



## **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development**

18<sup>th</sup> meeting, 25 and 26 May 2023

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### **Information Paper No. 5**

**Draft concept note and planning of the first capacity-building activity to be organized in 2023 or 2024 under the Swiss project (2023–2025) on implementing the fourth strand on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development” of the implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030**

#### **Item 9 of the provisional agenda:**

**Draft concept note and planning of the first capacity-building activity to be organized in 2023 or 2024 under the Swiss project (2023–2025) on implementing the fourth strand on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development” of the implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030**

**Prepared by the Secretariat<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This information document was not formally edited

1. The Steering Committee will be updated about the draft concept note for the first capacity-building activity to be organized in 2023 or 2024 under the Swiss project (2023–2025) on implementing the fourth strand on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development” of the implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 (information paper No. 5).

2. The members will be invited to express their interest<sup>2</sup> in considering participation in, and/or providing contributions to, the organization of the activity through financial contributions or in-kind contributions by, for example, providing experts and/or hosting the activity.

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<sup>2</sup> Interest to be expressed either from the floor during consideration of this agenda item or by email to the secretariat: [esd@un.org](mailto:esd@un.org) and [zaal.lomtadze@un.org](mailto:zaal.lomtadze@un.org)

# **Draft concept note and planning of the first capacity-building activity to be organized in 2023 or 2024 under the Swiss project (2023–2025) on implementing the fourth strand on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development” of the implementation framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030**

*Note by the secretariat*

## **Background**

1. At the High-level meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Vilnius, March 2005), countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region adopted the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (“Strategy” or “Strategy for ESD”) as a practically applied policy instrument that would facilitate promotion of ESD in the region. They also adopted the Vilnius Framework for Implementation setting up a Steering Committee in order to facilitate coordination and review of the Strategy’s implementation.
2. Since 2005, the ECE member States work together on implementation of the Strategy which is considered as a regional pillar of implementation of ESD for 2030, a new framework on ESD, coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the global level, which is built on the UN Decade on ESD (2005-2014) and the Global Action Programme on ESD (2015-2019).
3. The UNECE Strategy for ESD has furthered the recognition across global education initiatives that education systems must respond to the social, environmental and economic challenges facing the world today. The main aim of the Strategy is to encourage countries to introduce ESD into all forms of their education systems. The Strategy covers all levels of education, from primary to tertiary, including vocational and adult learning. It provides flexible framework for implementing ESD and can be adapted by its member countries to their needs and priorities.
4. In an effort to address the priority areas defined in the previous implementation framework of the Strategy adopted at the Second High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries in Batumi, Georgia (8 June 2016) , a number of capacity building activities had been organised in the region during the last decade at the request of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD and with the help of funding provided by the Swiss government – the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), focused on the implementation of the third priority area on “Strengthening technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy”. Thus, in 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2021, five capacity building national workshops were held successfully in the Kyrgyz Republic, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan (online) aimed at building the capacity of participants in acquiring knowledge on how to reorient the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in support of sustainable development and green economies in general, and particularly to identify elements of institutional environment for the training of entrepreneurs of small/medium businesses and understand critical areas for intervention, as well as in raising awareness of local stakeholders on importance of developing educational strategies and competencies of educators involved in implementing ESD in TVET system.
5. Over the past few years, the decisions taken by the Steering Committee have accelerated the pace of implementation of the Strategy in the ECE region, contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 and in particular its target 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development at the global level, in cooperation with UNESCO. In response to the challenges of the new decade of 2020–2030, the Steering Committee has undertaken a review of the direction of its work, with the help of its new expert groups working in the framework of activities under the Strategy, mandated to elaborate on the new strands of implementation framework and revise relevant indicators of progress.

6. For the next phase of work, launched at the Third High-level meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Nicosia, Cyprus, 5 October 2022), the Nicosia Ministerial Statement on ESD adopted by the Meeting reaffirmed the importance of education for achieving sustainable development and recognized both the central role of the ECE Steering Committee in promoting ESD in the region through demonstrated successful cooperation between the environment and education sectors, and the important contribution of other relevant sectors and stakeholders, especially educators, non-governmental organizations and their networks, business, youth and the media.

7. The Nicosia High-level Meeting adopted the Framework for implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 and stressed in particular the importance of focusing on the implementation of its four priority areas/strands of policy (quality education and ESD; whole institution approach/institutions as communities of transformational learning; digital education, information and communication technology and ESD; entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD), identified by the Steering Committee, and on strengthening the role of youth within these strands to ensure that youth are more active in planning and integrating ESD policies and actions at the national and regional levels.

## **Overall Objective of the project**

8. The overall objective of the project is to develop actions aiming at implementing the fourth strand (or priority area) – “*Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD*” of the implementation framework of UNECE Strategy for ESD from 2021 to 2030. The main goals within this strand are to provide a guiding framework for 21st century competences for innovation and entrepreneurship and to develop a toolkit with functional educational approaches that support the required skills for the development of entrepreneurship, employability and innovation especially for youth, as outlined in the draft workplan for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2025” (proposed at the 17th Meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on ESD, Geneva, 30-31 May 2022).

## **Draft outline of activities to be implemented in 2023-2025**

9. *Geographic scope:*

- UNECE members as a whole or focused target members, basing on requests from the member States and as a result of agreement to be reached between the donor country, ECE secretariat and the Steering Committee.

10. *Target education levels:*

- to focus on the upper secondary level, where entrepreneurship may be most taught; could include also tertiary level, including TVET, taking into consideration the structure of education system of the respective country/ies in focus.

11. *Expertise:*

- Swiss experts, including other experts from the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD and/or associated invited experts.

12. *Activities:*

(a) National capacity-building workshop (one per year or every two years, sometime in spring), for example, before the meeting of the Steering Committee; OR

(b) A sub-regional capacity-building event (workshop, seminar, etc.) with participation of 2-3 member States, [eventually/desirably committed to share costs]; OR

(c) A cross-educational capacity-building event (conference, workshop, seminar, etc.) with different countries sharing their own expertise (for example, Switzerland - in TVET; Austria, Germany or Denmark in upper-TVET and other countries - in higher education; experiences in lower-secondary level (if existing) would also be useful) [and eventually/desirably committing to share costs]; OR

(d) Any other activities, which may be identified by donors (Switzerland and possible other co-donors) or the Steering Committee.

13. *Funding:*

- Financial contribution of the Swiss Government (SERI) for a three-year project in the total amount of CHF 180'000 (i.e. CHF 60'000 per year) to be implemented during 2023-2025 (the period of funding: 2022-2024).

## **A complimentary draft project proposal submitted for funding on 10 May 2023 through the UNECE Regular Program for Technical Cooperation**

### *Note by the Secretariat*

The Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)<sup>3</sup> is the UN-wide mechanism, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 58 (I) in 1946, to support developing countries, least developed countries, countries with economies in transition and countries emerging from conflict in their capacity development efforts. Currently, those efforts are geared towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, and the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits.

The RPTC organises a yearly call for proposals for demand-driven short term technical cooperation projects with the limited funding from the UN regular budget. These proposals must have particular focus and a rather short time span (to be implemented by the end of 2023). The theme this year is: “Technical assistance for resilient and green transformation addressing the impact of ongoing crisis in the UN programme countries in UNECE region”.

The call for proposals for 2023 was issued at a rather short notice (end of April) with the submission deadline of May 10; however, the secretariat saw the possibility to align the goals of the potential RPTC proposal with the ongoing work of the Steering Committee and with the earmarked donor contribution of Switzerland, and decided to quickly draft and submit a proposal for RPTC funding. With the limited geographical coverage of the RPTC, it also was vital to quickly agree the proposed project with a potential host country.

Taking into consideration the current priorities of the Committee, focused on the implementation of the priority strands/areas of the newly adopted framework of implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD from 2021 to 2030, the secretariat has elaborated a draft project proposal aimed at facilitating the implementation of the fourth priority area on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD” in Georgia, based on the request received from the government of Georgia, asking to assist in building its capacity for implementing the Strategy on the national level and particularly for implementing the fourth strand of the 2030 implementation framework.

In case the RPTC funding will be made available for the present project proposal (the answer is currently awaited, to be received within the coming week or so), its’ implementation will also contribute to the goals of the three-year (2023–2025) project prepared in cooperation with and funded by the government of Switzerland (Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation) on implementing the fourth strand on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development” of the implementation framework of the UNECE Strategy for ESD from 2021 to 2030, and can be considered as a first capacity-building activity to be organized in 2023, as referred to on page 4, paragraph 12 (a). This way the RPTC funding could be complemented by the funds provided by Switzerland (details to be agreed with the donor) by, for example, expanding the participation in the project, based on the expression of interest from the countries. This would allow to develop outputs/materials that can be used for the activities to be implemented in 2024 and 2025 under the Swiss contribution, thus enhancing synergy between two sources of funding.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/universal/regular-programme-technical-cooperation-44152>

1. **Title:** Strengthening national capacity of Georgia in implementing the fourth priority area on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development” of the implementation framework of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 as a tool for green transformation and resilience.

2. **Expected timing and venue:** 1 September – 15 December 2023 (tbc)

## **Background**

3. Since 2005, member states of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) have collaborated on implementing the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which has highlighted the importance of education in addressing social, environmental, and economic challenges facing our world.

4. At the 70th session of the Commission, the new Framework for implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 (ESD implementation framework or framework) was recognized as a powerful tool for developing the knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to anticipate and prepare for an uncertain future. This framework provides a platform to develop agile, yet robust policies that address the risks of poly-crisis, while leveraging opportunities for sustainable and equitable economic development in the UNECE region. The UNECE Strategy for ESD facilitates the integration of education for sustainable development into all education levels and along all sectors of society by prioritizing the implementation of the four key policy directions of its implementation framework: quality education and ESD, whole institution approach/institutions as communities of transformational learning, digital education, information and communication technology and ESD, and entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD. Additionally, the framework places a strong emphasis on the role of youth in planning and integrating ESD policies and actions at national and regional levels.

## **Objective and a brief summary of the project/activity**

5. This project aims to enhance the capacity of Georgia (and of other participating countries) in implementing the fourth priority area of the implementation framework of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development. Specifically, it aims to encourage all UNECE member States to use education for sustainable development for stimulating entrepreneurial and innovative mindsets among learners in order to accelerate transformations towards sustainable development and increase the employability of youth in existing or emerging new jobs, as well as address disparities related to technological advances, and contribute to a sustainable, fair and resilient future. By following the workplan for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD from 2021 to 2025, the recipient country will be able to identify relevant stakeholders, investigate the readiness of selected educational institutions for using ESD for developing required entrepreneurial skills, enhance ESD synergies with the ECE region, national and local initiatives and bodies (including Sustainable Development Goal accelerator hubs) and exchange good practices within the ECE region. Furthermore, the project aims to identify existing funding mechanisms to support networking of ESD settings with other stakeholders and local communities, to develop and strengthen an ecosystem of champions agile in in employability, entrepreneurship and innovation, which could then widely diffuse its know-how in the region and beyond.

6. Finally, the project aims to share the gained experience among the selected countries of the UNECE region with the view to initiating a successful implementation of the priority area of the Strategy’s implementation framework in focus.

## **Main activity/activities to be implemented**

7. To achieve the project's objective, a national capacity-building workshop will be conducted in Tbilisi, Georgia, with the participation of representatives from the selected countries. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for December 2023 and aims to enhance the capacity of the participating countries in implementing the fourth priority area on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development” of the implementation framework of UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.

## **Methodologies or modalities to be employed and products to be produced**

### **Short description of the workshop**

8. A two-day national capacity-building workshop will be conducted in December 2023 in Tbilisi, Georgia (dates to be confirmed), with up to 32 (or more)<sup>4</sup> participants, who will be selected based on a preliminary stakeholder survey.

9. The workshop will enable participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the aims and approaches promoted by the ESD implementation framework, with a particular focus on the fourth priority area.

10. Participants will also become familiar with best practices of the UNECE region in integrating ESD principles in policies and curricular, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, and approaches to foster employability, focusing on education levels where entrepreneurship may be taught.

11. A local consultant will conduct a preliminary study to assess existing competences and capacities for implementing the framework in their countries, and participants will be invited to assess the results.

12. Participants will also consider possible challenges for the implementation of the fourth priority area and ways to overcome them, as well as opportunities for collaboration in this strand among the participating countries.

13. Finally, the workshop will encourage participants to contribute to the development of elements of action plans for the implementation of the priority area in focus in Georgia, as well as in other participating countries. More particularly, the participants from the selected countries will draft the elements of the strategy for implementing the fourth priority area of ESD implementation framework in their countries.

Responsible: UNECE secretariat, UNDP, national and international consultants

Timing: December 2023, date to be confirmed

### **Selection of participants**

14. A thorough stakeholder analysis will be conducted by a local consultant to identify competent State institutions and other relevant stakeholders that promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and employability in Georgia. The analysis will include identifying decision-makers and ministries/agencies in the fields of education, economic development, agriculture, labour, and

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<sup>4</sup> Note: number of participants will depend on the expression of interest from the countries and availability of funds.



social affairs, as well as educators of the relevant education levels where entrepreneurship can be taught, the business community (including unions of employers, chambers of commerce, and business hubs), and public organizations (NGOs). The analysis will also take into account the structure of the education system in the participating country. Based on this analysis, the UNECE secretariat will work with national focal points and national and international consultants to select participants. Representatives of international organizations with the relevant capacity and expertise in the focus area, such as the European Training Foundation, UNESCO, European Commission DG on Research and Innovation, and others will be invited to share their experience and build synergies, as appropriate. Respectively, the professionals and stakeholders actively engaged in the field of innovation, entrepreneurship and ESD will be invited to participate in the capacity building activity in Georgia. The participants from the other selected countries of the region will be selected in close collaboration with the ESD national focal points based on the process that will follow for identifying the stakeholders in the host country.

Responsible: UNECE secretariat, supported by national and international consultants

Timing: September – October 2023.

### **Materials to be prepared in the course of the project:**

15. Description and presentation of the fourth pillar/priority area of the ESD implementation framework

Responsible: UNECE secretariat

Timing: October 2023

### **Collection of best practices in integrating ESD principles**

16. The project will conduct a comprehensive collection of best practices that integrate ESD principles in policies and curricular of various institutions of the UNECE region, as well as other educational establishments that support entrepreneurship and innovation, and foster employability. It will also contribute to the implementation of the outlined final outputs for the focused priority area of the current workplan of the UNECE Strategy for ESD from 2021 to 2025” , which are to provide a guiding framework for 21st century competences for innovation and entrepreneurship and also to develop a toolkit with functional educational approaches that support the required skills for the development of entrepreneurship, employability and innovation especially for youth.

17. This collection will encompass a range of publicly accessible tools such as DigComp, EntreComp, and information about existing projects at the national and subregional levels of the UNECE region, including those funded by EC DG Research and Innovation. In addition, the collection may extend to the Mediterranean sub-region as relevant. The description of case studies will explore a variety of aspects, including the skills covered, success factors for introducing transformative learning, challenges and lessons learned, and the funding mechanisms used.

Responsible: international consultant[s] under the guidance of the UNECE secretariat

Timing: September October 2023.

### **Overview of existing funding mechanisms at the international level for supporting implementation of ESD projects in [selected countries of the UNECE region]**

18. An overview will be provided on the current funding mechanisms available at the international level to support the implementation of ESD projects in the selected countries of the

UNECE region. The overview will encompass all existing funding opportunities that could support the implementation of ESD projects, including those focused on developing and piloting specific curricula and networking ESD settings with other stakeholders and local communities. The ultimate goal is to create an ecosystem of champions who are proficient in employability, entrepreneurship, and innovation, and who can share their expertise across the region and beyond.

Responsible: international and national consultant[s]

Timing: October 2023.

### **Draft assessment of the existing competences and capacities for the implementation of the fourth priority area of the ESD implementation framework at the national level**

19. To draft an assessment of the existing competences and capacities for the implementation of the fourth priority area of the ESD implementation framework in Georgia, the national/local consultant will utilize the results of the stakeholder analysis. The consultant will undertake the following activities:

- a) Prepare an overview and assessment of relevant national strategic documents;
- b) Develop a questionnaire for selected stakeholders to be interviewed;
- c) Conduct in-depth interviews with the selected stakeholders and incorporate the results into the draft assessment;
- d) Present the preliminary results of the assessment at the workshop;
- e) Complete the assessment based on the feedback obtained during the workshop, including an assessment of the challenges and potential solutions to overcome them.

Responsible: national consultant

Timing: September - October 2023.

### **Elements of the action plan for the implementation of the fourth priority area at the national level**

20. Building upon the outcomes of the stakeholder analysis, the draft assessment of the existing competences and capacities for the fourth priority area of the ESD implementation framework, the overview of best practices, and the workshop discussions, including the identified challenges the national consultant, in consultation with the national focal point and international consultants will develop key elements of an action plan for the implementation of the fourth priority area on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development” of the implementation framework of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 on the national level. The action plan aims to facilitate the development of relevant competences and entrepreneurship ideas/skills based on sustainability and considers the present and future demands of the labour market. The workshop participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the document before its finalization through online commenting.

21. Participants from the other selected countries will consider how the elements of the elaborated **action plan could be adapted for their own counties.**

Responsible: national consultant with support of the NFP and international consultants

Timing: November - December 2023.

## **Partnerships to be established**

22. All involved stakeholders on the national level, also between Georgia and other selected participating counties, including with the involved organisations on the international level.

## **Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals:**

23. This activity supports directly the achievement of the following goals:

- SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and its target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, as well as
- SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development
- Also all other SDGs, as the ESD is by definition a cross-cutting concept contributing to achieving all SDGs through equipping people with knowledge of and skills in sustainable development that would rise the capability of all involved actors and stakeholders in implementing all SDGs.

## **Expected results of the project/ activity:**

- 24. Strengthened national capacity for adapting education systems towards accelerated transformation to sustainable development by implementing the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and its priority area on “Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD”;
- 25. Strengthened cooperation and partnerships among the key stakeholders of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development at the national, regional, and international levels.

## **Cooperation with other UNECE Subprogrammes:**

26. Cooperation with the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships of the ECE Economic Cooperation and Integration Division on the topic of entrepreneurship and innovation education and how to help countries to strengthen their human capital for sustainable development.

## **Target group and beneficiaries of the activity:**

27. Target Group: policy-makers/government officials of the relevant sectoral ministries; educators of the relevant education levels where entrepreneurship may be taught; business sector representatives, as well as relevant government and other institutions with responsibilities for achieving SDGs, especially in the sectors of education and the environment.

28. Beneficiary countries: Georgia and other 2-3 (or more)<sup>5</sup> selected countries from the UNECE region.

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<sup>5</sup> Note: number of participating countries will depend on the expression of interest and availability of funds