



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

TERMS OF REFERENCE
OF THE SPECA PROJECT WORKING GROUP ON
KNOWLEDGE-BASED DEVELOPMENT

A. PREAMBLE

1. The Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD) is a subsidiary body within the governing structure of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The member countries of the Programme are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) provide overall support to the Programme.

2. The PWG on KBD draws on previous forms of regional cooperation in related areas, in particular, on the work of the SPECA Project Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies for Development (PWG on ICT).

B. OBJECTIVES

3. In line with the overall objectives of SPECA to support its member countries in developing subregional cooperation, and integrating their economies into the world economy, the PWG on KBD shall: (i) promote and support policies on knowledge-based development in the member countries; (ii) facilitate cooperation in the initiatives related to knowledge-based development between the member countries and other regional initiatives; (iii) support and coordinate capacity-building and institutional strengthening activities and programmes related to knowledge-based development in the member countries; (iv) serve as a forum for discussion on issues related to knowledge-based development, including information and communication technologies (ICT) related policy and regulatory issues.

4. The thematic orientation of the activities of the PWG on KBD will include, but not be limited to, areas such as: (i) ICT for development; (ii) promoting innovation and innovative development; (iii) supporting knowledge-based competitiveness; (iv) financing ICT infrastructure and innovative development; (v) commercialization

and protection of intellectual property; (vi) public-private partnerships; and (vii) knowledge-based disaster risk reduction and management.

C. PARTICIPANTS

5. The PWG on KBD shall comprise National Representatives, nominated by the Governments of SPECA member countries. The National Representatives shall be senior officials involved in the formulation and implementation or be aware of national policies and programmes, which affect national policies related to knowledge-based development in their respective countries and able to effectively follow up the recommendations and decisions of the PWG on KBD.

6. Each participating country shall also nominate, on a permanent or on an ad hoc basis, experts on various aspects of knowledge-based development as required.

7. Neighbouring countries of the SPECA region are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the PWG on KBD, especially when issues concerning cooperation with neighbouring regions are discussed.

8. Relevant subregional organizations implementing programmes related to knowledge-based development are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the PWG on KBD.

9. United Nations organizations bodies as well as other bilateral and multilateral agencies and organizations operating in the knowledge-based development issues in the SPECA member countries are invited to participate in the work of the PWG on KBD and to nominate liaison officers on matters related to its work.

D. MODALITIES OF OPERATION

10. The PWG on KBD shall elect two Co-Chairpersons from among the National Representatives nominated by the Governments.

11. The secretariats of UNECE and ESCAP will provide substantive support to the PWG on KBD activities. The secretariats will facilitate the preparation and organization of the sessions of the Group and will maintain records of its activities.

12. The PWG on KBD shall hold annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries.

E. FUNDING

13. The operational costs of the PWG on KBD as well as the costs of participation of national representatives and experts in its sessions shall as a rule be borne by the Governments of participating countries. In addition, the UNECE and ESCAP will support, within their available resources, the functioning of the PWG on KBD.

14. The PWG on KBD shall also seek funds and technical assistance for its operations from multilateral and bilateral donors.

F. PROGRAMME OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES

15. The PWG on KBD shall develop, agree upon and implement an annual work programme.

16. The PWG on KBD shall formulate and agree upon specific projects and programmes and seek extrabudgetary resources for their implementation.

17. Important policy conclusions should be brought to the attention of high-level policymaking authorities in the SPECA member countries.

18. Recommendations along with agreed investment and project ideas should be presented to relevant international organizations and international programmes as well as to private investors.

G. OTHER MATTERS

19. The current Terms of Reference will be reviewed in 3 years or sooner if the SPECA member countries so decide.