

Sixth annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

Session 6: Supporting national capacities through the TFM

Background

Science, technology and innovation (STI) governance and policies that are coherent with national development plans and sustainable development strategies are critical for progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many countries, especially developing countries, are however oftentimes lacking adequate financial and human resources, and are yet to establish conducive institutional arrangements, policy practices and political priorities. In addition, there is oftentimes insufficient gender mainstreaming ensuring that gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality are central to all activities. TFM can help build and support national capacities, including through the UN IATT's joint work in supporting the development and roll-out of STI policy frameworks, STI action plans and the STI roadmaps; gender and STI efforts; and capacity-building for STI ministries.

1. Capacity-building and STI for SDGs roadmaps

STI roadmaps for SDGs are policy and planning tools leading to actions that can accelerate the attainment of the SDGs. They are integrated into national plans and are highly adaptable to different country contexts. STI roadmap was introduced as a key tool for many capacity building activities¹.

The initiative to develop STI for SDGs roadmaps is being carried out by UN-IATT members. The Group is co-led by UN-DESA, the World Bank, UNESCO, EC/JRC, and UNCTAD. Its members also include including UN-DESA, World Bank, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, FAO, UN-ESCAP, ESCWA, WIPO and UNSG Office of the Envoy on Technology, among others. Substantial support has been provided by international stakeholders, including the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Government of Japan.

Once national visions, priorities and action plans are articulated through STI for SDGs roadmaps, and progress is tracked and gaps and challenges are identified accordingly, opportunities for STI contribution to accelerate progress can be highlighted at both national and global levels. Increased coordination among national and international partnerships can help improving coherence of national STI policies and complementarities among development partners within overall development visions and strategies.

¹ For details about capacity building events and other related updates, see <https://sdgs.un.org/documents/iatt-background-info-work-update-oct-2020-24791>

The challenge is how to harmonize methodologies and foster real learning environment to develop and implement effective STI for SDGs roadmaps, and re-think international cooperation in the field of STI policy, in a coherent way to ensure that “no one is left behind.”

STI roadmap discussions during previous STI Forums

The 10-Member Group and other participants of the STI Forum and of various HLPF session have called for STI roadmaps for the SDGs at least since 2013.

In the first STI Forum 2016, there was a dedicated session and a prominent section of the proceedings was dedicated to “*Science, technology and innovation action plans and technology road maps*” alongside complementary sections on “*Enhancing the coherence of STI policy*” and on “*Creating robust science advisory ecosystems at all levels*”. Paragraphs 24 and 25 of the Co-chairs’ summary of the Forum provided further insights.²

In the STI Forum 2017, there was another session on STI roadmaps, in view of popular demand. It discussed STI policy failures and explored options for more efficient governance approaches, including responsible research and innovation approaches. It identified new STI policy trends and opportunities and called for increased inter-agency cooperation and the development of guidelines for STI policy development, in line with the national strategies to achieve the SDGs. Paragraphs 39, 71, 72 and 73 of the Co-chairs’ summary of the Forum provided further insights.³

In the STI Forum 2018, built on the earlier discussions of STI roadmaps and highlighted in particular the need for action-oriented design of STI roadmaps; global partnerships; national-level roadmaps; action plans at national and subnational levels; and stakeholder engagement. Paragraphs 108 to 111 of the Co-chairs’ summary of the Forum provided further recommendations on STI roadmaps and action plans for the SDGs.

In response to the interest in broad-based STI roadmaps, IATT has launched a consolidated initiative to promote such plans under the TFM. The present session will share expectations, review the progress and recommend specific ways forward.

The Global Pilot Programme on STI for SDGs Roadmaps

The IATT launched the Global Pilot Programme on Science, Technology and Innovation for SDGs Roadmaps in July 2019. The first phase of the Programme included an initial group of five pilot countries, namely Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, and Serbia. Most recently, in February 2021, Ukraine also joined the Programme bringing the number of pilot countries to six. In addition, both the European Union and Japan joined the Global Pilot Programme to strengthen international partnerships on STI for SDGs roadmaps. These pilots are implemented following the guidance of the “Guidebook for the Preparation of STI for SDGs Roadmaps⁴”.

² Co-chairs’ summary: UN document (E/HLPF/2016/6), http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLPF/2016/6&Lang=E

³ Co-chairs’s summary: UN document (E/HLPF/2016/6), http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLPF/2017/4&Lang=E

⁴ Available here :

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26937Guidebook_STI_for_SDG_Roadmaps_final_Edit_ion.pdf

The outcomes of these pilots will be used to generate lessons that will improve the the Guidebook and the development of roadmaps in a number of countries. The Guidebook has been developed by STI experts and representatives from UN IATT and other key strategic partners.

To date, more than 20 countries have expressed interest in joining the Programme. They will be accepted into the programme as soon as resources to support their participation become available.

During the side event held at the 75th General Assembly in November 2020, a proposal was launched as of establishing the “[Partnership in Action](#)” on STI for SDGs Roadmaps. The aim of the Partnership in Action is to mobilize the main actors in the field in further engaging and supporting the work on STI for SDGs roadmaps by providing political support, endorsing the Guidebook and providing inputs for its refinement, as well as by mobilizing additional stakeholders and resources, accelerating the translation of the political ambition and the preliminary findings of Roadmaps into policies and practical STI solutions.

2. Gender and STI

Gender equality is central to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is cross-cutting in nature. Progress in its attainment will accelerate the pace for all the SDGs. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, Gender Equality remains a global and cross-sectoral challenge. In the field of STI, underpinning most of the SDGs, women remain under-represented. Without the equal participation of women and girls in STI, humanity loses half of its innovative potential in finding solutions to the world most pressing challenges. Gender should be mainstreamed to ensure that gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality are central to all activities. It is from this perspective, that the work of the UN Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) Gender and STI Group finds context. In 2019- 2021, the Group continued advocacy for the equal participation of women in STI, by monitoring and tracking trends, supporting initiatives that have the potential of triggering the changes needed, raising awareness and promoting a better understanding of what it takes to shape environments that encourage and retain women in STI, and to make STI careers and studies more attractive for girls and women.

Objectives

This session will present how the TFM can support national capacities, including through United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT)s joint work in supporting the development and roll-out of STI policy frameworks, STI action plans and the STI roadmaps; gender and STI efforts; and capacity-building for STI ministries. During this session the panelists will present national and regional initiatives related to design and review of STI for SDG roadmaps and related policy actions, including regarding gender and STI. The session will also discuss potential support to strengthen international partnerships in the area of STI capacity-building for SDGs achievement.

Format

The session will be structured as a moderated panel discussion (5 minutes per panelist). After their intervention, 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:

- What are existing country practices and early pilot experiences in terms of STI roadmaps and action plans?
- What institutional mechanisms are needed for cross-sectoral engagement of government entities and multiple stakeholders for timely horizon scanning, tracking progress and corrective actions?
- What international collaborations or mechanisms are needed for exchange of experiences and partnerships on STI for SDGs?
- What are your three most important recommendations for policy and concrete action, including regarding gender and STI?

Supporting documents/publications

- [Guidebook](#) on Development of STI Roadmaps for the SDGs
- IATT [Policy Briefs](#) on STI Roadmaps for the SDGs
- [Progress Report](#) for Global Pilot Programme on STI for SDGs roadmaps (work-in-progress)
- [Operational Note](#) for Implementing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for SDGs Roadmaps
- [Resource Guide](#) on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategies
- [Partnership in Action](#) on Science, Technology and Innovation for SDGs Roadmaps
- [Brochure of gender and STI initiatives](#)