

# Sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook 2020: Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus

## Summary & insights





UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

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**Summary  
& insights**



**UNITED NATIONS**

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Countries of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus (EESC) (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine) have gone through a rocky transition period since the fall of the Soviet Union – plagued by regional conflicts, political instability, and growing inequality. Despite these challenges, most have managed to grow considerably over the past decades – in many ways an astonishing achievement. EESC countries have some of the highest levels of educational achievement compared to other countries in the same income group. All countries of the region show strong political and societal commitment to innovation, while making progress in reforming governance and reducing corruption over the past decades.

Yet, manifold structural problems ranging from limited academia-industry collaboration to institutional constraints hinder innovation-led sustainable development. The Sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO), which builds on long-standing intergovernmental engagement on innovation and competitiveness, seeks to guide policy makers in EESC countries in their efforts to enable and promote innovation for sustainable development. The IPO provides a platform for mutual learning and proliferation of best practices in innovation policy and governance across EESC countries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olga Algayerova'.

Olga Algayerova  
Executive Secretary  
UNECE



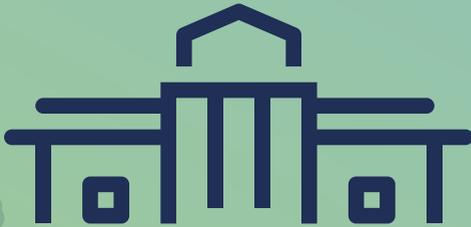
The Sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) aims to offer policymakers in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus (EESC) a framework for identifying strengths and weaknesses in their national innovation systems and setting up effective innovation policies and support mechanisms, as well as the institutions and processes to design and run them efficiently. The IPO also provides guidance to international donors and private investors on opportunities to support and invest in innovation for sustainable development in the EESC sub-region.

By engaging the EESC countries in an intensive process with high-level buy-in and strong national ownership, the IPO has already created momentum. Scoring and evaluating countries across a range of indicators forms the basis for sustained peer learning. I strongly hope that this dynamic will continue and intensify, as innovation is essential for the EESC countries to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. UNECE Economic and Trade Division stands ready to support the implementation of the IPO recommendations with the support of donors and the aim of building back better after COVID-19.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elisabeth Tuerk".

Elisabeth Tuerk

Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade  
UNECE



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# INTRODUCTION TO THE IPO PROJECT

The Sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook (IPO) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) rests on a mandate from the UNECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships. It helps Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus (EESC) countries assess their innovation systems and design, run, and evaluate effective policies, institutions, and support mechanisms.

The IPO complements international composite indices, such as the Global Innovation Index of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), by looking more closely at the role, scope, and effectiveness of innovation policies and institutions across countries with shared economic, structural, legacy and institutional features, challenges and opportunities.



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