

UN-WIDE CAPACITY-BUILDING PILOT COURSE IN TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT: '*Innovation Policies for SDGs in the Arab region*'

Concept note

A. INTRODUCTION

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, by the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA), identify 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.

One of the consequences of these agreements was 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.

To operationalize the TFM a *UN Interagency Task Team (IATT) on STI for the SDGs* was established. The IATT is composed of the entities that currently integrate the informal working group on technology facilitation (e.g. UNDESA, UNEP, UNIDO, UNESCO, UNCTAD, ITU, UNU MERIT, WIPO and the World Bank). This group is open to the participation of all other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. The IATT's Work Stream 6 (WS6) is responsible for the capacity building component of the TFM.

The first initiative of the IATT WS6 is a pilot training course on the framework, policies and measurement of innovation in the context of the SDGs.

B. OBJECTIVE OF THE INITIATIVE

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 programme of capacity building in three modes: foundation, advanced and complementary. Foundation will focus on STI rationale, policies, and tools, monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Advanced will specialise on STI issues based on specific national, sectoral or regional needs. Complementary, may be based on study/exposure visits and the development of follow up initiatives.

The IATT WS6 proposes to organize a pilot course on innovation policies and how they relate to SDG. This pilot will be a foundation course. It will serve as a test to implement potential institutional arrangements for future coordination between UN Agencies.

Course content, including syllabus, readings, and exercises, and other related material will be prepared by the IATT WS6. Course delivery will be in cooperation with participant and host UN agencies. The pilot training course should also start collaboration with regional and country partners, identify their needs and new content, and learn on ways of improving or adapting delivery for specific audiences.

This training course shall serve as a first step in the development and implementation of the UN-wide capacity-building programmes.

C. PILOT COURSE OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT

The course has the following objectives, stated in terms of enabling participants to:

1. Better understand the systemic nature of innovation and innovation policy;
2. Increase awareness that productive actors – private enterprises, public firms, small and medium-sized enterprises, farmers, inventors, entrepreneurs – form the core of innovation systems;
3. Appreciate better the various components of an innovation policy, especially the distinction between financial and non-financial instruments and their impacts;
4. Understand the importance of policies for increasing the supply of technically trained human resources for R&D and other innovation activities;
5. Improve the collection and presentation of conventional indicators, which will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of specific instruments of innovation policies;
6. Highlight the existence of new innovation indicators, such as community innovation surveys, while understanding the limitations of replicating such efforts in developing countries; and
7. Appreciate the need to integrate evaluation in to the actual design of innovation policies.

The pilot course will be implemented in the Arab region in collaboration with ESCWA. The Technology for Development Division of ESCWA, through its Innovation Section, has done extensive work related to innovation policy. This includes the development of an innovation policy framework for the Arab region specifically geared towards the achievement of inclusive sustainable development. The Regional Commission also furthered its work in innovation policy with research on innovation and entrepreneurship, small and medium enterprises, and social well-being.

The course will last for five days. It will gather a group of 30 mid-level policymakers, such as “director of department”, from the ESCWA region. Generating participation would focus on Ministries of Science and Technology, Ministries of Industry, Ministries of Economic Affairs, other technology policy and supporting institutions as well as universities and chambers of commerce (public sector is generally the main target group). These will be selected together with the local counterpart.

Around 30 participants from the Arab region, well distributed geographically, will be funded by ESCWA. Participant from Gulf countries will sponsor themselves. ESCWA has currently 18 Arab countries as members.

The course will consist of lectures and exercises. The lectures and presentations will be delivered in English with simultaneous interpretation to Arabic. Coursework materials will be available in English. Exercises will be conducted in English.

The course will present conceptual frameworks and policy experiences and will engage attendants in exercises. 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 SDG framework indicators. 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. The course will enable participants to get an overview of existing best practice in STI policies globally and the ESCWA framework for innovation policy, understand the status of innovation in the Arab region, exchange experiences with their peers, both nationally and internationally, and help developing a concrete plan of action for their constituencies back home.

Course material will include available books, articles and manuals used in the field. It will draw also on official literature focusing on specific STI themes, experiences, success stories and policy recommendations. It will draw on ESCWA’s current studies and research on innovation policy and other technical studies related to Innovation and Technology for SDGs.

Course faculty will gather at least one staff from the agencies involved in the design of the course together with top-level experts from the public and private sector, academia and other IATT member agencies, both locally and internationally. The location of the training will be defined by ESCWA and most probably will be at ESCWA. Each agency involved in the programme would fund its involvement in the training.

D. COURSE CONTENT

As pointed out above the pilot course will be foundational, that is will introduce participants into the subject matter and focus on the more generic innovation policies. The course will be structured along three core elements: STI for SDGs: Conceptual Framework, Design and Implementation of Innovation Policies and Monitoring and Evaluation of Innovation policies.

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 analysing 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

E. TIMEFRAME AND LOCATION

Preparations for the first course, including invitations shall start in January 2018. The course shall take place in the week of 15-19th April in Amman, Jordan.