

Webinar on Promoting Grassroots Innovation: Present Situation, Challenges, and Policies

Organized by United Nations ESCAP

In collaboration with
Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN)
Honey Bee Network

2-3 November 2020

Grassroots innovation is a modality of inclusive innovation that enables affordable, niche-adapted solutions developed by members of informal sector at community level, like farmers, artisans, workers, mechanics, children etc., to address unmet needs or local problems, often unaided by public sector or actors in the formal sector, including firms, science and technological institutions, and non-governmental organisations. As a bottom-up approach, grassroots innovation converts the ideas and innovations of knowledge-rich but economically poor individuals and communities into viable means of raising income, addressing social needs, and conserving the environment. In a context of growing income disparity and, especially, economic recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, every effort should be made to promote grassroots innovation.

A variety of policies and strategies of the public sector can serve the emergence, recognition, and diffusion of grassroots innovations. The webinar aims to raise awareness of the significance of grassroots innovations, provide policymakers with suggestions on how to promote grassroots innovations, and exchange the experience of practitioners within and across the national borders.

The webinar is mainly addressed to government officials and other decision makers from Asia-Pacific region, and researchers and civil society stakeholders relevant to the topic are also welcome to participate.

The webinar will be based on the **Workbook on Policies and Strategies for Promoting Grassroots Innovations** recently published by ESCAP, the Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN) and the Honey Bee Network. The objectives of this webinar are to:

- 1) Establish basic understanding about grassroots innovations: the definition of grassroots innovation; reasons why grassroots innovations matter and worth government support; the emergence, growth, and diffusion of grassroots innovations; different types of grassroots innovations; challenges for grassroots innovators; current policies from government or government-supported organizations to promote grassroots innovations. This part will be based on the experience of the Honey Bee Network over the past three decades of its existence.
- 2) Explore policies and strategies to create an enabling environment for grassroots innovations: what can be done by governments, academia, industry, NGOs, etc., to discover, recognize,

protect, incubate, and promote grassroots innovations.

- a. Discovery: different sources and methods for discovering grassroots innovations;
 - b. Recognition and protection: identifying local, regional and global innovations & traditional knowledge; protecting intellectual property right;
 - c. Incubation: process followed by governments and civil organizations to incubate grassroots innovations;
 - d. Social diffusion: approaches to diffuse grassroots innovations;
 - e. Financing: available financing mechanisms to support grassroots innovations;
 - f. Build linkages among grassroots innovators, public institutions, firms, academia, and civil society organizations.
- 3) Discuss and identify opportunities for regional cooperation among governments to provide a conducive environment for grassroots innovations, and the roles ESCAP and Honey Bee Network can play.

The webinar will be held on 2 and 3 November 2020.

Programme

(Bangkok Time)

DAY 1 (2 November 2020)

13:00 – 13:30 **Preparation; participants enter the online venue**

13:30 – 13:43 **Opening remarks**

- Dr. Mia Mikic, Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP
 - Prof. Anil Gupta, Founder of the Honey Bee Network
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13:43 – 14:00 **Introduction of participants**

14:00 – 15:00 **Session 1: Basic facts about grassroots innovations** (30-minute presentation + 30-minute dialogue)

This session will discuss the nature and potential of grassroots innovation, their relevance, how they emerge and diffuse, and the different types of grassroots innovations & traditional knowledge, challenges for grassroots innovators, based on the lessons learnt by the Honey Bee Network over the past three decades of its existence.

Presentation by:

- Prof. Anil Gupta

Dialogue moderated by:

- Ms. Marta Pérez Cusó, Economic Affairs Officer at United Nations ESCAP
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15:00 – 15:30 **Networking break**

15:30 – 17:00 **Session 2: Policies and strategies to create an enabling environment for grassroots innovations: Discovery, recognition and protection** (45-minute presentation + 45-minute dialogue)

This session will explore different sources and methods for discovering grassroots innovations, discuss how to identify local, regional and global innovations & traditional knowledge, and how to protect intellectual property right of grassroots innovations.

Presentation by:

- Prof. Anil Gupta
- Mr. Chetan Patel, National coordinator
SHODHYATRA, SRISTI
- Mr. Dharamveer Kamboj, Grassroots Innovator,
India

Dialogue moderated by:

- Dr. Anamika Dey, CEO GIAN

17:00 – 17:03 **Closing day 1**

DAY 2 (3 November 2020)

08:30 – 08:40 **Opening day 2**

08:40 – 10:10 **Session 3: Policies and strategies to create an enabling environment for grassroots innovations: Incubation, social diffusion, and financing** (45-minute presentation + 45-minute dialogue)

This session will introduce process followed by governments and civil organizations to incubate grassroots innovations, and discuss approaches and mechanisms to diffuse and financing grassroots innovations.

Presentation by:

- Dr. Anthony C. Sales, Regional Director,
Department of Science and Technology (DOST),
the Philippines
- Mr. Ravi Narayan, Representative from
Telangana State Innovation Council
- Mr. Anir Chowdhury, UNDP

Dialogue moderated by:

- Dr. Anamika Dey

10:10 – 10:40 **Networking break**

Presentations by Ms. Uusikyla [Innovation Officer/UNDP Vietnam],
Mr. Hussain [Head of Exploration and Strategy Development at a2i/Bangladesh],
Mr. Lor [Head of Solutions Mapping/UNDP Philippines].

10:40 – 11:50 **Session 4: Opportunities for stronger linkages with domestic and international stakeholders** (30-minute presentation + 30-minute dialogue)

The session will explore how organizations like ESCAP and the Honey Bee Network can assist governments in Asia-Pacific on developing regional cooperation and collaboration to provide a conducive environment for grassroots innovations. Also, it will discuss how to establish beneficial linkages among grassroots innovators, public institutions, firms, academia, and civil society organizations.

Presentation by:

- Ms. Marta Pérez Cusó
- Ms. Courtney Lawrence, Head of Exploration,
Regional Innovation Center, Asia-Pacific
Regional Hub, UNDP

Dialogue moderated by:

- Dr. Anamika Dey

11:50 – 12:00 **Concluding remarks (5 minutes for each speaker)**

- Ms. Marta Pérez Cusó
 - Prof. Anil Gupta
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