Technology and Innovation for the green transition in Latin America and the Caribbean

07 June 2023 (10:30 – 12:00 GMT-4/16:30 – 18:00, CEST)
Concept note

Objective

The webinar will present UNCTAD's Technology and Innovation Report 2023 and ECLAC's Latin American Outlook 2022: Towards a green and just transition. Presentations will be followed by a discussion among experts and policymakers, to reflect on the current situation of countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean and how the findings and recommendations of the reports could be applied to the region. The discussion will be focused on ways to move forward with the policy options for countries of the region to strategically position themselves to open and take advantage of green windows of opportunity. The webinar will serve as a platform for peer learning and discussion on innovation strategies for creating green windows that can be explored by government agencies, private sector institutions, and other stakeholders. The overall objective is to raise awareness of policy options for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to harness these frontier technologies to achieve the dual goal of economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Background

The world is facing pressing social and economic challenges of unprecedented nature. Hovering over this conjuncture is the climate crisis. As of 2023, carbon emissions are at a record high, reflecting historical growth patterns sourced by fossil fuels and a lack of political will to transition towards renewable energies. Governments are facing complex trade-offs between promoting inclusive economic growth and mitigating climate change.

Green technologies offer transformative solutions to achieve this dual goal. Green technologies are usually associated with renewable energy technologies but also include the strategic use of traditional and new digital technologies like blockchain, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things. They enable cleaner and more efficient production, thus creating a synergy between economic development and climate change mitigation.

Green transformation, supported by frontier technologies, offers a viable route for developing countries to claim agency in their own development narrative and move from crisis to sustainable development. To benefit from the green technology revolution, strong government efforts are needed to take strategic, long-term action to build innovation and technological capacities to spur sustainable economic growth and increase their resilience to future crises.

Technology and Innovation Report 2023

UNCTAD's *Technology and Innovation Report 2023* "Opening green windows: Technological opportunities for a low-carbon world" analyses the opportunities presented by the green transition and the technologies linked to it. Unleashing green innovations can enable countries to make the most of the 'green windows

of opportunity' to not only build resilience to climate change and implement mitigation mechanisms, but also to spur economic growth and technological development. These opportunities can particularly support developing countries to "leap" out of the cascade of crises and move forward.

The Report has three key messages. Firstly, developing countries must strategically position themselves to catch the green technological revolution early. Secondly, the international community needs to step up efforts in allocating sufficient resources and building the required know-how to support developing countries to take advantage of the green windows of opportunity. Lastly, agency and urgency are pivotal in the fight against climate change and inequalities – if we all share the same problem, then we must also share the same tools to solve it.

Latin American Economic Outlook 2022: Towards green and just transition

The 15th edition of the Latin American Economic Outlook explores options for the region to recast its production models, transform its energy matrix and create better jobs in the process. It argues that, for this transition to be just, stronger social protection systems and open dialogue must help build new, sustainable social contracts. In support of this ambitious agenda, the report presents an array of financing options, including green finance, and advocates for renewed international partnerships.

The event

This webinar is part of a set of events conducted to disseminate the findings of the Technology and Innovation Report 2023 to a broader audience comprised of policymakers, international organisations, the academia, the private sector, and other stakeholders. The webinar will be comprised of presentations followed by a moderated panel discussion by experts and policymakers on the ways to leverage technologies for a low-carbon world in the region. After discussion, the floor will be opened to questions and contributions from the audience (via chat function). The event will be conducted in Spanish (without translation) on the Zoom online platform.

Guiding questions for discussion

- How could countries in Latin America and the Caribbean take advantage of the green technology revolution to build a greener, smarter, more resilience, inclusive and sustainable society and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals?
- What are the major challenges that prevent developing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean face to adopt and develop green technology and innovation?
- What should governments, the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders do to harness the full potential of these technologies? How can countries in the region harness the full potential of frontier technologies while minimizing risks?
- How can the international community support developing countries to seize green windows of opportunity?