



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/CECI/2007/10
25 September 2007

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION

Second session
Geneva, 5-7 December 2007
Item 3 (f) of the provisional agenda

STATUS OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

**DISCUSSION OF INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN VARIOUS THEMATIC AREAS PLACED
ON THE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS OF CAPACITY-
BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

PROGRESS REPORT ON RELATED CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This report contains an overview of the capacity-building activities carried out by the Economic Cooperation and Integration Division (ECID) between April 2006 and September 2007, as well as some envisaged future activities. It includes work within the regular budget of ECID, activities supported through the Local Technical Cooperation Trust Fund and the United Nations Development Account, as well as activities undertaken and coordinated by the Division's Regional Adviser.

A number of the capacity-building activities were undertaken in cooperation with other United Nations agencies and international organizations, and in consultation with other subregional initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Terms of Reference of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (CECI) stress the importance of capacity-building activities in the mandated areas of work. The first session of the Committee, held from 27 to 28 September 2006, requested the secretariat to undertake fund-raising efforts in support of programme implementation, in particular of capacity-building activities, and to explore possibilities of funding these activities through the United Nations Development Account (UNDA).
2. This report contains an overview of the capacity-building activities carried out by the secretariat within the regular budget of ECID, activities supported through the UNDA and the Local Technical Cooperation Trust Fund, as well as activities undertaken and coordinated by the Regional Adviser on Economic Cooperation and Integration.

I. GENERAL FOCUS ON CAPACITY-BUILDING IN THE COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES IN GENEVA

3. The secretariat organized all meetings envisaged in the Committee's programme of work in a way that they could include a capacity-building component, in particular for the benefit of the countries with economies in transition. Participating delegates from these countries have the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge shared by first-class international experts and to learn from the experiences and best practices presented at these meetings.
4. The secretariat has received positive feedback from participating delegates, in particular from countries with economies in transition, on the learning component of these meetings.
5. During the reporting period the secretariat organized the following meetings containing capacity-building elements:
 - (a) First meeting of the Team of Specialists on Intellectual Property (TOS-IP), held on 23 and 24 November 2006. The TOS-IP meeting brought together representatives of all major stakeholder groups (Governments, agencies, international organizations, private sector) to discuss priority issues and challenges on intellectual property commercialization, protection and enforcement.
 - (b) First meeting of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies (TOS-ICP) held on 8 and 9 March 2007. The TOS-ICP meeting addressed and discussed the conditions for achieving higher competitiveness and establishing effective national innovation systems, as well as the role of innovation and competitiveness policies in national economic development.
 - (c) The Meeting of Experts on Financing for Innovative Development, held on 3 and 4 May 2007, was organized in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The meeting discussed the challenges innovative enterprises face in raising finance and how to address them, including the role of business angels and early support programmes, venture capital and other forms of financing, as well as the role of development finance institutions to foster innovation.

(d) International Conference on “Reducing Barriers to Entrepreneurship and Encouraging Enterprise Development: Policy Options”, held on 18 and 19 June 2007. The participants benefited from the discussion and exchange of experiences on legal and administrative obstacles to enterprise development. Issues discussed included reducing the regulatory and administrative as well as financing and tax-related barriers to the emergence and growth of enterprises, facilitating the cross-border expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and regulatory and administrative procedures related to enterprise development and operation less conducive to corruption. The secretariat cooperated with a number of other international organizations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (WB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for the purpose of building upon their existing work.

(e) International Conference on Intellectual Property Rights Protection and Transforming Research and Development Outputs into Intangible Assets in Economies in Transition, held on 25 and 26 July 2007, followed by the second meeting of the TOS-IP on 27 July 2007. There was a lively and productive exchange of experience and lessons learned between representatives of intellectual property (IP) offices in countries with economies transition and experts from leading international organizations, IP offices in developed economies, academics and representatives of the business community.

6. The secretariat is organizing and contributing to the following events with elements of capacity-building in the last quarter of 2007:

(a) International Seminar on Product Safety and Counterfeiting, to be held on 5 and 6 November 2007. The seminar is organized by the UNECE Working Party 6 on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies in cooperation with the TOS-IP. The seminar is intended to provide member States with opportunities to exchange experiences and lessons learned on how to coordinate the efforts of national enforcement agencies in the fight against hazardous counterfeit products.

(b) Training event on “Intellectual Capital Readiness: The Role of Intangibles as a Tool for Raising Finance”, to be held in Geneva on 19 and 20 November 2007. The event is being organized in cooperation with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), META Group and the European Business Angels Network. It aims to increase the capacity of government officials and other stakeholders dealing with intellectual property from countries with economies in transition to successfully manage intellectual property assets and to create the necessary framework conditions.

7. The policy-oriented documents included in the Committee programme of work should serve as a basis for future capacity-building activities. The Teams of Specialists and expert networks have prepared several such reports that are submitted to the second Committee session (documents ECE/CECI/2007/3, ECE/CECI/2007/4, ECE/CECI/2007/6, ECE/CECI/2007/7 and ECE/CECI/2007/9).

8. The secretariat has already developed, partly by mobilizing funds from the United Nations Development Account, the following guidebooks for capacity-building purposes:

(a) Guide to Promoting Good Governance in Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), to be published in the last quarter of 2007. The Guide aims to assist Governments and relevant stakeholders from the private sector in improving governance in PPPs, and thereby maximizing the benefits of PPPs and their contribution to bridging the infrastructure gap and improving economic competitiveness.

(b) Information and Communication Technology Policy and Legal Issues for Central Asia – Guide for ICT Policymakers. The Guide was produced at the request of the member countries of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The Guide examines legal issues related to the sound development of eCommerce on five distinct areas such as legal infrastructure, legal certainty, legal security, legal protection and legal deterrence. It will also be used in the future capacity-building activities in the SPECA region envisaged through 2009.

9. At the request of member States, the secretariat has created an Information Exchange Platform, which is an interactive online tool hosted on the official UNECE website and accessible to all members of the Committee's Teams of Specialists and expert networks. The Platform provides an online environment for preparing documents envisaged in the programme of work and provides a possibility for posting related information submitted by the members of the Teams of Specialists and expert networks. The platform also provides a forum where experts can post requests for, and offers of capacity-building services, as well as information on about ongoing capacity-building activities.

III. TARGETED CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD

10. At the request of member Governments, the secretariat mobilized extrabudgetary resources, including funds from UNDA and other sources to organize a number of targeted capacity-building activities. Most of these activities were organized in cooperation with other United Nations organizations and regional initiatives.

A. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN 2006-2007¹

11. The Economic Cooperation and Integration Division contributed to a number of advisory activities in the context of SPECA undertaken and coordinated by the Division's Regional Advisor, such as:

(a) The SPECA Economic Forum "Focus on Asia" held in Almaty in May 2007. The event was organized as part of the Asia-Pacific Business Forum of UNESCAP, as well as the informal meeting of heads of delegation of SPECA member countries organized in conjunction with the Forum; and

(b) Advisory services to the Government of Turkmenistan during the Turkmenistan-EU Roundtable on Sustainable Development, held in June 2007 in Ashgabat.

¹ Status as of date of submission of this document.

12. In the context of the project on “Capacity-building for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policymaking, the secretariat organized a regional seminar on Capacity-building for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policymaking in Central Asia from 11 to 14 July 2006, in Bishkek. The seminar was organized jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic, within the framework of SPECA. The seminar supported Central Asian countries in building the capacity in the area of legal aspects of ICT policymaking, development of ICT policy and strategy integrating ICT into national development programmes.

13. The secretariat organized jointly with the Government of Israel the International Conference on Knowledge Sharing and Capacity-Building on Promoting Successful Public-Private Partnerships in the UNECE Region in Tel Aviv from 5 to 8 June 2007. The Conference discussed good practices in promoting PPPs and participants shared knowledge on national experiences. Participants were given an opportunity to learn from examples of successful PPPs in the transport, water and innovative sectors of the economy through organized site visits. Visits included the Ashkelon Desalination Plant, the Weizmann Institute of Science, Highway 6 – The Cross-Israel Highway and the Light Train of Jerusalem.

14. In the context of the project on Knowledge Networks through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities, the secretariat has prepared an assessment review of the ICT access points in selected countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The review analyses the current status of the community ICT access points and identifies best practices. The review will be used in future capacity-building activities to be organized in the SPECA member countries, in cooperation with UNESCAP in 2008-2009.

15. The secretariat organized the Regional Workshop on Broadband and ICT Development for Improved Communication in Central Asia in Tashkent on 21 and 22 June 2007 jointly with the Communication and Information Agency of Uzbekistan, UNESCAP, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Information Technology Association of Uzbekistan. It contributed to an increased awareness and knowledge on broadband and ICT development issues among policymakers of Central Asia and served as a multi-stakeholder discussion forum on the issues.

16. At the request of the Government of the Russian Federation, the secretariat has been supporting capacity-building in the Russian biomass sector. The project examines the sustainable use of biomass for energy production both at local energy plants and as a new export commodity. It aims at strengthening the Russian biomass sector by contributing specific expertise from the different UNECE subprogrammes.

B. ACTIVITIES UNDER PREPARATION²

17. The Economic Cooperation and Integration Division will continue to undertake advisory activities in the context of the SPECA, in particular:

(a) Meeting of the Secretariats of the Regional Organizations in Central Asia (lead organizer UNDP) in October 2007 in Istanbul. The objective of this meeting is to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of technical cooperation work in the region. The main focus of the meeting is on cooperation between SPECA and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Group (i.e. the Asian Development Bank, EBRD, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank and UNDP), as well as with the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

(b) The second meeting of the 2007 SPECA Economic Forum “Central Asia and Europe: a New Economic Partnership for the 21st Century” will take place on 13 November 2007 in Berlin. The second session of the SPECA Governing Council is to be held on 14 November, in conjunction with the Forum.

(c) Work on the mainstreaming of the results of the Committee’s work into demand-driven capacity-building activities in the SPECA region.

18. The secretariat and the TOS-IP are taking part in the Conference on “Software Applications as Intellectual Property Objects”, organized by the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the administration of the High Technologies Park Minsk, to be held on 26 and 27 September 2007. The TOS-IP experts are expected to share their experiences on IP protection and enforcement at this conference.

19. The secretariat envisages a contribution to the “First Ukrainian Open Forum for Technology Transfer and Innovation”, to be organized by the Government of Ukraine and the German Technical Cooperation Agency on 29 and 30 October 2007 in Kiev. The Forum will provide the participants with opportunities to exchange experiences on how to build national innovation systems, how to manage the transfer of technology from research organizations to the business sector, and how to create innovation clusters and networks.

20. At the request of the Government of Tajikistan, the secretariat is organizing a capacity-building Seminar on Information and Communication Technology Policy and Legal Issues in Dushanbe in the last quarter of 2007. The purpose of this event is to assist ICT policymakers in Tajikistan in preparing harmonized law reforms to create sound development of eCommerce and related activities in the country.

21. The secretariat plans to organize a Forum on Improving Professional Standards in PPPs in Moscow in the early summer of 2008. This Forum will be primarily focused on the training of

² Status as of date of submission of this document.

government officials in the Russian Federation and other interested countries. It is hoped that it will contribute to the launch of other training activities in the region.

IV. THE WAY FORWARD

22. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Committee, capacity-building activities in requesting countries and subregions should be assigned greater emphasis in the programme of work (see Draft Programme of Work for 2008 and general orientation of the work in 2009 and beyond, document ECE/CECI/2007/11). The secretariat will continue its efforts to meet the capacity-building needs expressed by the member States and to provide demand-driven activities within the available resources.

23. The secretariat's capacity to provide additional capacity-building activities depends on the availability of extrabudgetary resources. It will therefore continue to undertake fund-raising efforts with a view to expanding and diversifying the available resources in support of additional capacity-building activities.

24. In designing the future capacity-building activities, the secretariat will continue to explore links between different thematic areas of works and deepen its cooperation with other relevant international organizations.

25. The secretariat will continue to work in close cooperation with the members of the Committee's Teams of Specialists and networks of experts for the purpose of facilitating their contributions in the future capacity-building activities and in transforming the results of normative work into capacity-building and training materials and modules.

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