



## 6<sup>th</sup> Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

4-5 May 2021, UN HQ New York (virtual)

### *Special Event: STI and harnessing global opportunities for transformation in 2021*

[Background note and guiding questions](#)

#### **Background**

The year 2021 is a time for ambitious and synergistic actions to recover and build back better from COVID-19, to deliver on existing commitments during the Decade of Action and Delivery on the SDGs, to restore and conserve our natural resources, tackle increasing inequalities including those exacerbated by the digital divide, and accelerate efforts to eradicate poverty, achieve zero hunger and speed up in the race to achieve carbon neutrality. All of these goals can be powered by science, technology and innovation and accelerated through collaboration, innovative partnerships, trust and open access to knowledge sources.

During this decade, and as we build back from COVID-19, we need to further strengthen strategic and innovative ways to *use* the interlinkages between SDGs to speed up results - minimizing trade-offs and generating positive impacts across multiple goals and targets as well as across important related sectors, such as agriculture, energy and transport. For example, evidence indicates that there are win-win paths toward job creation, carbon neutrality and greater equality boosted by STI solutions that could set us on track to achieve the SDGs. In comparison with coal or natural gas, solar photovoltaics create more than twice the number of jobs per unit of electricity generation.

This year, the UN is bringing governments, businesses, local governments and civil society together, both virtually and in person, to boost climate action, transform agriculture and food systems, address inequalities, protect biodiversity, land and oceans, and ensure access to water, sustainable energy and sustainable transport for all.

These key moments during 2021 are an opportunity to take decisive steps towards the world we all want. Guided by science and strengthened by solidarity, we can recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, curb emissions, conserve natural resources, reduce pollution, create green jobs, tackle growing inequalities, and enhance inclusion to advance human well-being.

#### **Objectives**

The year 2021 is set to be a landmark year with a number of high-level global events, such as the UN Food Systems Summit, the High-level Dialogue on Energy, the second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26). This special event will examine the most impactful STI applications - as well as the most significant unsolved problems

- in the areas of focus at the events, with the potential to simultaneously influence multiple SDG targets. Several of these correspond closely to the 'entry points' advanced in the scientific assessment of the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report.

### **Format**

The session will be structured as a moderated panel discussion (5 minutes per panelist). After the panelists' interventions, the moderator will take comments and questions from the audience during an interactive discussion. The session will close with a brief presentation of main outcomes of the discussion by the moderator.

### **Questions for discussion**

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- Are there opportunities across high-level events taking place in 2021 to strengthen the science-policy-society interface and accelerate the adoption and sharing of technologies and innovations for the SDGs within a common framework?
- What are some of the most promising technologies and innovations for leveraging the interlinkages among SDGs during the Decade of Action and Delivery? How can STI support related solutions considered during the series of high-level events?
- What are some practical ways the STI community can collaborate to ensure that solutions generate synergies across the SDGs while avoiding duplication?
- How can dialogue through these events advance inclusive forms of knowledge generation and sharing, work to build capacity and facilitate technology transfer for accelerating STI solutions everywhere?

### **Supporting documents/publications**

- Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development (Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/gsdr2019>)
- The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020 (Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/>)
- Food Systems Summit website <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>
- High-level Dialogue on Energy website <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/energy2021>
- Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference website <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/transport2020>
- Convention on Biological Diversity Cop15 website <https://www.cbd.int/article/new-dates-cop15-october-2021>
- UN Climate Change Conference COP26 website <https://ukcop26.org/>
- UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) website <https://sdgs.un.org/tfm>