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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

UN-Wide Capacity Building Workshop on Technology for Development:
Innovation Policies for SDGs in the Arab Region
Amman, 15-19 April 2018

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION NOTE

I. BACKGROUND

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, by the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA), identifies key **Science Technology and Innovation (STI)** policies and actions for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The *Paris Agreement on Climate Change* also proposes a framework for enhanced action on technology development and transfer.

Among the outcomes of these agreements has been the establishment of a *Technology Facilitation Mechanism* (TFM) as an important tool to mobilize STI solutions for the SDGs. UN specialized agencies with STI-intensive mandates have joined to promote improved technology cooperation and enable the transfer of necessary technological know-how needed to build up economic, technical and managerial capacities targeting the SDGs.

Within this context, a *UN Interagency Task Team (IATT) on STI for the SDGs*¹ was established to operationalize the TFM through seven Working Streams whereby IATT's Work Stream 6 (WS6) is responsible for the capacity building component of the TFM².

An effective STI policy is a prerequisite to achieve sustainable development. Designing and implementing impactful policies in turn requires building capacity among policy makers to prepare those policies, prior to engaging in policy reform.

IATT WS6 proposes a capacity building programme on the framework, policies, and measurement of innovation in the context of SDGs in three different modes:

- a- Foundational mode: focuses on STI rationale, policies, tools, monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
- b- Advanced mode: specializes on STI issues based on specific national, sectoral or regional needs;
- c- Complementary mode: based on study/exposure visits and the development of follow up initiatives.

¹ In addition, to ESCWA and other UN organizations, the IATT is initially composed of the entities that currently integrate the informal working group on technology facilitation namely Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the United Nations University-MERIT, and the World Bank. More info on members and the TOR of IATT is available on the following link: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/tfm>.

² IATT on STI has 7 Work Streams as follows:

WS1: Establishment and Management of the Interagency Task Team;

WS2: Group of 10 representatives of civil society, private sector and science (10-Member Group);

WS3: Collaborative, multi-stakeholder forum on STI for the SDGs;

WS4: Online Platform;

WS5: Mapping of STI initiatives, background research and reports in support of the TFM activities;

WS6: UN capacity building programme on technology facilitation for SDGs;

WS7: Partnerships and fund raising.

Against this backdrop, ESCWA is collaborating with the IATT WS6 to organize a 5-day foundational capacity building course in the ESCWA region that focuses on innovation policies and their relation to SDGs.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The course seeks to introduce the participants to more generic innovation policies and provide training on the systemic nature of innovation and innovation policy to increase the awareness of productive actors – private enterprises, public firms, small and medium-sized enterprises, farmers, inventors, entrepreneurs – form the core of innovation systems.

Therefore, the course will focus on the following:

1. The systemic nature of innovation and innovation policy;
2. Various components of an innovation policy, especially the distinction between financial and non-financial instruments and their impacts;
3. Importance of policies for increasing the supply of technically trained human resources for R&D and other innovation activities;
4. Collection and presentation of conventional indicators, which will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of specific instruments of innovation policies;
5. New innovation indicators, such as community innovation surveys, while understanding the limitations of replicating such efforts in developing countries; and
6. Integration of evaluation in to the actual design of innovation policies.

III. OUTCOMES

The current foundational 5-day course will enable participants to:

- Acquire better understanding about innovation and innovation policy;
- Learn about the best practices in STI policies globally, regionally and nationally.
- Have more knowledge about the role of STI for achieving the SDGs;
- Learn about the ESCWA framework for innovation policy and its various components, and have information about the status of innovation in the Arab region,
- Exchange experiences with their peers, both nationally and internationally,
- Assist in developing a concrete plan of action for their constituencies back home.

IV. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The course will be structured along three core elements related to STI for SDGs: conceptual framework, design and implementation of innovation policies and monitoring and evaluation of innovation policies. It will present the conceptual frameworks and policy experiences whereby the learning approach will be based on human interaction, discussion of own experiences, team work and building of networks as basis for potential follow-up activities.

Participants will work on country or topic-specific groups where they will review and assess their respective regional or national innovation policies and develop improvements in line with the SDGs framework indicators. Within this context, the training workshop serves as a first step in the development and implementation of the UN-wide IATT WS6 capacity building programmes.

The course material will include lectures and exercises. Reference material will include available books, articles and manuals used in the field. It will also draw on literature that focuses on specific STI themes, experiences, success stories and policy recommendations in addition to ESCWA's current studies and research on innovation policy and other technical studies related to innovation and technology for SDGs. Top level experts from public and private sector, academia as well as UN agencies involved in the design of the course will deliver the training workshop.

Within the aforementioned framework, the agenda of the course will tackle the following topics:

1. STI for SDGs: Conceptual Framework;
2. Design and Implementation of Innovation Policies;
3. Monitoring and Evaluation of Innovation policies.

More information about the course are included in the Annex.

V. ORGANIZATION

The course is organized by ESCWA in collaboration with the UN-Interagency Task Team and will be held during the period 15-19 April 2018 in Amman, Jordan. English will be the working language of the meeting. More details about the venue, accommodation and other logistics will be sent to registered participants by email.

VI. PARTICIPANTS

Government mid to high-level decision makers (such as "Director of Department") nominated by their respective Ministries such as Ministries of Science and Technology, Industry, Economic Affairs in ESCWA member states are invited to participate in this course. Experts involved in STI from academia, research institutes, chamber of commerce and industry as well as from regional organizations will also be invited to this course.

Government representatives who are nominated by their ministries and invited experts are kindly requested to send their registration form to ESCWA by 1st of March 2018 in order to assure arrangements for their participation. ESCWA will partially cover the cost of participants from selected countries, especially least developed countries. Sponsorship cannot be guaranteed for nominations or confirmation received after this deadline.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

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For additional information, please visit the meeting website at:
<https://www.unescwa.org/events/workshop-innovation-policies-sdgs-arab-region>

ANNEX

TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT

1. STI for SDGs: Conceptual Framework

- a. Role of Technology and Innovation in Growth and Sustainable Development
- b. The conditions for innovation and the role of change
- c. Science, Technology and Innovation in the 2030 Development Agenda
- d. Innovation theory and concepts, National Systems of Innovation and the SDGs
- e. Role of R&D in innovation and economic growth
- f. Role and importance of public investment in STI
- g. Tapping into global knowledge flows
- h. Integrating R&D investments into development policy

2. Design and Implementation of Innovation Policies

- a. The policy content and process in an SDG context: objectives, instruments, capabilities and stages
- b. Diversification into new sectors: approaches and mechanisms
- c. Human capacity building: education, vocational and skilled labour promoting policies
- d. Women in STI: addressing the gender gap
- e. Entrepreneurship, start-ups, SMEs and innovation experiences
- f. Role of intellectual property rights in STI at different stages of development
- g. Promoting linkages and networks: universities, value chains, domestic and foreign stakeholders
- h. Fostering technology transfer: role, absorption capacity, channels and promotion instruments
- i. Spatial and sectoral dimensions of STI policies: clusters, technology/industrial parks, supply/value chains
- j. Financing innovation: access and incentives
- k. Stimulating demand for innovation, in particular, through public procurement

3. Monitoring and Evaluation of Innovation policies

- a. STI indicators frameworks: methodologies, collection approaches, standards
- b. Measuring and analyzing STI policies: R&D and other STI indicators
- c. Innovation and R&D Surveys: design and implementation, standards
- d. Monitoring STI indicators' progress in the context of SDGs
- e. Innovation evaluation approaches in the context of SDGs
- f. Innovation impact evaluation in the context of SDGs
