

**United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)  
Twenty-seventh Annual Session**

**Launch of Reports on Technology Assessment  
in Seychelles and Zambia**

**17 April 2024,  
15:00-17:30 (Geneva time)  
Geneva**

**Concept note**

**Background**

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has a pilot project promoting technology assessment (TA) in the energy and agricultural sectors in Africa, focusing on pilot assessments in Seychelles, South Africa and Zambia. TA entails a critical and participatory evaluation of the social, economic and environmental benefits and risks of using a particular technology. It can be a powerful tool for policymakers to make strategic choices about the procurement, development, introduction, and governance of technologies new to them. Despite the proliferation of new and emerging technologies, there is little experience with technology assessment in sub-Saharan Africa, or in fact in developing countries more broadly. To overcome this gap, the UNCTAD pilot project has developed a Methodology for implementing TA that is tailored to the specific needs and challenges of developing countries. The project supports SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 15.

In Seychelles and Zambia, the TA Reports have recently been completed and validated at national workshops. The team in Seychelles chose to assess agrivoltaics for controlled-environment crop production. This technology combines, on the one hand, the simultaneous use of land for both agriculture and photovoltaic power generation and, on the other hand, the cultivation of crops in total isolation from the external environment. Agrivoltaics for controlled-environment crop production holds the potential to ensure the availability of freshly grown vegetable crops throughout the year in Seychelles. In Zambia, the team selected to assess small-scale biogas. Despite widespread use of biogas in some developed and developing countries, its use remains limited in Zambia. Small-scale biogas presents a promising avenue for the country to align national policy with development targets by increasing energy access (especially in rural and peri-rural areas) and steering energy production and use towards more sustainable sources while also potentially benefiting farmers with organic fertilizer. These areas of focus are timely considering recent global energy and food crises and the high priority placed on energy and food security in all countries.

**Objective**

This event will present the two TA Reports to the CSTD and the global community, raising awareness of the potential usefulness, but also challenges, for African and other developing countries to build capacity to undertake technology assessments. It will review the experience of these countries so far in building national capacity in technology assessment (as part of broader STI policy capacity), within their national contexts, to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national development plans. Through this event, we encourage member States of the CSTD to consider the need for support to all countries to build national STI capacity (and TA capacity specifically) to help them harness the potential power of science, engineering, technology and innovation for promoting sustainable development.

### **Guiding questions for discussion**

- How can the TA Reports from Seychelles and Zambia help address the specific needs and challenges of these countries, and contribute to the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- What lessons can other developing countries learn from the experiences of Seychelles and Zambia in conducting TA, and how can they adapt these lessons to their own contexts?
- What types of support do developing countries these countries need to build their technology assessment and implementation capacity?
- What role can international collaboration play and what support mechanisms are available from UNCTAD, the CSTD and the international community to help countries build TA capacity and support TA implementation?

### **Format**

The event will feature the following panellists:

- An intervention by H.E. Mrs Devika Vidot, Minister for Investment, Entrepreneurship and Industry of the Seychelles on the importance of TA in supporting policymaking in Seychelles;
- An intervention by Mr. John Chongo, Deputy Director Science, Technology and Innovation, Department of Technology and Science, Ministry of Technology and Science of Zambia on the importance of TA in supporting policymaking in Zambia;
- A presentation on the Seychelles TA Report by Ms. Cynthia Alexander, Director General, Division of Science, Technology and Innovation, Seychelles Ministry of Investment, Entrepreneurship and Industry;
- A presentation on the Zambia TA Report by Senior Lecturer Onesmus Munyati, University of Zambia and TA Expert Group Chairman.

These interventions will be followed by an interactive discussion among panellists and participants with remarks limited to 3 minutes. Key project counterparts, including Mr. Xavier Estico and Mr. Mutinta Lunda, consultants from Seychelles and Zambia respectively, along with Dr. Miltos Ladikas and Dr. Andreas Stamm, international project consultants, will be present in the audience to provide additional insights into their experiences with implementing TA in the pilot countries as well as in other countries that have an established tradition of undertaking TA.

### **Supporting documents**

- UNCTAD TA methodology: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tcsd-tlinf2022d4\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tcsd-tlinf2022d4_en.pdf)