



## Call for contributions

### National Innovation Systems in Central Asia

The Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition (Munich) has initiated a book project on National Innovation Systems (NIS) in Central Asia. The overall objective of the volume is to provide an insightful, contextually grounded, and systematic account of the development of NISs across Central Asian countries.

We invite chapter proposals from researchers across disciplines that offer:

- Analytical perspectives on the evolution of NISs as part of broader socio-economic transitions in the region – examining social, legal, and economic reforms, among other shaping factors; and/or
- Normative assessments of how NISs in Central Asia could or should be further developed with regard to their innovation visions and implementation strategies.

Relevant themes and methodological frameworks are detailed in the attached concept note. Proposals on additional topics that align with the overall theme will also be considered. While we value original research, contributors are welcome to build on prior work.

The edited volume is planned for publication in the [Max Planck Institute Book Series](#) at [Springer](#).

#### Submission guidelines

Please submit the following by **10 August 2025**:

- An **abstract in English** (300–500 words) outlining the proposed chapter
  - Important: Abstracts should clearly articulate how the proposed chapter engages with the overarching theme of the edited volume and how it fits within the overall book concept (see attachment).
- A brief **biographical note**, with a link to a professional or institutional profile, if available

Notification of acceptance: 25 August 2025

Deadline for full chapter submission (6,000–8,000 words): **31 October 2025**

All submissions will undergo peer review and editorial revision. Expected publication: second half of 2026.

#### Contact and submission:

Please address inquiries and send your abstract and bio to

Dr Daria Kim (editor)

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## Publication Project on National Innovation Systems in Central Asia

### Concept note

#### *A. Conception and objective*

This edited collection aims to offer the first comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of national innovation systems (NISs) in the Central Asian states: the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Over the past few decades, these countries have navigated a complex socio-economic transition, self-determination, global integration, and reconnecting with the heritage of their ‘golden ages’ in post-Soviet times. Innovation is broadly viewed as both an integral part of an ambitious future and a means to achieve it, with all countries in the region adopting national innovation policies that prioritise technological progress as key to their development, well-being, and competitiveness.

The overall objective of this project is to develop a rich, contextualised understanding of where Central Asian states stand in terms of their vision and strategies for innovation, through a reflective sense-making and solution-oriented exercise. While the region has implemented substantial social, economic, and legal reforms in recent decades, there remains a lack of critical appraisal grounded in a systematic analysis, especially in English-language literature. To address this gap, the collection will solicit and present diverse, in-depth perspectives, offering:

- Interpretative analyses of the evolution of NISs in Central Asia, examining particular phenomena and shaping factors (‘How have we come to where we are?’)
- Normative assessments of how NISs in the region should be further developed (‘What’s next?’)

In doing so, the collection aims to provide a comprehensive perspective on innovation developments in the region, situating them within the broader context of socio-economic transformations and tracing their continuities, discontinuities, and new beginnings.

#### *B. Conceptual framework*

The concept of NIS will serve as an overarching framework and analytical lens, integrating individual contributions into a holistic perspective. An NIS is generally understood as a plurality of formal (particularly, policies, laws, and regulations) and informal (especially social networks and cultural norms) institutions. The central premise is that the interactions among these institutions give rise to a nation’s ability to innovate through adaptive learning processes, which largely determine its development trajectory and competitive performance.

Another key idea is that innovation is a systemic process, shaped by a nation’s specific historical, cultural, economic, and institutional factors and contexts. Innovation is thus understood in its broadest sense, embracing diverse types of knowledge and various modes of knowledge production and diffusion. Accordingly, an NIS analysis typically explores how interactions among key components – including institutional frameworks, innovation infrastructures, resource allocation decisions, innovation processes and outcomes, and governance philosophies and instruments – define a nation’s innovation path and can be leveraged to serve its best interests.



### *C. Thematic fields*

Reflecting on innovation-related phenomena and developments through the lens of an NIS framework, the contributors are invited to explore the following topics.

#### 1) Foundations

- Conceptualising what an NIS means for a country/region at its current stage of development
- Historical perspective on NISs and innovation governance frameworks in Central Asian countries; their conceptual and theoretical foundations, beyond mainstream Western theories often promoted by international norm-setting institutions
- The values that domestic innovation policies and related regulatory frameworks should promote, and the relevant incentive mechanisms

#### 2) Visions and orientations

- Beyond transplants: In search of pathways and solutions tailored to the national and regional circumstances and complexities in Central Asia
- The value and limitations of adopting/transplanting innovation-related legal blueprints and economic models rooted in Western philosophical, political, and economic thinking, such as modern intellectual property law, competition law, and market regulations
- Lessons about innovation and innovation governance from other economies in transition

#### 3) Norms and governance institutions

- National economic policies, laws, and regulations as determinants of knowledge creation and innovation dynamics
- Interactions between formal and informal norms and institutions shaping national innovation pathways
- Innovation in innovation governance

#### 4) Strategies and instruments

- Adaptive governance strategies for overcoming environmental and other constraints
- The sources and pathways of indigenous innovation
- A civil society perspective on governance and innovation
- Interactions between innovation and education
- Sectoral innovation policies

#### 5) Spatial dimension

- The geography of knowledge and innovation: How geographical factors, such as proximity of actors and resources, have shaped economic development and innovation patterns in the region
- Innovation in the geopolitical context: Technology and innovation as means to navigate political and economic dependencies, shape political cooperation and economic integration, and establish self-determination
- The political economy of innovation at the country and regional levels: Innovation aspects in regional and international trade agreements; technology transfer and foreign investment



#### *D. Methodological approaches*

To explore the themes outlined above, contributors are encouraged to apply diverse theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches, including:

- Analysis of governance institutions as determinants of innovation, including policies, laws, and regulations, with a focus on their rationale, implementation, and enforcement
- Sectoral analyses and case studies – for instance, in digital markets and e-commerce regulation, competition policy in the natural resource sector, agricultural innovation, and the protection of traditional knowledge
- ‘Law and ...’ perspectives, examining the interactions between law and other disciplines such as political economy, regional studies, and sociology in the context of innovation
- Case studies on innovation processes or the implementation of innovation policy measures
- Economic methods, such as econometric analysis, cost–benefit assessments, and modelling of innovation scenarios and dynamics
- Comparative perspectives on NISs
- Policy analysis drawing on empirical assessment of policy impact

Whichever methods are chosen, decisive is that the chapter addresses the research question convincingly, offering deep insights that enhance understanding of the subject and contribute to well-considered, viable solutions. Contributors are also encouraged to undertake multi- and inter-disciplinary research and approach topics individually or in co-authorship. Both country-specific and comparative perspectives, as well as cross-regional studies identifying regional patterns, convergences, and divergences, are welcome.

#### *E. Expected impact and significance*

The project seeks to:

- Address the gap in current scholarship – especially in English – on NISs in the Central Asian context
- Contribute to both theoretical and practical understanding of innovation developments in the region
- Promote an interdisciplinary exchange and networking between local and international experts
- Provide practical insights for policymakers
- Serve as a comprehensive reference for a broader audience

#### *F. Target audience*

The collection targets a diverse audience, including academic researchers, students, policymakers, legislators, development professionals, and regional studies experts interested in the featured themes.