

# UNECE advises Belarus on promoting innovation for sustainable development

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During the last five years, Belarus has undertaken important measures to upgrade its national innovation system. These include legislative changes to encourage the commercialization of intellectual property, the centralisation of its innovation funds, and the inclusion of innovation enhancing measures in its national strategy for sustainable development. However, important challenges remain to be tackled. These include the need to increase risk tolerance in public funded innovation projects, improve screening and evaluation systems, and strengthen the capacity of SMEs to innovate. Overall, more dynamic inter-ministerial coordination and multi-stakeholder consultations in public policy making could very significantly contribute to attaining the sustainable development goals.

These are some of the main findings and policy recommendations of a pilot national Innovation for Sustainable Development Review which UNECE is carrying out together with the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus. The findings and recommendations were reviewed at an international peer review workshop in Minsk on 6 October 2016 with the participation of international experts, representatives of the Government of Belarus and other innovation policy stakeholders in the country.

The Review assesses progress made in innovation performance in Belarus since an earlier review carried out by UNECE in 2010. It also extends the analysis to key priority areas for innovation performance, in particular the role of “green” innovations in the context of the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Review presents a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of the factors that determine innovation performance.

Based on this analysis, UNECE will support the State Committee on Science and Technology and other stakeholders over the coming years in implementing selected policy recommendations.

Mr. Andrey Kosovski, First Deputy Chairman of the State Committee on Science and Technology (SCST) of the Republic of Belarus, highlighted the timeliness of the new review: “The advice we have received from UNECE since 2010 has been the basis for substantial change in several

directions. Capacity building assistance and knowledge sharing activities have been used in law making and training initiatives. We look forward to completing this second review, which will help us assess recent achievements, identify pending challenges and better align innovation policies with the UN agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030”, he said.

National Innovation for Sustainable Development Reviews (formerly Innovation Performance Reviews) are undertaken at the request of UNECE member States. Reviews assess a country’s ecosystem for innovation, discuss policy options and provide recommendations to foster innovation for sustainable development in the national economy. The program builds on earlier Innovation Performance Reviews which were undertaken in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Armenia and Tajikistan.

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