



**Draft Action Plan  
for Implementing  
the SPECA Innovation  
Strategy for  
Sustainable  
Development**

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# Main objectives of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development



- Objective 1. Upgrade the knowledge and skills base of key stakeholders in the SPECA countries to meet the challenges of addressing SDGs with innovative solutions
- Objective 2. Facilitate the diffusion of innovations and the transfer of technologies addressing sustainable development challenges in the subregion
- Objective 3. Enhance the institutional framework for subregional cooperation for implementing innovation addressing sustainable development challenges of common interest
- Objective 4. Contribute to improved performance of the SPECA countries as measured against the SDGs

# Key cooperation mechanisms in the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development

- *Strengthening the subregional policy dialogue and the sharing of good policies and practices*, including the attraction of leading international expertise in innovation for sustainable development
- *Working together in identifying subregional and transboundary sustainable development challenges of high priority and common interest that call for innovative solutions*
- *Raising awareness in the SPECA countries on the role of innovation in achieving the SDGs*
- *Strengthening cooperation with existing platforms and mechanisms for international cooperation to promote innovation for sustainable development within the United Nations family of organizations*

# Logical framework of the Action Plan for implementing the SPECA Innovation Strategy

- The main body of the Action Plan comprises a description of the actions through which the SPECA countries will target the objectives of the Strategy
- Another component of the Action Plan is the list of Strategy milestones which are checkpoints in the implementation process as well as the diagram of the sequencing of the actions
- The Action Plan includes a description of the resources necessary for the implementation of the actions
- The logical framework also contains a description of the governance and monitoring mechanisms envisaged for the oversight of progress in implementing the SPECA Innovation Strategy

# Proposed cooperative actions for implementing the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development

No.	Actions and sub-actions	Description	Targeted Strategy objectives	Lead UN Agency	Timeline
<b>A1</b>	<b>Action Plan launch</b>	<b>Organisational activities to support Action Plan implementation in the SPECA countries</b>	<b>O1, O2, O3 O4</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
A1.1	Nomination of Focal Points	Each SPECA country nominates a Focal Point to coordinate implementation in the respective countries	O1, O2, O3 O4	UNECE ESCAP	2021-2022
A1.2	Promotional/awareness raising campaigns	Each SPECA country undertakes a national promotional/ awareness raising campaign to mobilise participation of national stakeholders in the implementation of actions	O1, O2, O3 O4	UNECE ESCAP	2022
<b>A2</b>	<b>National capacity development and skill-building workshops</b>	<b>The workshops will cover selected topics on innovation policy for inclusive and sustainable development based on identified needs and priority areas for cooperation for the SPECA countries</b>	<b>O1, O3</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2022-2024</b>
A2.1	First series of national workshops	Possible topics: a) Building institutional capacity in innovation for inclusive and sustainable development policy; b) Policy coordination on innovation for inclusive and sustainable development	O1, O3	UNECE ESCAP	2022
A2.2	Second series of national workshops	Possible topics: a) Policy experimentation in innovation policy for inclusive and sustainable development; b) Innovation-enhancing public procurement targeting innovation for sustainable development	O1, O3	UNECE ESCAP	2023
A2.3	Third series of national workshops	Possible topics: a) Alternative sources of early-stage financing: microfinance and crowdfunding; b) Facilitating digital innovation and digital ecosystems supporting inclusive and sustainable development in the SPECA countries	O1, O3	UNECE ESCAP	2024
<b>A3</b>	<b>Training materials on innovation for SD policies (in 3 sets)</b>	<b>Develop and disseminate training materials on good practices in innovation policies for inclusive and sustainable development</b>	<b>O1</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2022-2024</b>

# Proposed cooperative actions for implementing the SPECA Innovation Strategy (contd.)

No.	Actions and sub-actions	Description	Targeted Strategy objectives	Lead UN Agency	Timeline
<b>A4</b>	<b>SPECA innovation/ startup competition</b>	<b>A competition of innovation projects initiated by startups from the SPECA countries</b>	<b>O2, O4</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
A4.1	Competition launch	Announcement of the competition and its terms and ensuring wide publicity	O2, O4	UNECE ESCAP	2022
A4.2	Collecting bids	Soliciting bids from eligible participants from the SPECA countries	O2, O4	UNECE ESCAP	2022
A4.3	Review of submissions	The submitted bids will be reviewed by a UNECE+ESCAP jury of international experts	O2, O4	UNECE ESCAP	2023
A4.4	Announcing winners	The jury of international experts ranks the bids. The winners are awarded prizes	O2, O4	UNECE ESCAP	2023
<b>A5</b>	<b>SPECA Innovation Week</b>	<b>A series of mini webinars on consecutive days, during each of which one or two SPECA countries share their good practices in innovation for sustainable development policy and practice</b>	<b>O1, O3</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>A6</b>	<b>Technical assistance missions by international experts</b>	<b>During missions, leading international experts will share their expertise with SPECA policymakers on selected topics of innovation policy design and implementation</b>	<b>O1, O3</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2022-2024</b>
A6.1	First technical assistance mission	Possible topics: a) Building institutional capacity in innovation for sustainable development policy; b) Policy coordination in innovation for sustainable development	O1, O3	UNECE	2022
A6.2	Second technical assistance mission	Possible topics: a) Policy experimentation in innovation policy; b) Innovation-enhancing public procurement targeting innovation for sustainable development	O1, O3	UNECE	2023
A6.3	Third technical assistance mission	Possible topics: a) Alternative sources of early-stage financing: microfinance and crowdfunding; b) Facilitating digital innovation and digital ecosystems in the SPECA region	O1, O3	UNECE ESCAP	2024

# Proposed cooperative actions for implementing the SPECA Innovation Strategy (contd.)

No.	Actions and sub-actions	Description	Targeted Strategy objectives	Lead UN Agency	Timeline
<b>A7</b>	<b>SPECA startup accelerator programme and support network</b>	<b>The programme will help innovative SPECA startups to accelerate the life cycle of their businesses</b>	<b>O2, O4</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
A7.1	Programme and network launch	Announcement of the terms of the programme and launch of the support network	O2, O4	UNECE ESCAP	2023
A7.2	Soliciting applications and their evaluation	The eligible submissions by SPECA startups are evaluated by a panel of international experts	O2, O4	UNECE ESCAP	2023
A7.3	Programme runs in phases 1 and 2	The startups get intensive structured training and face-to-face consultations with mentors and prospective partners	O2, O4	UNECE ESCAP	2023 – 2024
A7.4	Demo days	The participants pitch their startup to actual potential investors	O2, O4	UNECE ESCAP	2024
<b>A8</b>	<b>Mid-term monitoring and evaluation report</b>	<b>Preparing a mid-term monitoring and evaluation report on Action Plan implementation</b>	<b>O1, O2, O3 O4</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>A9</b>	<b>SPECA subregional event on innovation for SD policy instruments</b>	<b>A skills development workshop on good practices in the design and administration of policy instruments targeting innovation for sustainable development</b>	<b>O2, O4</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>A10</b>	<b>SPECA subregional event on innovation support institutions</b>	<b>A skills development workshop on good practices in design and management of innovation support institutions (business incubators, tech parks and technology transfer offices)</b>	<b>O2, O4</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>A11</b>	<b>Final monitoring and evaluation report</b>	<b>Final monitoring and evaluation report on Action Plan implementation</b>	<b>O1, O2, O3 O4</b>	<b>UNECE ESCAP</b>	<b>2024</b>







## Detailed implementation plans:

# Pilot Action “SPECA innovation/startup competition”

Annotation. The SPECA innovation/startup competition will be a contest among innovation projects initiated by startups from the SPECA countries.

- The competing projects should have already advanced from their initial conception phase to reach an intermediate implementation phase close to market (e.g., a prototype)
- The bids will be reviewed by a jury of international innovation experts
- The winners of the competition will be awarded prizes procured by the supporting organizations

# Organisational framework of the Pilot Action “SPECA innovation/startup competition”

<i>Phases</i>	<i>Steps/ Sub-actions</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1	Competition launch	The supporting organisations together with the national Focal Points of the SPECA Innovation Strategy will prepare terms of reference for the competition and announce the start of the competition and its terms. The terms should include eligibility criteria for the proposals, the criteria for their evaluation and the prizes for the winners. The Focal Points organize wide publicity of the competition among the potential participants and other relevant stakeholders in each country	March – May 2022
2	Soliciting bids from SPECA innovators	Each SPECA country organises a national submission e-window for collecting bids to the competition and nominates technical experts who will check the eligibility of the proposals with the help of international experts mobilised by the supporting organisations. The potential candidates are be invited to submit proposals (only in electronic form) as early as possible. The window for submission remains open for a sufficiently long period which will provide an opportunity for a second chance of successful submission to proposals that could not meet the eligibility criteria in a first attempt. The successful bids are be forwarded to the supporting organisations.	June 2022 – March 2023
3	Review of successfully submitted proposals	The supporting organisations mobilise a jury of renowned international innovation experts which will be tasked with the review of successfully submitted proposals. The jury organises among its members the evaluation of the submitted proposals in accordance with the pre-announced evaluation criteria. Finally, the jury will jointly decide on the proposed ranking of all proposals. The final ranking of the jury will be coordinated with and validated by the supporting organisations.	April – October 2023
4	Announcing the results and awarding the winners	The supporting organisations inform the national Focal Points of the results of the competition and the Focal Points organize wide publicity of these results. The top three (or five) proposals from the evaluation ranking will be awarded with prizes procured by the supporting organizations. The ceremony of awarding the prizes to the winners will take place at a SPECA event (e.g. the annual session of the SPECA WG ITSD)	October – November 2023

# Strategy/Action Plan resources



- The implementation of the actions will require financial, human and in-kind resources
- The main input expected from the SPECA countries will be in the form of human resources contributing local expertise and effort
- Each SPECA country is also expected to nominate a national Focal Point who would coordinate Strategy implementation at the national level
- UNECE and ESCAP will consider their support to the Action Plan within the available budgetary and extrabudgetary resources
- Support should also be available from the UNDA project 2023N “Strengthening innovation policies for SPECA countries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”
- Additional resources for the implementation of the Action Plan could be mobilized from international donors

# Governance and monitoring of Strategy/ Action Plan implementation



- The SPECA Governing Council and the SPECA WG on ITSD will perform the functions of Joint Governance and Monitoring Bodies for the implementation of the SPECA Innovation Strategy and its Action Plan
- The SPECA national Focal Points would lead and coordinate the process of implementation in the respective countries
- The implementation teams will prepare Periodic Monitoring and Evaluation Reports which will be submitted to and reviewed by the SPECA Governing Council
- The Governing Council may decide to introduce changes to the Action Plan on the basis of the results reported in the periodic Monitoring and Evaluation Reports



**Thank you!**

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