

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

**Geneva, Switzerland  
21-22 October 2024**

**Contribution by ESCAP**

**to the CSTD 2024-2025 priority theme on “Technology foresight and technology  
assessment for sustainable development”**

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## **PRIORITY THEME 2:** Technology foresight and technology assessment for sustainable development

### **United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)**

To whom it may concern

The [27<sup>th</sup> CSTD annual session](#) selected “Technology foresight and technology assessment for sustainable development”, as one of the priority themes for its 28th session (2024-2025) period).

Along with unprecedented opportunities, rapid technological developments present multifaceted challenges and risks, socio-economic disruptions and environmental impacts, among others. STI foresight (ForSTI)<sup>1</sup> and technology assessment (TA)<sup>2</sup> are useful tools for identifying and understanding key emerging trends and the risks and opportunities from the creation and adoption of new technologies, improving the quality of decision-making by making it better informed, more evidence-based and inclusive, promoting inclusive discussion, and identifying strategic priorities for future STI policy at the national level, and thereby enable more effective adaptation to technological and other systemically important future changes. STI foresight is a systematic process aimed at envisaging the future and strategically making decisions on STI policy and the use policy actions in the present to arrive at a preferred future.

Technology assessment is an interdisciplinary process for assessing opportunities and risks of new technologies, informing policymakers, inducing public dialogues and debates, and helping frame supportive policies and instruments. Therefore, they are policy tools that are particularly relevant to ensuring that policymakers can identify STI policy actions and implement more inclusive policy processes that move towards leaving no one behind, which is closely aligned with the theme under consideration for ECOSOC 2025 (“Advancing sustainable and inclusive solutions for leaving no one behind”).

The annual resolutions negotiated at the CSTD have consistently underscored the importance of technology foresight and TA exercises and have encouraged all stakeholders to conduct inclusive national, regional and international and foresight exercises on existing, new and emerging technologies to help to evaluate their development potential and mitigate possible negative effects and risks. By integrating these processes into strategic planning and innovation policymaking, countries could navigate better the complexities of technological changes while maximizing its benefits for national development.

Under this theme, the Commission will consider issues such as the methodology for conducting ForSTI and TA, good practices and challenges in conducting these exercises, and the effective integration of the results from these exercises into the design and implementation of STI policies that will drive progress towards achieving the SDGs. The Commission will also consider how international cooperation and the CSTD could play a role in this regard.

The CSTD secretariat is in the process of drafting an issues paper on the theme to be presented at the CSTD inter-sessional panel meeting to be held on 21 and 22 October 2024 in Geneva. In this context, we would like to solicit inputs from your organization on this theme. We would be grateful if you could kindly answer the following questions based on your organization’s work. To facilitate your answering, we have made the questions be as specific as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Technology foresight is a term that can be usefully broadened to STI foresight to recognize that STI is broader than technology alone, and foresight for national policy related to technology can include STI more broadly defined. This remains narrower than “strategic foresight”, which can be applied to many areas of policy and diverse uses, and “futures”, which can include many future-oriented studies of a diverse nature.

<sup>2</sup> TA is not the same as technology needs assessment (TNA), which aims to identify technology needs for addressing climate change rather than the impacts of adopting a technology new to the country.

1. Has your organization conducted ForSTI, TA or both for developing countries? If yes, what were the reasons for undertaking ForSTI and TA? And what have been some important ForSTI and TA examples undertaken by your organization?  
[Not applicable](#)
2. If your organization have not conducted ForSTI or TA in the past, what were the reasons for this? Would your organization be interested in undertaking either ForSTI or TA for developing countries in the near future?  
[Not applicable](#)
3. Who was your counterpart in the beneficiary countries responsible for implementing the ForSTI and/or TA undertaken - national government, sub-national levels of government (state/province or other levels), industry, universities, research institutes or civil society?  
[Not applicable](#)
4. In which sectors and/or for what policy processes have ForSTI and TA been undertaken, or linked to? What SDGs have they related to?  
[Not applicable](#)
5. What specific methods (tools) and methodologies have been used for ForSTI and/or TA?  
[Not applicable](#)
6. What challenges has your organization experienced in undertaking ForSTI and TA exercises? Does your beneficiary country have any specific capacity needs to strengthen the conduct and use of ForSTI and TA?  
[Not applicable](#)
7. Has your organization conducted combined ForSTI and TA in a single exercise at any time? What were the benefits and challenges of combining ForSTI and TA? Do you see this as a useful and feasible approach?  
[Not applicable](#)
8. What role(s) can international cooperation, and the CSTD, play in promoting ForSTI and TA?  
[CSTD can facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned in implementing ForSTI and TA. This includes the sharing of methodologies, tools, and strategies that have been successful in various countries.](#)
9. Based on your organization's experiences, how have ForSTI and TA improved STI decision making and the prioritization, design and implementation of STI policies?  
[Not applicable](#)

Please indicate contact person(s) responsible for projects/policies and international collaboration in this context in case we need clarification on the inputs.

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Please send your responses and any further inputs on the theme to the CSTD secretariat ([stdev@unctad.org](mailto:stdev@unctad.org)) by **24 July 2024**. We look forward to receiving your valuable inputs.

Sincere regards,  
CSTD secretariat