DRAFT Terms of Reference
Independent Technical Assessment for Development of an On-line Platform as part of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism

I. Context and Stakeholders

The key stakeholders on this assessment are the *United Nations Inter-agency Task Team (IATT) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for the SDGs* and the *United Nations 10-Member Group to support the Technology Facilitation Mechanism*. They are seeking an independent technical assessment as the basis for the development of an online platform, as mandated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (paragraph 70) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing for Development (paragraph 123).

UN Member States have agreed that the online platform will "*establish a comprehensive mapping of, and serve as a gateway for, information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes, within and beyond the United Nations*," "*facilitate access to information, knowledge and experience, as well as best practices and lessons learned, on science, technology and innovation facilitation initiatives and policies*" and "*facilitate the dissemination of relevant open access scientific publications generated worldwide*". It is expected that the online platform will function as an integral part of the broader Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM). For more information, please refer to https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM

The IATT, in support of UN Member States, has so far: (i) conducted an initial mapping of existing STI initiatives within the UN system; and (ii) developed three broad options for an online platform, with low, mid and high levels of ambition (see Annex B). These options seek to reflect inter-governmental deliberations and how such a platform could link to other elements of a TFM such as the *Multi-stakeholder Forum on STI for SDGs* and the TFM's emphasis on capacity building.

II. Scope of work of the independent assessment

Building on IATT's preparatory work, an independent technical assessment(s) will be the basis for the development of an online platform. As such the assessment will "*take into account best practices and lessons learned from other initiatives, within and beyond the United Nations, in order to ensure that it will complement, facilitate access to and provide adequate information on existing science, technology and innovation platforms, avoiding duplications and enhancing synergies*."

The assessment has been divided in two sections.

Section A

1. Architecture, functional requirements and user group for the online platform.

- Given the overarching objectives of the online platform, who should be the user group of the online platform?
- Given the overarching objectives of the online platform, what are its key functional requirements?

- What is the unique value proposition of the platform that other existing platforms do not address? Why would the intended users visit the platform, and what added value do they get from using it? What existing problems or shortcomings does the platform solve or address for its users?
- Considering industry trends and best practices in the area of information/knowledge/experience sharing through online platforms in general (not limited to STI topics), technological advancements - to date and anticipated over the 2015-2030 period, and the SDGs' and TFM's broad principles (e.g. universality, inclusiveness), what are typical usage scenarios of the platform by different user groups, and how could/should the use cases evolve over time if the platform were to be implemented incrementally?
- Given the experience of other platforms, what could be the results framework of the online platform, i.e., the road map articulating the transmission mechanisms through which the online platform can most usefully contribute to the other TFM deliverables and the effective implementation of the SDGs?
- How might the platform integrate a South-South and triangular cooperation dimension to scale-up technology transfer, while identifying and capturing STI expertise, knowledge and best practices from Southern partners?

2. Stocktaking, benchmarking, best practices, and lessons learned from existing relevant online platforms, within and beyond UN system.

- What are the most relevant online platforms within the UN system (possibly including the examples IATT identified in its "Overview of the UN Technology Initiatives" and "Options for an Online Platform" papers)? How do they fit key requirements? Are there notable opportunities to avoid duplications by enhancing synergies across existing STI platforms within UN system?
- What are the most relevant online platforms outside the UN system? In what ways can the new TFM platform create synergies and make best use of these existing provisions?
- What scientific instruments (eg. scientific papers, technologies, products including machines and equipment) are used in the existing initiatives?
- What are key lessons across public, private and civic sectors (within STI related initiatives and beyond), to be considered for implementation of the TFM, on leveraging online platforms to i) reach broad stakeholders across a wide range of institutions and geographies; ii) generate and maintain active traffic of interactions; iii) accumulate and renew relevant and timely knowledge repository; and iv) operate in an integrated manner with other modalities including off-line forums to advance the state of knowledge and practices in the field they are meant to inform?

3. Recommendations on management and governance structure and regular quality control of the platform

- What are the key factors in management and governance structure to ensure success and sustainability of the online platform?
- How to ensure quality of the information/knowledge/technology and services provided by the platform?
- How to attract maximum use and participation to the online platform?
- What are the challenges in IPR protection that the online platform may encounter and what are the possible solutions?

- How should the performance of the online platform be evaluated? What are the criteria of being 'successful'?
- Any other important aspects or factors that are not included in the TOR which may enhance the outcome and potential of the online platform.

Section B

4. Assessment of the benefits and financial costs of the three options of the online platform

- Do IATT's three indicative components/stages of an online platform (please see Annex B) adequately inform Member States on possible cost and benefit scenarios? How can this summary table be extended to give Member States adequate information about possible costs and benefits of each option?
- Considering best practices, lessons learned to date and future prospects, what additional or refined scenarios, including evolution over time, may be worth considering?
- What are the cost implications, including through alternative implementation modalities if relevant (e.g. building from scratch; leveraging existing platforms through harmonization of interfaces; reduction of duplication and strengthening of synergies)?
- What are the cost implications for having multi-language version of the platform?
- What are the cost implications to develop a mobile App of the online platform?
- How to identify the online system developer who will develop and maintain the basic online system?
- How to ensure financial and technological sustainability of the platform until 2030 and beyond, given the vastly changing landscape of technology trends, and the need for ongoing substantive management (content collection and curation, facilitation of interactions, data analysis and results measurement, etc.) and technical maintenance (IT hosting, administration, feature improvements, architecture upgrades)?

The independent technical assessment shall be performed in an inclusive manner, through consultation with experts in academia, governments, UN entities, the private sector and NGOs. Where appropriate, it could also offer the opportunity for the general public to contribute, such as through best practice examples and lessons.

III. Organization of the assessment

Different independent assessors may be selected for Sections A and B.

For the work under Section A, the UN will commission two independent assessors (consultants) working in parallel, one from a developed country and one from a developing country, with "reconciliation" of the findings ex post.

The work under section B will be performed by a consultant in a coherent way with the results obtained under Section A.

The present terms of reference are also a call for proposals. Interested parties are invited to submit proposals following the broad guidance presented in page 5 of these terms of reference.

The deadline for proposal submission is 29 July 2016.

IV. Deliverables and timeline

The successful applicant hereafter called "technical assessor" will be expected to produce the following deliverables, in line with the scope of work detailed above.

Section A:

The assessment will involve: an inception report to be discussed with IATT and interested Member States to assure continuity and alignment; an interim report and review period for feedback from stakeholders on key findings and indicative conclusions; and delivery of a full report. In addition, the two selected assessors will be required to compare their findings, assessing commonalities and main areas of difference.

Indicative timeline: The technical assessor will be responsible for performing according to the following project schedule:

Deliverable	Timeline
Inception report	31 September 2016
Interim review	30 November 2016
Full report	31 December 2016
Final report with reconciliation	1 February 2017

Section B:

The assessment will involve: an interim report and review period for feedback from stakeholders on key findings and indicative conclusions; and delivery of a full report.

In order to ensure the coherence of the assessment, the assessor will have to work on the basis of the interim findings of the work under Section A. The assessor will be responsible for performing according to the following schedule:

Deliverable	Timeline
Interim report	15 January 2017
Full report	29 February 2017

V. Estimated Contract Term and Schedule

The stakeholders estimate that this project will take five to seven months to complete. Work is expected to begin in August 2016.

Oversight and Project Management: The technical assessor will work closely with the 10-Member Group and may also draw on the expertise of IATT members. He/she can work remotely from home or their existing office.

Occasionally, he/she may be invited to a face-to-face meeting or briefing. The stakeholders shall receive weekly progress updates and to be notified immediately of any concerns or delays that may arise during the course of the engagement.

In addition, the technical assessor should demonstrate capability to meet the following requirements for project management:

Dedicated Team: The successful applicant should have dedicated staff assigned to the project, including a primary point of contact for the duration of the engagement.

Project Management Plan: The successful applicant shall, along with its proposal, submit a plan for completing this project. The plan should include how the project will be managed, where the work will be performed, and how the stakeholders will be kept apprised of progress.

VI. Questions related to these terms of reference

Please submit questions relating to this TOR to https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact, no later than 5:30 pm EST, on 29 July 2016. Answers to all questions submitted will be posted on this page.

VII. Proposal submission requirements

Interested parties are invited to submit proposals to the Secretariat of the Interagency Task Team on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs, liuw@un.org and cabani@un.org.

Proposals should be built around the following requirements:

Proposal format: Proposals should be six A4 pages or less (not including resumes and samples of comparable work), concise, well-organized, and demonstrate how your proposed services, approach and methodology, qualifications, experience, and terms meet or exceed the requirements. All proposals must also contain the following:

Applicant information: Your full name, address, telephone number, email, and website. If applicable, organization overview, including a brief history, mission, number of staff, and number of years in operation.

Key qualifications: Describe your familiarity with the use of technology in the delivery of sustainable development projects, e.g. multilingual portals and gateways, search engines; experience conducting technical assessments.

Provide or describe a sample of comparable work completed.

Provide resumes for the assessor and, as applicable, other key personnel involved, describing qualifications and experience which make him or her particularly suited for this project. Include relevant education, training and work experience, certifications, as well as names and contact addresses of two referees.

Statement and Methodology: Describe your understanding of the overall objective and the objectives and deliverables for each phase of the project. Include a clear description of the work to be performed, the anticipated methodology used to complete the work and the objectives to be reached and/or product to be delivered for each phase of the project. In particular, include a description of the particular work product to be produced by you at each stage in the process. Please include a timeline for project completion in the time designated for these deliverables.

Management: Provide an indicative work plan for carrying out the project, and demonstrate your ability and willingness to meet the proposed project schedule.

Cost: Identify the estimated cost and the proposed cost basis for you to complete the project, such as direct and indirect costs and expenses, as well as any plans for utilizing students and interns for research to maximize the scope of the work that can be accomplished.

Alternatives: The proposal may include discussion of alternative tasks or areas of work the submitter believes will better enable the stakeholders to reach their objectives for this project. If the Proposal contains any such alternatives, the proposal must identify the ways in which the proposal would modify the terms of reference and be identified in the proposed work plan.

References: Provide three (3) recent references concerning your organization's performance on relevant projects, activities or research. Indicate the project name, a brief description of the project and the name, title, telephone number and email address of a reference who is knowledgeable about the project and who may be contacted by proposal evaluators.

Other Information: You may provide other information or material that you believe is relevant to our evaluation or that provides additional value to the stakeholders.

VIII. Proposal deadlines and mode of delivery

Deadline for submitting proposals: Proposals must be received no later than 15 July 2016. You are solely responsible for ensuring that your proposal is delivered on time. Late proposals may be accepted at the stakeholder's discretion. Delays caused by any delivery service will not be grounds for extension of the proposal due date and time.

Delivery of proposals: Please email (in Word or PDF format) your proposal to: liuw@un.org and cabani@un.org .

Cost of proposal: All costs incurred in preparing proposals will be borne by the applicant. The final engagement will not reimburse the successful applicant for proposal preparation costs.

IX. Proposal evaluation criteria

The assessors for part A and part B will be selected by the 10-member group to support the technology facilitation mechanism. The selection will be based on the basis of criteria:

- Demonstrated interest in and proven expert knowledge of technology issues, technology and knowledge transfer and the needs in the developing world, and online information system design; ideally, the assessor should have expert knowledge of more than one country/region;
- Qualifications and experience; technical expertise; project plan and approach;
- Balance of experience, creativity, and performance reflected in the proposal.

X. Terms of payment

The contractor's fee will be commensurate with experience.

Payments will be initiated upon successful completion or documented progress made on tasks as mentioned in the above Terms of Reference.

XI. Performance criteria:

The performance of the consultant will be assessed based on the following criteria: Timeliness of deliverables; capacity; understanding of and ability to meet the needs; responsiveness to stakeholder's questions during the assignment; quality of deliverables.

X. Key references

- Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/69/L.85), http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

- Addis Ababa Action Agenda (A/CONF.227/L.1), http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

- An Overview of the UN Technology Initiatives (IATT), https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2153OnlineTechnology%20Facilitation%20Knowledge%20Platform%20Oct%2028%202015_clean_final.pdf

- Options of an Online Platform of a Technology Facilitation Mechanism (IATT), https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2091Mapping%20UN%20Technology%20Facilitation%20Initiatives%20Sept%202015%20clean.pdf

- Terms of reference for the IATT, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/8569TOR%20IATT%2026%20Oct%202015rev.pdf

- Terms of reference for the 10-Member Group, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/9468TOR%2010-member%20group-final-clean.pdf

Annex A: Inter-governmentally agreed text regarding the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, as contained in paragraph 70 of "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"[1]

We hereby launch a Technology Facilitation Mechanism which was established by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in order to support the Sustainable Development Goals. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism will be based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders and will be composed of a United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, a collaborative multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and an online platform.

- The United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals will promote coordination, coherence and cooperation within the United Nations system on science, technology and innovation-related matters, enhancing synergy and efficiency, in particular to enhance capacity-building initiatives. The task team will draw on existing resources and will work with 10 representatives from civil society, the private sector and the scientific community to prepare the meetings of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in the development and operationalization of the online platform, including preparing proposals for the modalities for the forum and the online platform. The 10 representatives will be appointed by the Secretary-General, for periods of two years. The task team will be open to the participation of all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and it will initially be composed of the entities that currently integrate the informal working group on technology facilitation, namely, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Bank.

- The online platform will be used to establish a comprehensive mapping of, and serve as a gateway for, information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes, within and beyond the United Nations. The online platform will facilitate access to information, knowledge and experience, as well as best practices and lessons learned, on science, technology and innovation facilitation initiatives and policies. The online platform will also facilitate the dissemination of relevant open access scientific publications generated worldwide. The online platform will be developed on the basis of an independent technical assessment which will take into account best practices and lessons learned from other initiatives, within and beyond the United Nations, in order to ensure that it will complement, facilitate access to and provide adequate information on existing science, technology and innovation platforms, avoiding duplications and enhancing synergies.

- The multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals will be convened once a year, for a period of two days, to discuss science, technology and innovation cooperation around thematic areas for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, congregating all relevant stakeholders to actively contribute in their

[1] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

area of expertise. The forum will provide a venue for facilitating interaction, matchmaking and the establishment of networks between relevant stakeholders and multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to identify and examine technology needs and gaps, including on scientific cooperation, innovation and capacity-building, and also in order to help to facilitate development, transfer and dissemination of relevant technologies for the Sustainable Development Goals. The meetings of the forum will be convened by the President of the Economic and Social Council before the meeting of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council or, alternatively, in conjunction with other forums or conferences, as appropriate, taking into account the theme to be considered and on the basis of a collaboration with the organizers of the other forums or conferences. The meetings of the forum will be co-chaired by two Member States and will result in a summary of discussions elaborated by the two co-Chairs, as an input to the meetings of the high-level political forum, in the context of the follow-up and review of the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

- The meetings of the high-level political forum will be informed by the summary of the multi-stakeholder forum. The themes for the subsequent multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals will be considered by the high-level political forum on sustainable development, taking into account expert inputs from the task team.

***Annex B:* Elements of three indicative components/stages for the online platform**

	"Why" – demands and rationale	"What" – key platform functions	"How" – technical requirements, operational model, cost implication
Component 1: One-Stop Portal as a One-Way Dissemination Channel	• Broad mandates of an online platform, as defined by PGA Report on Structured Dialogues and SG Synthesis Report • Stocktaking identified numerous relevant online platforms • Some Member States emphasis on existing platforms and request for focus on one stop access	• Repository of relevant UN documents, including on mapping of technology facilitation initiatives • Curated inventory of technologies, catalogue of platforms and directory of actors, UN, other public, and private • Periodic updates on ad hoc products (good practice, lessons); and progress of policy dialogues and relevant efforts	• Some interoperability with services linked • Part time maintenance team (subject matter expert and web service technician) • $100-500k per year?
Component 2: Dynamic Exchange of Knowledge, Experiences	• Food for thought paper outlined interactive and participatory aspects beyond dissemination • Stocktaking identified no UN platforms "truly interactive" on such aspects; experiences suggest it takes time and concerted efforts • Initial mapping of UN facilitation initiatives indicated full mapping requires open information channel on demands and non-UN initiatives	• Common taxonomies (technology clusters and policy areas under SDGs and targets) as participation framework • Community of Practice, user-generated contents, tools for knowledge capture • Facilitated exchanges of contents and discourses with public and private participants, including through Multi-stakeholder forum on STI for SDGs and other key global, regional, national, industry forums	• User identification, access control, wiki-type metadata architecture, quality assurance of dynamic contents • Full time mid-size team of program administration and community moderation; with key influencer contributions • $1-3m per year?
Component 3: Integrated Delivery Channel	• Broader TFM activities emerged, such as coordinated STI capacity building program • Online platform may be a channel for coordination and delivery	• [depends on substance proposal of coordinated STI capacity development; if it should include online and offline delivery, contents coordination and integration, etc.]	• Requires technical and programmatic management • Cost depends on ambitions

Source: These options were identified by IATT members in 2015 based on work by DESA and the World Bank.