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**Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness  
and Public-Private Partnerships**Team of Specialists on Innovation  
and Competitiveness Policies****Fifteenth session**

Geneva, 22 and 23 November 2023 (am)

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

**Adoption of the agenda****Annotated provisional agenda for the fifteenth session****To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting on 22 November  
at 10:00 in room XXVI\*****I. Provisional agenda**

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Review of the work of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies since its fourteenth session.
3. Inter-sessional Implementation Plan for 2023-2024.
4. Any other business and discussion of the draft report.
5. International policy dialogue on “Digital and green transformations: Exploring the strategic dynamics of experimentation and learning”.

**II. Annotations to the provisional agenda**

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<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/discussion</i>
Agenda	ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/1	Decision
Inter-sessional Implementation Plan for 2023-2024	ECE/CECI/2023/2, Annex II	Information

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\* All delegates should [register online](#). Delegates are requested to present themselves with a valid identification card/passport at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, Avenue de la Paix 8-14, Geneva 1211, for the issuance of an identification badge. Additional information for delegates, including a map of the premises, is available on the [ECE website](#).



<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/discussion</i>
Progress report on the Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Ukraine	ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.1	Discussion
Progress report on the work of the ECE Transformative Innovation Network	ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.2	Discussion
Results of the Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Armenia	ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.3	Discussion
Results of the Interim Sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook for Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus	ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.4	Discussion
Evaluation report of the extrabudgetary project “Promoting innovation policy capacities in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus” financed by Sweden	ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.5	Discussion
Progress report on the work of the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development	ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.6	Discussion
Overview of fundraising needs and opportunities	ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.7	Discussion

## 1. Adoption of the agenda

*Documentation:* ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/1

1. The Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies (ToS-ICP) will adopt its agenda.
2. The objectives of the fifteenth session are to:
  - (a) Discuss and address topical, substantive issues related to the innovation and competitiveness elements of the programme of work of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (CICPPP);
  - (b) Review the outputs and activities carried out since the fourteenth session in 2022 and agree on the Inter-sessional Implementation Plan for the work to be carried out until ToS-ICP sixteenth session in 2024.

## 2. Review of the work of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies since its fourteenth session

*Documentation:* ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.1; ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.2; ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.3; ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.4; ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.5; ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.6

3. ToS-ICP members will be briefed on the main outcomes and highlights of the work since the fourteenth session, including:
  - (a) the policy document on “Transformative innovation for a sustainable future”; submitted to the 2023 session of the CICPPP;

(b) seminars, policy dialogues, study tours and other outputs and activities on transformative innovation under the auspices of the ECE Transformative Innovation Network (ETIN);<sup>1</sup>

(c) the publication of the Innovation for Sustainable Development Review (I4SDR) of Armenia, and progress on the I4SDR of Ukraine;

(d) progress on the capacity building programmes for Armenia, Moldova and Uzbekistan, based on the recommendations of the I4SDRs of these countries;

(e) regular policy dialogue meetings of the network of Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO) national focal points and publication of the Interim IPO;

(f) support to the implementation of the Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), under the twelfth tranche of the UN Development Account (UNDA) project “Strengthening innovation policies for SPECA countries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, jointly with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific including:

- a capacity building programme for Azerbaijan on strengthening its venture capital ecosystem;
- production of a final draft ECE handbook “New Innovation Policy for Transition Economies in the SPECA Subregion”;
- an online training for the SPECA countries “Development of business incubators and start-up accelerators: training for university management”;
- an online training “Working with venture funds and business angels: ECE practical online training for staff of business incubators and accelerators in the SPECA sub-region”;
- an ECE workshop for Chief Innovation Officers on innovation for the circular economy;
- a study tour to Georgia for innovation policymakers from the SPECA sub-region; the organization of the fourth session of the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development alongside a subregional SPECA Workshop on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development and a Business-to-Business event on Innovation for the Circular Economy; and
- an ECE-MASHAV joint international course on “Support Systems for Early-Stage Startups”.

(g) cooperation with the ECE Trade sub-programme on the topic of circular economy, including on the ECE Circular Stakeholder Engaging Platform (Circular STEP), under the framework of the thirteenth tranche UNDA project “Accelerating the transition towards a circular economy in the ECE region”, in response to the decisions taken at the sixty-ninth Commission session;

(h) contributions to the ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, the seventieth session of ECE and the sixteenth session of CICPPP in 2023;

(i) evaluation of the extrabudgetary project “Promoting innovation policy capacities in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus” financed by Sweden;

<sup>1</sup> Developed as a joint initiative between ECE and the German Federal Agency for Disruptive Innovation, the ECE Transformative Innovation Network (ETIN) brings together innovation agencies, policy makers, government officials, think tanks, researchers, practitioners, experts, and entrepreneurs mandated to support or engaged in transformative innovation in the ECE region. The objective of the network is to analyze, discuss, and cooperate on better understanding trends, challenges and opportunities of transformative innovation for sustainable development, and to explore how governments can play a productive and catalytic role in these efforts.

4. ToS-ICP will be invited to take stock of past activities and to discuss effective means for the dissemination of outputs.

### **3. Inter-sessional Implementation Plan for 2023-2024**

*Documentation:* ECE/CECI/2023/2, Annex II; ECE/CECI/ICP/2023/INF.7

5. The secretariat will inform ToS-ICP of the main outcomes of the sixteenth session of CICPPP, held from 31 May to 2 June 2023.

*Inter-sessional Implementation Plan for 2023-2024*

6. ToS-ICP will discuss proposals for work to be undertaken in the remainder of 2023 and in 2024 in accordance with the Inter-sessional Implementation Plan for 2023-2024 of CICPPP (ECE/CECI/2023/2, Annex II).

7. The plans and proposals reflect demands expressed by member States as well as resources available to the secretariat. Proposals include:

#### ***National Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews***

8. Work on the I4SDR of Ukraine will continue. ECE received requests to carry out I4SDRs from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Work may begin on these reviews subject to availability of additional resources.

#### ***Innovation Policy Outlook***

9. Regular meetings of the network of IPO national focal points, previously mentioned in paragraph 4(e), will continue to foster exchange of good practices, and build capacity to implement the recommendations of IPO.

10. Subject to extrabudgetary funding, preparations for a sub-regional IPO for the Western Balkans or for SPECA participating member States may be started.

#### ***Capacity building***

11. As follow-up to the I4SDR of Armenia, a capacity building programme will be implemented according to the needs and priorities identified by the government and subject to availability of additional resources.

12. ECE will contribute, as appropriate, to the capacity building workstream of the UN Inter-agency Task Team on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Development.

13. Building on the existing work of CICPPP on innovation for circular economy and innovation-enhancing procurement, and in cooperation with the ECE Trade sub-programme, ECE will support member States, at their request, in developing roadmaps or action plans for the circular economy transition in selected fields.

14. ECE is actively looking for extrabudgetary funding to support further member States, including in SPECA, Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, and the Western Balkans. The secretariat will present possible activities and resource needs for 2024 (ECE/CECI/ICP/2022/INF.7). The Secretariat calls upon donors and development partners to support these efforts.

#### ***SPECA***

15. The fifth session of the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development will be organized together with ESCAP in 2024.

16. Capacity building for SPECA participating States will be carried out according to the Action Plan of the SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development, upon request and subject to availability of additional funding.

#### ***ECE Transformative Innovation Network (ETIN)***

17. ETIN is developing several workstreams around the two broader themes of ecosystem development and strategic learning for transformative change towards sustainable growth.

These workstreams consider different aspects of innovation such as innovative technologies, business models and processes for transformation, focusing on recent trends and policy implications. They will also explore the dynamics of ‘strategic learning’, i.e. the relationship between innovation, experimentation and learning as a critical process to support sustainable transformations. Activities will include workshops, seminars, policy dialogues and participation at relevant events organised by international partners and peers.

***Contributions to other ECE workstreams***

18. In order to raise awareness of its work among a broader audience and to strengthen beneficial synergies with other parts of the organisation, ToS-ICP and its secretariat will contribute, as appropriate, to ECE events such as the 2024 ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the seventeenth session of CICPPP.

#### **4. Any other business and discussion of the draft report**

19. The secretariat will present how it has implemented the findings of the 2022-2023 evaluation of the ECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, which was carried out by the Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS).

20. Participants will discuss the draft report of the session. The secretariat will subsequently finalize the draft report of the session and distribute it to the Permanent Missions in Geneva for adoption by silent procedure in accordance with paragraph 21 of Appendix III of document E/ECE/1464 (Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies). Once the draft report is adopted, it will be published in English, French and Russian. The Chair’s summary of the international policy dialogue (Item 5 of the agenda) will be annexed to the report.

21. ToS-ICP will decide on the date of its sixteenth session. The secretariat proposes one and a half day meeting on 19 and 20 November 2024.

#### **5. International policy dialogue on “Digital and green transformations: exploring the strategic dynamics of experimentation and learning”**

22. The substantive segment of ToS-ICP will be an international policy dialogue on “Digital and green transformations: exploring the strategic dynamics of experimentation and learning”, which will provide a platform for international knowledge-sharing and policy-learning in this area. ECE member States designated “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region” as the theme of the high-level segment of the seventieth session of the Commission (18 and 19 April 2023).<sup>2</sup> At the session, member States requested relevant subsidiary bodies of ECE to consider how to enhance the impact of existing ECE instruments to foster digital and green transformations and propose ways to identify, assess and fill gaps in governance and good practices.<sup>3</sup> The substantive segment of ToS-ICP responds to this request.

23. Innovation is increasingly recognized as a critical component in driving green and digital transformations. Innovation processes nowadays extend beyond the generation of new products and processes to larger transformations in the surrounding ecosystem. In addition to research, technology and innovation management narrowly construed, we now need to consider the extent to which the surrounding system is ready to assimilate, or even participate in the development of innovations that solve societal challenges and promote the green transformation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

24. Innovations at the system level are distinct and yet intimately linked with more established innovation processes. System-level innovations are novel and useful value

<sup>2</sup> The seventieth session of the Commission follows up on the workstreams of the sixty-ninth session dedicated to the circular economy. The circular transformation is also at the core of ETIN work.

<sup>3</sup> [E/2023/37 Biennial Report of the Economic Commission for Europe](#).

creation in different parts of a system. Its primary function is creating new and additional synergies among multiple innovation processes.

25. This call for large-scale sustainable transformations requires an increasing amount of experimentation at all levels, including the systemic level, where experimentation has happened relatively little. Sustainable transformations hold several traits that make systemic innovation particularly demanding, among which: 1) a high degree of complexity and complementarity; 2) long-term horizons; and 3) a high degree of uncertainty; all in a policy environment that demands quick and solid action. There is therefore the need for more elaborate processes for learning.

26. The interaction between *innovation*, *experimentation*, and *learning* is fundamental. These interconnected forces drive progress and growth in various aspects of human endeavour. As such, they are the cornerstones of transformation. *Innovation* serves as the catalyst for change, inspiring individuals, and societies to seek breakthroughs and improvements, by applying creative ideas and novel approaches to tackle existing problems or seize new opportunities. *Experimentation*, on the other hand, is the essential counterpart to innovation. It involves systematically testing hypotheses, ideas, and concepts to gain insights, refine approaches, and validate assumptions. *Learning*, finally, constitutes the driving force behind innovation and experimentation, by providing the process through which we acquire new knowledge, skills and insights that enhance our adaptability, resilience, and capacity to innovate.

27. The highly cyclical interaction between these three processes emphasizes the importance of: 1) further exploring their interrelation; 2) analysing the specific challenges that each of them confronts in the quest for transformative innovation; and 3) considering the organizational and institutional implications.

28. In some ways, the ECE region has fallen behind the transformation that has taken place in other parts of the world. More than ever, it is vital to understand the nature of such transformations better and find ways to enable and catalyse experimentation, while identifying and mitigating the risks and short-term trade-offs. Navigating an increasingly complex and uncertain environment requires: 1) elaborate processes for learning; 2) increase and further develop experimentation; 3) develop new models for innovation.

29. The substantive segment of the fifteenth session will attempt to raise stronger awareness about the interconnections between innovation, experimentation, and learning, with a specific focus on the latter. Learning, it can be argued, has gained less attention so far, while at the same time being of strategic importance.

30. The session will:

- 1) outline the interaction between innovation, experimentation, and learning as a strategic tool to promote transformative innovation;
- 2) discuss some of the specific opportunities and challenges in learning from the past (history), from the present (formative evaluation), and about the future (horizon scanning);
- 3) explore some of the organizational aspects that follow from a more integrated approach supporting strategic policy making; and
- 4) provide experiences and practices from ongoing work within the ECE region and ETIN.

31. The discussion will lay the groundwork for developing good practices and policy recommendations. Following the meeting, a policy paper will be developed as a contribution to the seventeenth session of the CICPPP in spring 2024.

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**Annex****Provisional timetable**

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<i>Time</i>	<i>Agenda Item</i>
<b>Wednesday, 22 November 2023</b>	
10:00 – 10:15	Item 1. Adoption of the agenda
10:15 – 12:00	Item 2. Review of the work of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies since its fourteenth session
12:00 – 12:50	Item 3. Inter-sessional Implementation Plan for 2023-2024
12:50 – 13:00	Item 4: Any other business and discussion of the draft report
15:00 – 17:00	Item 5. International policy dialogue on “Digital and green transformations: exploring the strategic dynamics of experimentation and learning”
<b>Thursday, 23 November 2023</b>	
10:00 – 12:00	Item 5. International policy dialogue on “Digital and green transformations: exploring the strategic dynamics of experimentation and learning” (continued)

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