



UN STI Forum 2021

Side Event on Capacity Building in STI for SDGs

4 May 2021, 8 am to 9 am EDT

Summary

1. Objectives

The side event aimed at presenting the work and future plans of the UN-IATT Workstream 6 on Capacity-Building in STI for SDGs as part of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM). The objective of the side event was to receive feedback and recommendations from officials who participated in past IATT training courses and webinars and to hear views from partners on the way forward of the IATT's work to strengthen capacities related to STI for SDGs. Furthermore, the event was the occasion to seek new partnerships and interest in future training sessions. Lastly, the discussion was also meant to enrich the debate of the STI Forum sessions.

2. Organizers & Participation

UNESCO and UNCTAD, in collaboration with the IATT workstream 6 on Capacity-Building for STI policies for SDGs, have co-organized the virtual side event, which was attended by near 100 participants including representatives from UN agencies, countries' officials from more than 40 countries and partner institutions.

3. Major issues discussed in the session

- importance of strengthening knowledge and skills of policy-makers, public service experts and key STI stakeholders to foster and use STI for solving pressing health, economic and social challenges and achieving SDGs.
- approaches, design and delivery of joint UN trainings on STI policies for the SDGs at regional and international level (past trainings in Jordan 2018; Panama 2019 and webinars in 2020 and 2021)
- focus, outcomes and challenges of past training courses and pilot sessions, building on the comparative experience by UN agencies at national and regional levels
- plans for future training sessions in 2021, based on demand-driven approach and requests for more in-depth focus
- experience and perspectives, as input for scaling-up of the pilot sessions
- Partnerships (for ex. universities)

4. Main outcome

The meeting has stressed the critical importance of capacity-building in STI for SDGs and the importance of building synergies and pooling joint UN expertise for capacity-building at national and regional level. The UN-IATT partnerships and synergies were presented as a good

way to help Member States to harnessing STI for SDGs and improving the delivery on the SDGs. The TFM was considered as an important platform for such collaborations helping aligning different UN agencies' perspectives and expertise, building synergies with other IATT initiatives, such as the workstream on STI roadmaps. The discussion highlighted the need to sustain and scale-up the capacity-building programmes. The interventions pointed out the need to propose flexible and SDGs-targeted contents of trainings, based on demands and expressed needs by countries' officials. The courses were considered inclusive and the WS6 was invited to invite more UN agencies to join, in order to build a holistic picture of STI for the SDGs. Participants stressed the great potential of the trainings and called for scaling –up the impact of capacity-building in STI for SDGs. Challenges such as the short time aspect of the courses, the diverse profiles and levels of participants were also underlined. The discussion re-affirmed the need to strengthen capacities of policy-makers, in order for developing countries to rely less on external resources, in particular in the context of STI, which is instrumental to the achievement of the SDGs.

5. Key recommendations for action

- Pursue UN collaborations for the implementation of future STI policy trainings with improved learning content on most current approaches to STI policy design and implementation as part of strategies to achieve the SDGs,
- Increase access to information and offer diverse capacity-building tools and materials for capacity-building tools – repository of existing training resources, support materials, webinars, development of MOOC on new approaches to mainstream STI for SDGs in partnership with EU-JRC,
- Increase the reach and deliver the courses to more countries – notably the online format - and customize the workshops as much as possible,
- identify potential partnerships with donors and funders to sustain and allow integration in the UN agencies regular offers of services to Member States,
- Continue expanding the networks of STI officials who take part in the trainings,
- Engage UN regional commissions and regional entities and partners for good contextualization of the course, sharing good practices in countries to promote regionalization and reflect local realities,
- Engage academia, youth and bring new partners and stakeholders into the activities of workstream; empower students in universities through contributions to knowledge gaps,
- Reach a good balance in the contents of the course between methodological and practical approaches.