



**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME¹ FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL
ASIA (SPECA)**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(DRAFT)

PREAMBLE

1. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was established by the Tashkent Declaration signed by the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well as the Executive Secretaries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on 26 March 1998. Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan joined the Programme later.

OBJECTIVES

2. The objectives of the Programme are to facilitate economic cooperation in the SPECA region as well as integration of the SPECA participating countries into the world economy for their attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. SPECA (a) provides a neutral United Nations platform for discussions on strategic issues of regional economic cooperation among the SPECA participating countries as well as their integration into the world economy for the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; (b) develops, supports and coordinates relevant capacity-building activities in SPECA countries; (c) promotes compliance with relevant international legal instruments, norms, guidelines, standards and recommendations; and (d) stimulates the exchange of best national practices among the SPECA countries.

GOVERNING STRUCTURE

SPECA Governing Council

4. The supreme governing and decision-making body of SPECA is the Governing Council, composed of National Coordinators at the deputy prime minister or minister level, as well as the Executive Secretaries of the UNECE and ESCAP.

5. The Governing Council is chaired by one of the participating countries. The Chair is elected by the Governing Council on a rotational basis, normally for a period of one year. Decisions are taken by consensus.

6. The Governing Council meets annually at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries. A Chairperson of the annual session of the SPECA Governing Council is a National Coordinator or a high-level representative of the Chair country.

¹ As per the Recommendation #2 of the EGM report countries expressed the idea to change "Programme" to "Platform" and focus SPECA on policy dialogue (away from project management), which was requested to be reflected in the revised Terms of Reference of SPECA.

7. UNECE and ESCAP secretariats each nominate a SPECA Coordinator and a Deputy Coordinator at UNECE and ESCAP, respectively, to ensure the smooth running of the Programme.
8. Each SPECA participating country nominates a SPECA Focal Point to assist the SPECA National Coordinator as well as the SPECA Coordinators and Deputy SPECA Coordinators at UNECE and ESCAP in proper management of the Programme.
9. The official working languages of SPECA are Russian and English.
10. The Governing Council provides guidance to the work carried out within the SPECA framework by:
- (a) Determining strategic issues for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals that are regional in nature or require regional economic coordination and integration;
 - (b) Considering the recommendations of the SPECA Economic Forums for adoption as decisions;
 - (c) Identifying priorities for its future work, discussing and adopting biennial SPECA work plans on the basis of the biennial work programmes of the SPECA Thematic Working Groups;
 - (d) Reviewing progress in the implementation of activities of the SPECA Thematic Working Groups; and
 - (e) Establishing and disbanding Thematic Working Groups and approving their terms of reference.
11. Representatives of the member States of UNECE and ESCAP, United Nations Funds, programmes and specialized agencies, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions and donor agencies may be invited to attend the SPECA Governing Council sessions as observers.
12. Representatives of the private sector and the academic community may be invited to participate in the discussion of specific agenda items.

SPECA Economic Forums

13. The SPECA Economic Forums are organized annually in conjunction with the sessions of the Governing Council.
14. The SPECA Economic Forums focus on selected strategic issues of economic development and cooperation in the SPECA region, provide a platform for high-level policy dialogue among all relevant stakeholders and make concrete recommendations to the Governing Council. The theme topic of each Economic Forum should be identified in advance by the Chair country.
15. Representatives of the member States of UNECE and ESCAP, representatives of United Nations Funds, programmes and specialized agencies, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, and donors as well as representatives of

the private sector and academic community may be invited to participate in the SPECA Economic Forums.

SPECA Thematic Working Groups

16. The SPECA Governing Council has the following subsidiary bodies²:
 - (a) Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment;
 - (b) Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity;
 - (c) Working Group on Trade;
 - (d) Working Group on Knowledge-based Development;
 - (e) Working Group on Statistics; and
 - (f) Working Group on Gender and Economy.
17. Each Working Group shall comprise senior officials involved in the formulation and implementation of national policies and nominated by the Governments of the SPECA participating countries.
18. Each Working Group is chaired by at least one SPECA country.
19. Governments of the SPECA countries nominate Focal points for each Working Group to ensure successful delivery of programmes of work, according to adopted terms of reference.
20. Each Working Group shall hold its annual session at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries.
21. Each Working Group develops, agrees upon and approves its terms of reference and submits them to the Governing Council session for adoption.
22. Each Working Group shall develop, agree upon, approve and implement its biennial work programmes and prepare its annual reports to the Governing Council on progress made in their implementation.

² Recommendation 5a of the Expert group meeting on SPECA, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 11-12 June 2018, suggested to maintain the "Thematic Working Groups on Water, Energy and Environment; on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity; and on Trade" and Recommendation 5c of the Expert group meeting on SPECA, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 11-12 June 2018, states "the Thematic Working Groups on Knowledge-based Development (KBD), Statistics and Gender and Economy should formulate at their next sessions, with support from UNECE and ESCAP, where regional coordination is needed in relationship to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in their areas of activity. It is necessary to look into the possibility for ad hoc working groups (task forces) on concrete topics, such as an innovation strategy (currently under consideration) or disaster management. Each SPECA country should review the necessity to continue work of these thematic working groups or reform them in a more flexible arrangement through time-bound, issue-focused, result-oriented task forces".

23. Each Working Group will draw important policy issues to the attention of the SPECA Governing Council.

24. Representatives of the member States of UNECE and ESCAP, representatives of United Nations Funds, programmes and specialized agencies, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, and donors as well as representatives of the private sector and academic community may be invited to participate in the work of each Working Group.

RESOURCES AND FUNDING

25. The Tashkent Declaration calls upon other States and United Nations system agencies, donor countries, international financial organizations as well as the private sector, to provide financial and other types of assistance to SPECA.

26. The costs of participation of the SPECA National Coordinators or their representatives as well as experts in the sessions of the Governing Council and Economic Forums as well as in the sessions of the SPECA Thematic Working Groups shall, as a rule, be borne by the Governments of the participating countries. In addition, the UNECE and ESCAP shall provide financial support, within their available resources.

27. SPECA participating countries are invited to provide financial and other types of support to the implementation of the Programme.

28. The two Regional Commissions provide substantive support to SPECA by:

- (a) Providing expertise as well as assistance to activities implemented within the framework of SPECA, including its Thematic Working Groups; and
- (b) Providing secretariat support to the preparation and organization of sessions of the Governing Council, Economic Forums and Thematic Working Groups, including preparation of documents and studies as well as maintenance of records.

29. The Thematic Working Groups shall, to the extent possible, seek extrabudgetary resources and technical assistance from multilateral and bilateral donors for the implementation of specific capacity-building projects falling under the scope of the approved work programmes.

OTHER MATTERS

30. These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed after 5 years or sooner if the SPECA Governing Council so decides.

31. These Terms of Reference were reviewed and adopted on 21 September 2018.
