly ubiquitous connectivity, and rapid technological progress will change not only how we create economic value, but how we produce, consume, live, work, and interact. Countries in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus are facing the challenge of making the most out of these opportunities – in particular, how to enable and promote continuous experimentation with new ideas, or innovation.

SMEs, enabled and encouraged by the right rules and policies, can drive this process. But not all of them: a small group of innovative, potentially high-growth enterprises play a key role in scouting and experimenting with the right opportunities and business models. This group share a range of characteristics that make many standard SME and entrepreneurship policies less effective than for SMEs overall. Public policies, institutions, and regulations should ensure that those enterprises get the support they need to experiment with new business ideas that, if successful, can benefit the economy and society and ultimately the Sustainable Development Goals.

Objective

These webinars, organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), aim to help officials from Eastern Europe and South Caucasus (EESC) to develop a better understanding of the nature of and policies and tools that enable and promote innovative, high-growth entrepreneurship. Participants will discuss, inter alia, i) effective state support services and regulatory frameworks for Innovative, High Growth Enterprises (IHGEs), and ii) enhancing IHGEs access to finance. The webinars are also an opportunity to present the findings of the forthcoming UNECE Handbook on Supporting IHGEs in EESC.

Participants

The workshop targets government officials and experts from Eastern Europe and South Caucasus responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating innovation, entrepreneurship, and SME policies, as well as business and civil society.

The webinars follow on the first workshop on IHGEs conducted in March 2019 in Minsk, Belarus. The project is part of a programme financially supported by Sweden. The OECD contribution is provided from the financial support of the European Union within the [EU4Business](#) initiative¹.

¹ EU4Business is an EU initiative that helps SMEs in the six countries of the Eastern Partnership region to realise their full potential and boost economic growth.

Webinar 1 Designing effective state support services and regulatory frameworks for IHGEs in EESC

Draft Agenda	
<i>Please, note that the below timing is based on CET time zone, Geneva/Paris time.</i>	
Moderator: Anders Jönsson, Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE	
09:00-09:30	<p>Access to the session</p> <p><i>Participants are recommended to join the meeting prior to its start to familiarise themselves with video conference tool. Thank you for consulting the technical note before.</i></p>
09:30-09:45	<p>Welcome and opening remarks</p> <p><i>Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE</i> <i>Daniel Quadbeck, Senior Policy Analyst, Eurasia Division, OECD</i></p>
09:45-10:45	<p>Support policies for IHGEs: good practices and exchange of experiences of EESC countries</p> <p><i>Framing presentation by Alasdair Reid, UNECE Consultant</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the forthcoming <i>UNECE Handbook for Innovative High-growth Enterprises in EESC</i>, the presentation will review the current state of IHGE development and outline broad recommendations for getting policies, institutions, and regulatory frameworks right. <p><i>Case study from Estonia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Eve Peeterson, Head, Startup Estonia</i> <p><i>Case study from Armenia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sevak Hovhannisyan, Partner, EV Consulting</i> <p><i>Case study from Belarus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Antti Rauhala, Policy Analyst, OECD</i>: Drawing on the OECD peer review note on <i>Monitoring Business Development Services and Supporting High Growth Enterprises in Belarus</i>, OECD will present its ongoing work on reforming SME policies and institutions in Belarus to enable and promote IHGEs. • <i>Iryna Babachonok, Director, Department for Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Economy of Republic of Belarus</i>
10:45-11:20	<p>Open discussion</p> <p><i>Comments by participating countries</i></p> <p>Azerbaijan, Fidan Rustamova, Senior Expert, Startup Support and Acceleration Department, Innovation Agency Azerbaijan</p> <p>Moldova, Constantin Turcanu, Head of analysis, Innovation and Entrepreneurial Training Department, Organisation for SME Sector Development (ODIMM)</p>
11:20-11:30	<p>Conclusions</p> <p><i>Anders Jönsson, Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE</i></p>

Webinar 2 Enabling access to finance for IHGEs in EESC region

Draft Agenda	
<i>Please, note that the below timing is based on CET time zone, Geneva/Paris time.</i>	
Moderator: Katia Adamo, Economic Affairs Officer, Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE	
09:00-09:30	<p>Access to the session</p> <p><i>Participants are recommended to join the meeting prior to its start to familiarise themselves with video conference tool. Thank you for consulting the technical note before.</i></p>
09:30-09:45	<p>Welcome and opening remarks</p> <p><i>Anders Jönsson, Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE</i> <i>Tural Kerimli, Chairman of the Board, Innovation Agency Azerbaijan</i></p>
09:45-10:55	<p>Closing gaps in access to finance for IHGEs: drawing from international and EESC countries` experiences</p> <p><i>Framing presentation by Alasdair Reid, UNECE Consultant</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the forthcoming <i>UNECE Handbook for Innovative High-growth Enterprises in EESC</i>, the presentation will review the current state of IHGEs access to finance and provide recommendations on financial support to these firms based on the international best practices. <p><i>Case study from Finland</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vesa Salminen, CEO, 4FRONT</i> <p><i>Case study from Georgia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annie Vashakmadze, Head of Donor Relations and International Relations Department, GITA</i> <p><i>Case study from Belarus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Antonio Fanelli, Senior expert on SME policy</i>, will present main outcomes of ECE project on venture capital in Belarus, highlighting challenges encountered and potential for similar projects in the EESC region. • <i>Nikolay Shestak, Managing Partner, Zubr Capital</i>
10:55-11:25	<p>Open discussion</p> <p><i>Comments by participating countries</i></p> <p>Ukraine, Dominique Piotet, <i>CEO, Unit City Innovation park</i> Azerbaijan, Vusal Karimli, <i>Managing Director, SUP Accelerator</i></p>
11:25-11:30	<p>Conclusions</p> <p><i>Anders Jönsson, Chief, Innovative Policies Development Section, UNECE</i></p>