



United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Programme

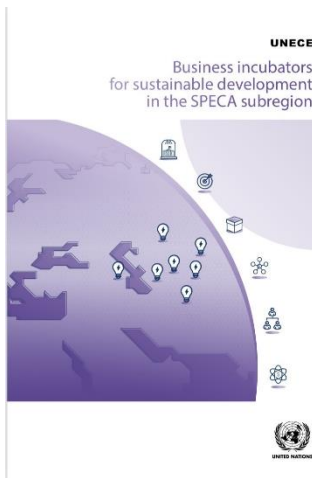
Study tour to Georgia for innovation
policymakers from the SPECA sub-region

Dates: 10-11 July 2023

Venue: Tbilisi, Georgia

Background

Since the beginning of 2020, UNECE has been implementing a UN Development Account project titled “Strengthening innovation policies for SPECA countries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This project continues the longstanding support UNECE has provided to the participating countries of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) on innovation for sustainable development and on enhancing sub-regional cooperation, including in the area of innovative entrepreneurship.



Building on strong interest from the SPECA participating countries¹ on the topic of business incubators, and to support implementation of the [SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development](#), the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and

Technology for Sustainable Development on 20 July 2022 welcomed a proposal to set up a SPECA Network of Business Incubators and Accelerators for Sustainable Development. This Network is a platform for dialogue and exchange on issues, challenges and solutions, as well as best practices related to innovative entrepreneurship support through business incubators (BI) and accelerators (BA) in the SPECA sub-region.

Under the Network, several online trainings have been organized to develop the capacity of policymakers but also of entrepreneurs, of the staff of business support institutions and the universities and other organisations who host such institutions. The trainings have covered technical aspects related to the promotion of innovative entrepreneurship, such as education, project selection, financing etc. With over 100 participants attending each training, these events have disseminated the good practices contained in the UNECE policy handbook “[Business Incubators for Sustainable Development in the SPECA Sub-region](#)” to a broad audience. The events have also highlighted the importance of aligning the work of business support institutions with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



To further support the progress in the sub-region towards the SDGs via innovation, UNECE is organizing a 2-day study tour to Tbilisi, Georgia. The SPECA participating countries have expressed strong interest in learning from the Georgian experience on building a strong innovation ecosystem. Consequently, the tour will provide an overview of the national innovation system and entrepreneurship support structures in Georgia, and highlight best practices that may also be applied in the SPECA sub-region.

The study tour targets policymakers from the national innovation ministries or agencies of SPECA participating countries.

¹ The SPECA participating countries that are UNECE member States are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Objectives

The study tour will help to:

- *Understand the Georgian innovation ecosystem:* The study tour aims to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of Georgia's innovation ecosystem. This includes exploring the key stakeholders, such as government agencies, start-up accelerators, financing mechanisms and industry associations, which contribute to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship Georgia.
- *Explore business support institutions:* The tour intends to visit various business incubators in Georgia to gain insights into their operations, services, and success stories. Participants will learn about the different types of business support institutions, their models, and the support they provide to start-ups and early-stage ventures.
- *Learn best practices:* The study tour will offer an opportunity to learn about best practices in nurturing innovation and supporting start-ups. Participants can observe the strategies, programs, and initiatives implemented by Georgia's innovation ecosystem and business support institutions that have yielded positive results.
- *Get policy and regulatory insights:* The tour will involve discussions with government officials and policymakers to understand the policies and regulations that support the innovation ecosystem and business support organizations in Georgia.
- *Foster networking and collaboration:* The tour will facilitate networking and collaboration among participants, local entrepreneurs, innovators, and incubator managers.

Contact information:

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Programme

9 July 2023	Arrival in Tbilisi, Georgia
10 July 2023	<p><u>Location:</u> Business and Technology University (Room 401); 82 Ilia Chavchavadze Avenue, Tbilisi</p> <p><u>09:15 – 10:00</u> Opening remarks by UNECE secretariat, introduction of participants and the tour programme</p> <p><u>10:00 – 11:00</u> Presentation of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship support structures at BTU and tour of relevant BTU facilities (by Ani Chelishvili, Head Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator, Development and International Relations Office, BTU)</p> <p><u>11:00 – 12:00</u> Meeting with representatives of Axel Georgia, an Angel Network boasting over 80 Angel Investors</p> <p><u>12:00 – 12:30</u> Meeting with Start-up Georgia - a co-financing grants program</p> <p><u>12:30 – 13:30</u> Meeting with representatives of Georgian start-ups</p> <p><u>13:30 – 15:00</u> Lunch at BTU</p> <p><u>15:00 – 15:30</u> Meeting with start-up acceleration program managers (Medea Janjghava - Startup Drive, ScaleUP, UC Berkeley SCET)</p> <p><u>15:30 – 16:00</u> Explanation of Ilia University Acceleration Program</p> <p><u>16:00 – 17:00</u> Past and the future of the Georgian Startup Ecosystem (by Irakli Kashivadze)</p>
11 July 2023	<p><u>First location:</u> Business and Technology University (Room 401); 82 Ilia Chavchavadze Avenue, Tbilisi</p> <p><u>10:20 – 11:00</u> Opening of second day, discussion on upcoming UNECE activities</p> <p><u>11:00 – 12:00</u> Meeting with Annie Vashakmadze, Head of International Relations Department, Georgia’s Innovation and Technology Agency</p> <p><u>Second Location:</u> National Bank of Georgia; 2, Zviad Gamsakhurdia Named Right Bank, Tbilisi 0106</p> <p><u>12:00 – 12:30</u> Travel to the National Bank of Georgia building</p> <p><u>12:30 – 13:30</u> Meeting with representatives of the National Bank to gain insights into the venture fund registration regulatory environment and discuss fintech development</p> <p><u>13:30 – 15:00</u> Lunch at HB Restaurant (TBC)</p>

	<p><u>Third Location: D-Block Workspace; 14 Merab Kostava St., Tbilisi 0108</u></p> <p><u>15:00 – 15:30</u> Tour of D-Block Workspace</p> <p><u>Fourth Location: FabLab TechPark; 2 Zugdidi Lagidze</u></p> <p><u>15:30 - 16:00</u> Travel to FabLab TechPark</p> <p><u>16:00 - 17:00</u> Tour of FabLab TechPark – Digital Fabrication Laboratory</p>
12 July 2023	Departure from Tbilisi, Georgia