United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology, and Innovation for SDGs (IATT)

34ᵗʰ Coordination meeting

Summary

Wednesday, 5 Feb 2025, 9:30am to 10:30am NY time (EDT)

Key issues discussed:

- Updates on the 2025 STI Forum and CSTD.
- IATT member briefings and updates including some substantive and strategic areas that could be considered in the STI Forum.
- Updates of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), IATT Webinar, and Global Ministerial Dialogue on Science Diplomacy
- IATT workstream reporting including capacity building, gender and STI, and STI Roadmaps.
- The next IATT meeting will be convened on 12 March 2025 (TBC).

Updates on the 2025 STI Forum and CSTD.

Astra Bonini (DESA) STI Forum Updates

The 2025 STI Forum will take place in New York (Conference Room 4) from 7 to 8 May. The Executive Office of the Secretary General (EOSG) is exploring the possibility part of adding additional events to create an STI Week or STI Days.

The 2025 STI Forum is convened by ECOSCO President H.E. Mr. Bob Rae (Canada) and co-chaired by H. E. Mr. Omar Hilale (Morocco) and H.E. Ms. Elena Kalkku (Finland). The theme of 2025 STI Forum is "*Advancing sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based science and technology solutions and innovations for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind*" in line with the HLPF theme. It will have a special focus on SDG 3, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 14, and SDG 17.

- **Context of the 2025 STI Forum:**

- o **The 10th Anniversary of the STI Forum**: The opening session will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the STI Forum, learning from 10 years of leveraging STI for the SDGs.

- o **Revitalization of STI Commitments in the Pact of the Future and the Global Digital Compact**: There is an opportunity to discuss how to deliver those commitments in the STI Forum.

- o **The 4th International Conference on Finance for Development** (June)

- o **The UN Ocean Conference** (June)

- o **The High-Level Political Forum** (July): The STI Forum will directly contribute to HPLF.

- o **The Second World Summit for Social Development** (November)

- **Tentative STI Forum Sessions:**

  The co-chairs aim to make the 2025 STI Forum more engaging, dynamic and innovative. EOSG has contributed ideas for innovative session formats. In terms of the forum sessions, IATT members are invited to bring their expertise, identify speakers and contribute related background research on the following topics.

  - o **Making AI accessible, inclusive and beneficial for the SDGs**

  - o **Advancing science, technology and innovation for gender equality**

  - o **Leveraging science to conserve, restore and sustainably use the ocean and coastal ecosystems**

  - o **Scaling up STI financing and capacity building and strengthening research infrastructures for sustainable development**

- **IATT Timeline toward the STI Forum**:

  - o The Call for Innovations will close on **14 February**, with the initial deadline set for 31 January. So far, over 220 submissions have been received.
  - o **Throughout February and March**, efforts will focus on organizing sessions, identifying speakers, developing session notes, and planning special events, exhibits, and other activities.
  - o On **3 March**, Briefing to Member States and Stakeholders will be held in UNHQ New York at Conference Room 2.
  - o Full draft submission of science-policy briefs are due by 10 March 2025. For any questions, please reach out to Alex Roehrl.

- On **7-11 April**, Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) will take place.
- On **7-8 May**, STI Forum will be held with opportunities for side events and a possible "STI week" on 5/6 May tbc.

- **Next Steps**:

    The **Call for Side Events** is expected to launch early next week, with a submission deadline of 10 March. Virtual side events are strongly encouraged due to the limited availability of rooms at UNHQ. In-person side events may be scheduled between 10:00 and 15:00 on 6 May, as they cannot overlap with the main forum sessions.

    IATT members will be contacted to help organize thematic session working groups, nominate thematic session speakers, and propose ideas for IATT special events during the lunch break (13:15-14:45) on 8 May.

Tomas Frantisek Zak (EOSG):

- **Updates of STI Action Day**: Building on the success of the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) is organizing an Action Day prior to the formal STI Forum, potentially on 5 or 6 May, or both. The Action Day will feature exhibits, side events, and a main program. EOSG is collaborating with DESA colleagues and the co-chairs team to ensure that the Action Day aligns with the STI Forum and its multi-stakeholder approach.

Minerva Novero (UNOSSC):

- UNOSSC is interested in exploring engagement in convening SDG 17 thematic discussions. South-South and triangular cooperation are playing an increasingly significant role in STI efforts, particularly in advancing best-fit, context-specific, and Southern-led solutions for SDG acceleration. The STI Forum presents a valuable opportunity to highlight these efforts and drive greater action.

Angel Gonzalez Sanz (UNCTAD):

- **Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)** is another key UN meeting that focuses on technology, innovation, and development. CSTD works in close collaboration with the STI Forum. The co-chairs of the STI Forum will attend the CSTD opening session, and the CSTD chair will present the outcomes of the annual session at the STI Forum. From an institutional and sustainability

perspective, this collaboration provides an excellent opportunity for knowledge exchange between the two.

- **Updates of 28th Session of CSTD:**
  - The 28th Session of CSTD will take place from 7 to 11 April, focusing on technology and innovation for development, with two prioritized themes: one is diversifying economies in a world of accelerated digitalization; another is technology foresight and technology assessment for sustainable development.
  - The Commission will review progress on the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), both at the regional and international levels. Presentations on ongoing science, technology, and innovation (STI) policy reviews will also be included. The outcomes will be submitted to ECOSOC and the General Assembly for the 20-year WSIS review scheduled in New York in 2025.
  - The registration for the meeting is open. Most of the sessions are in-person. There are side events about digital justice and quantum technologies, and an exhibition on women in STI for development.
  - CSTD is planning to hold the **1st session of the working group on data governance**, which the General Assembly has requested. The process to designate the working group members is underway, with a decision expected by the end of the month. The working group will be open to Observers without practical restrictions, including the ability to take the floor or submit written inputs.
  - Registration information is available at: [Commission on Science and Technology for Development, twenty-eighth session | UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)](#)

Updates on FfD4

Hoi Wai Jackie Cheng (DESA)

- **Updates of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4):** The zero draft of the outcome document has been circulated by the co-facilitators and the member states. Compared to the elements paper, some notable changes in the STI chapter include: 1) A new chapter structure: The STI chapter now begins with a section on technological advances for sustainable development, followed by closing the digital divide, and leveraging digital technologies for promoting financial inclusion and financial health; 2) More

specific language on facilitating access to STI funds: highlighting facilitating access to STI funds through capacity building and information sharing; 3) Global Sustainability and Science Center: This proposal has been dropped by the co-facilitators of the FfD4 outcome document.

- **Next Steps:** The idea of inviting the member states and other stakeholders to launch their own FfD-related initiatives at Sevilla is materializing. The USG is expected to announce the initiative track next week at the third session of the preparatory committee for FfD4. The initiative submission window is expected to open on 1 March and will last for 3 months until the beginning of June. There will be a dedicated space for launching the initiative. However, if a lead implementing entity aims to organize their own side event to launch its initiative, it will have to submit an additional side event proposal by 31 March. More information will be provided when the details of the initiative track are finalized.

IATT Webinar on SDG Fund

Marta Cali (Joint SDG Fund)

- **UN IATT Webinar – The Joint SDG Fund** will be held on 11 February 2025 to discuss how to leverage digital innovations for SDG acceleration at the country level. She emphasized the role of the Joint SDG Fund in supporting digital transformation, particularly in areas such as financial inclusion, social protection, and digital public infrastructure. The discussion will highlight ongoing projects, funding opportunities, and ways UN entities can collaborate to enhance digital solutions for sustainable development. Participants are encouraged to join and provide insights on scaling successful digital innovations across different regions.

Upcoming Global Ministerial Dialogue on Science Diplomacy

Ezra Clark (UNESCO):

Ezra Clark provided insights into the upcoming Global Ministerial Dialogue on Science Diplomacy (25-16 March 2025, Paris).

- **Background:** UNESCO has historically played a role in science diplomacy by fostering international cooperation, improving relations between nations, and providing scientific data and advice for policymaking. In response to current global challenges—including geopolitical tensions, rapid technological advancements, competition over shared resources, national security concerns, the rise of non-state actors, and persistent inequalities in research and knowledge access—

UNESCO is launching a renewed initiative to strengthen its engagement in science diplomacy.

- **Objectives of the Dialogue:** 1) Strengthen high-level commitment to science diplomacy as a tool for dialogue and peace; 2) Explore innovative diplomatic initiatives through exchanges among ministers, scientists, diplomats, and experts; 3) Establish a common framework for advancing shared goals through science diplomacy; 4) Highlight and showcase ongoing and emerging initiatives in the field.
- **Four Key Themes:** 1) Science diplomacy to advance secure and open science; 2) Science diplomacy in a world of disruptive technologies; 3) Science diplomacy in times of crisis; 4) Science diplomacy for shared natural and scientific resources.
- **Event Structure:**

  Day 1 (High-Level Multi-Stakeholder Conference): Discussions on key themes and the drafting of a Declaration on Science Diplomacy.

  Day 2 (Ministerial Meeting): Adoption of a Ministerial Statement on Science Diplomacy in a Rapidly Changing World.

IATT workstream reporting including capacity building, gender and STI, and STI Roadmaps.

Dimo Calovski (UNCTAD):

Dimo reported on **IATT workstream on capacity building**. He mentioned a successful STI policy seminar for Southeast Asia (online) with 250 active participants, and 2 upcoming webinars – one is for Africa, and another is for Latin America.

Ola Zahran (WIPO):

Ola reported on **IATT workstream on gender and STI** and highlighted upcoming key gender-focused activities supported or organized by the co-leads: 1) 10th Anniversary of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (11 Feb 2025); 2) The sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women side event (12 March 2025): Focus on gender and STI in the context of the Beijing+30 review; 3) International Girls in ICT Day (April 17, 2025); 4) STI Forum Gender Session.   Members wishing to contribute to any of the activities led by ITU/WIPO were invited to express interest.

- **The 2025 edition of the She in STI publication**.   A call for contributions will be sent out soon.

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Talking Tech Women and Girls in ICT intergenerational video series. Over 185 have been recorded thus far with intergenerational pairs across the world. Recommendations of women in tech willing to share their journey and record it in an intergenerational chat with a girl or young woman in tech are welcome.

Mario Castro Grande (ITU):

Mario shared that ITU is celebrating its 160th anniversary this year, with its main celebration coinciding with the organization's two flagship events to be held in Geneva from 7-11 July 2025, in collaboration with Switzerland and over 40 UN partners. The two events being:

- **WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025** – A continuation of the annual World Summit on the Information Society Forum (WSIS), this year focusing on the WSIS+20 review, which has guided digital development for two decades, ensuring equitable distribution of digital technology benefits worldwide.
- **AI for Good Global Summit 2025** – Showcasing how AI can benefit humanity, with a focus on trustworthy AI applications, capacity-building, standards development, and AI governance for sustainable development.

Mario also mentioned ITU's policy brief for the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, focusing on digital infrastructure investment.

Manuel Ricardo Galindo Moreno (UNESCO)

Manuel reported on **IATT workstream on STI roadmaps**, which is jointly led by DESA, JRC and UNESCO.

- **Workshop on Capacity Building,** organized in October 2024 in Ethiopia, aimed to gather stakeholders' input for the development of the STI for SDGs Roadmaps Guidebook. The guidebook will focus on six key transitions and is being developed with contributions from multiple organizations, including the 10-Member Group.
- **Progress on the Guidebook**: Drafting is well underway. The goal is to finalize the guidebook by the end of 2025.
- **Upcoming Meeting on STI for SDGs Roadmaps**: A new STI for SDGs Roadmap meeting is planned for late 2025 or early 2026. Discussions are ongoing with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to host the event. The event aims to review pilot country progress, share experiences, and raise awareness about STI for SDGs activities in the Asia-Pacific region.

Annex I: Agenda

1) **Secretariat's updates**

   a) 2025 STI Forum preparations - Astra Bonini

   b) CSTD - Angel Gonzalez Sanz

2) **Briefing and Updates by IATT members**

   a) FfD4 (FSDO/DESA) – Hoi Wai Jackie Cheng

   b) Others (IATT Webinar on SDG Fund; Global Science Ministerial Dialogue on Science Diplomacy; IATT work stream 6 and other work streams to report)
      i)   Webinar on SDG Fund - Marta Cali
      ii) Global Science Ministerial Dialogue on Science Diplomacy - Ezra Clark
      iii) IATT workstream on capacity building - Dimo Calovski
      iv) IATT workstream on gender and STI - ZAHRAN Ola / Wynhoven, Ursula
      v)   IATT workstream on STI roadmaps - Galindo Moreno, Manuel Ricardo / Wei Liu

3) **Other matters and looking ahead**

   a) Next meeting date (after MS briefing – Wednesday 12th March – tbc)

Annex II: Participants

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Anllo, Guillermo [UNESCO]
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