



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 March 2019

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Fifth session

Geneva, 28-29(am) May 2019

Item 8 (e) of the provisional agenda

Programme of work

Status of Implementation of the 2018-2019 programme of work

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) trade subprogramme (“the subprogramme”) biennial evaluation report for 2018–2019. The report measures the subprogramme’s performance against the expected accomplishments (EA) and indicators of achievement (IA) as established under the subprogramme’s programme of work (ECE/CTCS/2017/10).

The evaluation covers the sub-programme’s main areas of work, which are supported by the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6); the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7); the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business (UN/CEFACT); and the secretariat to support Member States in their efforts to implement of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools on trade facilitation, regulatory cooperation and agricultural quality standards.

The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (CTCS) is invited to endorse the segments related to the Steering Committee and its subsidiary bodies, WP.6 and WP.7. The evaluation of UN/CEFACT is provided for information only.

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Introduction

1. Consistent with the Trade subprogramme's programme of work, the evaluation report applies a results-based management (RBM) approach which establishes logical relationship between the hierarchical results (outputs – outcomes – impact) or 'results chain', the resources (human and financial) or 'inputs' and the external factors (strategic, governance, operational, financial) that have a direct bearing on the achievement of the objective.
2. The objective of the subprogramme was to strengthen trade facilitation and trade-related economic cooperation in the ECE region, and external factors were: (a) there is political will and cooperation among Governments and international organizations; (b) there is demand from public and private sectors for ECE standards and recommendations; (c) member States provide the necessary information; (d) there is active participation by experts in ECE technical meetings; and (e) donors provide extra-budgetary funding
3. The responsibility for the subprogramme was vested in the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division.
4. The document maps the expected accomplishments with the corresponding indicators and associated performance measures by area of work, and provides reflections on lessons learned.

I. Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardisation Policies

Expected accomplishment

5. Increased consensus on best practices and strengthened implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for regulatory cooperation.

Indicators of achievement

6. Number of new and/or revised recommendations and tools for regulatory cooperation adopted by the ECE:

Performance measures:

- Estimate 2014-2015: 1 new and/or revised recommendations and tools
- Target 2016-2017: 2 new and/or revised recommendations and tools
- Achieved: 4 new and/or revised recommendations and tools
- Target 2018-2019: 2 new and/or revised recommendations and guidelines
- Achieved: 2 new recommendations were adopted in 2018

Statement of accomplishments

7. In 2018, WP.6 adopted Recommendation T on "Standards and Regulations for Sustainable Development", and "Recommendation U on "Gender-Responsive Standards". The two recommendations are geared to enhance the contribution of voluntary standards and regulatory frameworks in achieving the Agenda 2030, with a specific focus on gender equality. This is in addition to previously adopted Recommendation S on "Applying predictive risk management tools for targeted market surveillance", and other previously adopted guidelines and best practice, which contribute to help Governments strike an optimal balance between protecting safety and public health, and avoiding unnecessary barriers to international trade and stifling competitiveness and innovation.

Lessons learned

8. ECE member States highlighted the need to develop new recommendations that will guide both standards bodies and authorities in enhancing the contributions of standards and quality infrastructure to sustainable development. This renders increased outreach and strong cooperation with the standards, conformity assessment, research and academic community crucial, so as to access and tap into the required expertise knowledge. ECE will follow this approach in the next biennium.

II. Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards**Expected accomplishment**

9. Increased consensus on best practices and strengthened implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for agricultural quality standards.

Indicators of achievement

(a) Number of new and/or revised recommendations and standards on agricultural produce adopted by the ECE:

Performance measures:

- Estimate 2014-2015: 25 new and/or revised recommendations and standards
- Target 2016-2017: 25 new and/or revised recommendations and standards
- Achieved: 39 new and/or revised recommendations and standards
- Target 2018-2019: 25 new and/or revised recommendations and standards
- Achieved: 67 new and/or revised recommendations and standards in 2018

(b) Number of implementations of existing, new or revised ECE agricultural quality standards by member States:

Performance measures:

- Estimate 2014-2015: 1,000 implementations
- Target 2016-2017: 1,000 implementations
- Achieved: 1,500 implementations
- Target 2018-2019: 1,500 implementations
- Achieved: 1,500 implementations in 2018

Statement of accomplishments

10. The number of adopted and revised agricultural quality standards reached 67, thus exceeding the biennial target. All the 4 Specialized Sections adopted new and revised standards to cope with increased demand for updates and trade relevant practices. The exceptionally high number of revisions and new standards is the result of the specialized Section for fresh fruit and vegetables revising all its 55 standards. This was done to reflect the decision to use the standards at all stages of marketing (not only at export) and to include the newly created UNECE code mark directory as a clearly defined traceability/identification of origin reference.

11. Implementations by Member States was 1500, owing to harmonization effort by all EU member States to align their standards with those of ECE as well the new adoptions of nuts and dried fruit, meat and seed potato standards by e.g. China, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Northern Macedonia, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

12. The increased ECE capacity-building efforts paired with new guidance material and initiatives on food loss reduction, traceability, code of good practice, base line quality for domestic and export markets, eating quality, have strengthened the uptake and use of ECE recommendations for agricultural produce quality, sustainable production and consumption both within and outside the ECE region.

Lessons learned

13. The impact of standards on sustainable trade, production and consumption can be significantly increased through outreach, advisory missions, workshops and linkages with the work of other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and donor agencies. Linking standards' development to related issues (e.g. food waste reduction, food safety), and fostering closer cooperation among all parties has increased the implementation of agricultural standards worldwide. This approach will be upheld by the secretariat.

III. United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business

Expected accomplishment

14. Increased consensus on best practices and strengthened implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business.

Indicators of achievement

(a) Number of new and/or revised recommendations, norms, standards and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business adopted by the ECE:

Performance measures:

- Estimate 2014-2015: 24 new and/or revised instruments
- Target 2016-2017: 22 new and/or revised instruments
- Achieved: 51 new and/or revised instruments
- Target 2018-2019: 22 new and/or revised instruments
- Achieved: 15 new and /or revised instruments

(b) Number of new measures introduced by member States to implement ECE trade recommendations, norms, standards and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business:

Performance measures:

- Target 2018-2019: 4 new measures
- Achieved: 4 new measures in 2018

Statement of accomplishments

15. The number of adopted and revised recommendations, norms, standards and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business reached 15 in the year 2018. This list includes,

among others: Recommendation 28 – update to the Codes for types of means of transport; Update to the Code Management User Guide; update to the Multi-Modal Transport Reference Data Model- Business Requirement Specification version 1.0; update to the e-Quality Certificate Business Requirement Specification; White Paper in Trade Facilitation: Sectoral challenges and examples; White Paper on real-time Smart Container data for supply chain excellence; Green Paper on Sustainable Tourism; 2 UN/EDIFACT Directories (Versions D.18A and D.18B,); 2 UN/LOCODE Directories (Versions 2018-1 and 2018-2); 2 UN/CEFACT Core Component Libraries (Versions D.18A and D.18B); and 2 UN/CEFACT XML Schema Libraries (Versions D.18A and D.18B).

16. In addition, 4 new measures were introduced by member States to implement ECE trade recommendations, norms, standards and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business. These are: Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (FLUX); also known as "Electronic Interchange of fisheries catch data"; Workshops to strengthen the national capacity of trade-support institutions of Kyrgyzstan; a seminar in Ukraine promoted Recommendation 42 on National Trade and Transport Monitoring Mechanisms in the framework of implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; and UN/CEFACT Cross-Industry Invoice has been adopted as an obligatory standard for public procurement within the European Union. UN/CEFACT supported Germany in implementing it <https://www.eurofactura.de/programm/>.

Lessons learned

17. The development and revision of standards and recommendations on trade facilitation and electronic business was strategically selected following the entry of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation into force early 2017. This enabled ECE to respond, within limited resources, to the increasing demand of tools supporting the implementation of this agreement. ECE member States expressed interest in developing a Framework Agreement on e-Trade to advance paperless trade. This will be addressed in the next biennium.

IV. Secretariat to the Steering Committee

Expected accomplishment

18. Enhanced national capacity of member States for the implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools.

Indicators of achievement

19. Number of new national actions to implement ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools:

Performance measures:

- Estimate 2014-2015: Not available
- Target 2016-2017: 4 national actions
- Achieved: 6 national actions
- Target 2018-2019: 6 national actions
- Achieved: 5 national actions

Statement of accomplishments

20. The 5 national actions were based on the results of the national studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, carried out by the secretariat in Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan

and Kyrgyzstan. The national actions drew on the result-oriented recommendations emerging from the studies, which were developed in consultation with public and private sector stakeholders. The recommendations were geared towards helping the countries implement ECE as well as international recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools, as part of their broader reform efforts to address capacity shortfalls in 4 areas: trade facilitation, standardization, regulatory cooperation and quality assurance. Below is an overview of the national actions:

(a) Belarus developed a Risk Management Approaches for A Successful and Sustainable National Paperless Trading System in Belarus, with the support of the ECE drawing on the study recommendations.

(b) Georgia adopted the study recommendations for removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the country. The recommendations were presented during the fourth annual session of the Steering Committee (ECE/CTCS/2018/5)

(c) As per the study recommendations to improve the transparency of trade, Kazakhstan published national legislation outside of the Eurasian Economic Union online (<https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Trade-Analysis/Non-Tariff-Measures/NTMs-Training.aspx>) with the support of ECE and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

(d) As per the study recommendations, Kyrgyzstan prepared a roadmap for ensuring the compliance of national NTM outside of the Eurasian Economic Union with the World Trade Organization requirements with the support of the ECE, which was presented to the Steering Committee during the fourth session (ECE/CTCS/2018/8)

(e) As per the study recommendations to improve the transparency of trade, Kyrgyzstan published national legislation outside of the Eurasian Economic Union online (<https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Trade-Analysis/Non-Tariff-Measures/NTMs-Training.aspx>) with the support of ECE and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Lessons learned

21. Engaging public-private sector stakeholders in ECE Studies is critical for ensuring policy responsiveness and national ownership. Equally important is the adaptation of the study methodology to the specific development context of the reviewed country. To ensure policy coherence across the four areas addressed in the studies, the secretariat relies on in-house experience in drafting the studies and developing the recommendations, using, as background information, technical reports by consultants and the results of the enterprises surveys.

22. Coordination with donors and international organizations is pursued during the early stages of the research process to avoid duplication. To facilitate implementation, action-oriented solutions are explored, in terms of their feasibility and impact, during the preparation of the studies and are integrated into the recommendations. Moreover, the recommendations are integrated, in their totality, into the national United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) of the respective countries.
