

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE REPORT 2008-2009
REGULAR PROGRAMME OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION (RPTC)

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Economic development in Europe

All regional advisory activities were provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) at the requests of countries with economies in transition, particularly low income and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). They contributed to strengthening national capacities to accede/adopt and implement international instruments, norms and standards, particularly on transboundary issues, as well as to promoting regional cooperation. During the biennium, UNECE provided 103 advisory services and 55 capacity building events benefiting 2,238 participants, including 568 women, from 25 countries.

Achieving the objectives of the subprogrammes was a formidable task given extreme poverty in low-income countries (LICs), remoteness and isolation from major world markets of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), lack of political will and cooperation, political instability, weak national capacity for negotiations and implementation of international instruments exacerbated by reduced fiscal policy space of governments to implement ECE recommendations as a result of the economic crisis and hardened national positions on environmental issues in the face of the climate change.

Subprogramme 1: Environment

(a) Strengthened capacity to develop transboundary water cooperation and national integrated water resources management plans in the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asian, and South-Eastern European region.

(b) Improved transboundary environmental and natural resources management in Central Asia by introducing provisions and principles of UNECE environmental conventions.

With regard to expected accomplishment (a), technical cooperation activities were aimed at strengthening national capacities for transboundary environmental and water cooperation in Central Asia (SyrDarya, AmuDarya and Chu—Talas basins), the Caucasus (the Kura river basin), the Eastern Europe (the Dniester river basin) and the South-Eastern Europe (Drin river basin). As a result, two agreements regulating cooperation between water sharing countries have been established: on the Drin process in South-Eastern Europe and the Chu-Talas in Central Asia. Progress has been also made in dam safety cooperation in Central Asia, sustainable management of water resources of the Dniester river basin in Eastern Europe and the Kura River in the Caucasus.

With regard to expected accomplishment (b), fourteen countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) benefited from capacity building, field projects and advisory missions aimed at strengthening their national capacity for transboundary cooperation on water and other natural resources based on the principles of UNECE environmental conventions. This work

has contributed to eight ratifications/accessions to UNECE Conventions and Protocols during the reporting period and contributed to improved implementation of these legal instruments. The direct beneficiaries of the regional advisory services were decision makers and experts from national authorities responsible for water and environmental protection. A total number of 724 (of which 120 female) persons benefited from regional advisory services and participated in various meetings during the biennium.

Subprogramme 2 Transport

(a) Strengthened capacity to increase accession to and implementation of UNECE legal instruments and recommendations on transport.

(b) Strengthened subregional cooperation towards the development of pan-European transport networks and Euro-Asian transport links.

With regard to expected accomplishment (a), UNECE capacity-building and advisory services provided to countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus in the biennium 2008-2009 were focused on promoting ratification and implementation of UNECE international Conventions and Agreements in the field of transport. They contributed to fifteen new accessions by EECCA countries to the UNECE Conventions, mainly in the field of transport of dangerous goods.

With regard to expected accomplishment (b), two countries (Belarus and Azerbaijan) have made progress towards their membership in Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) projects. Early 2008, UNECE established an institutional structure to support the development of the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL). Regional advisory services contributed to the participation of 5 countries (Lithuania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan) in the EATL project, phase II. Capacity-building workshops organised by the UNECE in Tehran and Istanbul contributed to the strengthening of national capacities of countries with economies in transition for international transit along the Euro-Asian transport routes.

Subprogramme 3: Statistics

(a) Further developed national institutional frameworks and corresponding implementation practices of member countries, in line with the UNECE Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

(b) Enhanced capacity of national statistical offices to routinely collect, compile, store, analyze and disseminate official statistics and indicators in the economic, social, demographic and environmental fields in accordance with international standards and frameworks.

With regard to expected accomplishment (a), UNECE provided training and advisory services to seventeen countries of EECCA. As a result, Kazakhstan revised its statistical legislation in line with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Global Assessments of National Statistical Systems of Kazakhstan and Armenia carried out by the UNECE, in cooperation with partners (UNESCAP, EFTA, and Eurostat) contributed to the development of the framework of Official

Statistics of these countries. As a result of UNECE assistance, EECCA and SEE countries implemented a total of 45 UNECE recommendations in the biennium.

With regard to expected accomplishment (b), the UNECE undertook 27 advisory missions to EECCA and SEE countries. These advisory services contributed to improved understanding of the role of Official Statistics, communication of statistical information, and other topical issues, such as the system of National Accounts and gender sensitivity of statistics. During the reporting period, 362 participants (61% females) enhanced their capacity in 12 workshops organized by the UNECE. A survey of the countries shows that, as a result of the training and technical assistance provided by the UNECE, significant changes are occurring in methods used for censuses: use of register as a census method, of internet for data collection and processing, of census evaluations, and of web for census data dissemination.

Subprogramme 4: Economic cooperation and integration

(a) Enhanced knowledge of best practices and guidelines related to economic cooperation and integration, particularly those covered by SPECA.

With regard to expected accomplishment (a), through coordinated capacity building work of six Project Working Groups within the framework of the Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), the SPECA Governing Council has adopted a number of policy recommendations and guidelines related to best practices in economic cooperation and integration. Seven SPECA countries have demonstrated significant progress in their implementation, in particular, on dam and road safety. Three countries have indicated their interest in acceding to the UNECE Water Convention, in addition to the present two Parties from SPECA. Some 300 government representatives and experts participated in meetings of the SPECA Governing Council, Economic Forum and Project Working Groups.

Subprogramme 5: Sustainable Energy

(a) Enhanced capacity of experts in countries with economies in transition to implement international and UNECE instruments.

(b) Progress in addressing energy conservation and efficiency issues in economies in transition, especially those leading to a reduction in energy-related environmental impacts, including progress in the formation of energy efficiency markets in those countries.

With regard to expected accomplishment (a), ten countries with economies in transition strengthened capacities and skills of their experts to use various financing instruments with a view to promoting energy efficiency investments, accelerating integration of their economies in the region and developing sustainable energy systems. Advisory services on energy efficiency and energy conservation contributed to the establishment of the Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation Centre in Kazakhstan. Five other countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia and one country South-Eastern Europe expressed their interest in establishing such Centres. Ten countries strengthened capacity of their national experts to eliminate existing barriers to the development of renewable energy sources and prepared Renewable Energy Sector (RES) national reports.

With regard to expected accomplishment (b), two energy efficiency workshops were organized within SPECA framework and two workshops under the project “Energy Efficiency Market Formation in Southeastern Europe”. These and other capacity-building and advisory activities contributed to strengthening the capacity of the recipient countries in addressing energy conservation and efficiency issues, in particular, to the establishment of the Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation Centre in Kazakhstan, development of the Energy Efficiency Centre in Belarus, development of energy policies and energy strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new energy law in Kyrgyzstan which envisages market oriented energy tariffs restructuring, development of the Green Economy Vision in Azerbaijan, renewable energy projects in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Poland, as well as energy efficiency and conservation policies in Belarus.

Subprogramme 6: Trade

(a) Increased implementation of UNECE trade facilitation recommendations, norms and standards in procedures and regulations of countries with economies in transition.

(b) Strengthened skills and understanding of national staff in using UNECE standards for trade, trade facilitation and electronic business.

With regard to expected accomplishment (a), twenty-six countries strengthened their capacity to understand and implement UNECE’s trade facilitation standards and measures, and improved trade development and facilitation policies. As a result, five SPECA countries launched Single Window national projects and two countries developed their Single Window Action Plans. Four countries adopted trade facilitation measures and five EurAsEC countries reviewed their legislation in the areas of trade facilitation, e-commerce and the Single Window. The regional initiative on the Single Window was launched in the South Caucasus. Nine Southeast European countries strengthened their capacity to implement trade facilitation standards. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, has finalized the first stage of a Single Window system, becoming the first transition economy to implement such a system.

With regard to expected accomplishment (b), more than 530 participants from 26 countries strengthened their capacity to implement trade development and regional integration policies and trade facilitation measures through participation in the UNECE capacity-building workshops and seminars. About 97% of the respondents of the surveys affirm that the training strengthened their capacity to implement trade facilitation standards and measures.