



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/TRADE/C/2009/10  
17 December 2008

Original: ENGLISH

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Third session  
Geneva, 25-26 February 2009  
Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**PROGRAMME OF WORK**

**Draft Programme of Work for the Committee on Trade 2010-2011**

Note by the secretariat

*Summary*

This document contains the draft 2010-2011 programme of work of the Committee and its three subsidiary bodies: the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT); the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6); and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7). The draft is consistent with the 2010-2011 Strategic Framework for Trade Subprogramme, approved by the Economic Commission for Europe (A/63/6 (Prog. 16) dated 20 February 2008).

The Committee is invited to review and approve the programme of work.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The programme of work has been developed on the basis of the following agreed policy framework:

(a) The mandate of the UNECE to, “Initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic development and integration of Europe, for raising the level of European economic activity, and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of the European countries both among themselves and with other countries of the world;”<sup>1</sup>

(b) The objective of the UNECE Trade subprogramme, which is, “to facilitate trade and trade-related economic cooperation among countries of the ECE region and with the rest of the world;”

(c) The Trade subprogramme strategy to “support governments, with a special emphasis on the less economically developed countries in the region, in the national and regional adaptation and implementation of UNECE trade-related standards and recommendations, including their integration into national and regional trade facilitation strategies, trade policy and regulatory regimes.”<sup>2</sup>

## **II. STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

2. Developing and maintaining trade-related instruments, norms and standards is one of the core activities of UNECE. In order to further this work, UNECE will undertake the following activities.

### **A. Development of trade facilitation standards and recommendations under the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)**

3. UN/CEFACT will:

(a) Analyse and document key elements of international processes, procedures and transactions for each trade and business domain;

(b) Identify trade facilitation needs and priorities with relevance to cross-border transactions as well as the WTO framework;

(c) Work closely with the Committee on Trade and other sectors of the UNECE to identify areas of work that could reinforce trade facilitation;

---

<sup>1</sup> Document E/ECE/778/Rev.4 (Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe).

<sup>2</sup> This quotation and the one in the previous bullet point come from document ECE/TRADE/C/2007/14 (para. 6).

(d) Monitor technological and methodological developments and develop consequent e-business standards and trade facilitation instruments;

(e) Bridge the gap between paper and electronic business documents;

(f) Ensure the technical quality of recommendations, standards and technical specifications.

4. The target audience of UN/CEFACT is government agencies, intergovernmental organizations, international and regional organizations, technical bodies, private sector organizations and business.

5. The principal outputs of UN/CEFACT in this area will be the following:

(a) One annual Plenary session and supporting parliamentary documentation and two annual Forum meetings;

(b) Recommendations to countries and the private sector on the use of UN/CEFACT business processes and data model to facilitate international trade;

(c) Recommendation on the use of the UN/CEFACT core component library as the foundational standard for cross-border paperless trading and the establishment of the joint UNECE-APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) task force;

(d) Reports on the impact of UN/CEFACT instruments implemented by countries and businesses;

(e) State of technology report that analyses the impact of new technologies for the UN/CEFACT programme of work with recommendations on strategic options;

(f) An integrated and detailed process model of the international supply chain based on the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM) and the Core Component Library (CCL);

(g) A list of core business, government and trade processes that will be facilitate and harmonized with the appropriate allocation of resources for the delivery of these core processes;

(h) Regular ongoing maintenance and publication of core UN/CEFACT standards such as UN/LOCODE, UN/EDIFACT and UN CCL;

(i) Report on the UN/CEFACT instruments that are relevant to the current state of WTO trade facilitation negotiations and implementation;

(j) A list of requirements for technical instruments and syntax-specific solutions that meet the needs of its business domain groups (International Trade & Business Process Groups - TBGs);

(k) Development and implementation of a central Registry.

6. The details of the UN/CEFACT programme of work can be found in the document ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2008/16 and ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/C/2008/40.

**B. Development of recommendations under the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)**

7. The Working Party will develop and maintain its Recommendations on standardization and regulatory policies by the following:

(a) Review its current recommendations to governments on establishing business-friendly standardization and regulatory environments;

(b) Draw up new recommendations;

(c) Define the areas for future work on recommendations;

(d) Identify and recommend best practices for countries to follow;

(e) Review as necessary its terms of reference and working procedures.

8. Its target audience: Governments, intergovernmental organizations, international/regional trade organizations, quality inspection services, producers' organizations and consumer organizations.

9. The outputs of WP.6 will be the following:

(a) Two annual sessions and supporting parliamentary documentation;

(b) Revised Recommendation "D" on reference to standards;

(c) Revised Recommendation K: Metrological Assurance of Testing;

(d) New guidelines on market surveillance.

**C. Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)**

10. The Working Party will:

(a) Review the recommendations made by its specialized sections;

(b) Define the directions for their future work on standards;

(c) Monitor the implementation of standards.

11. The target audience for WP.7 and its specialized sections is Governments, quality inspection services, trade, producers' and consumers' organizations.

12. The outputs of the Working Party will be the following:

(a) Two annual sessions and supporting parliamentary documentation;

- (b) The review or up-dating of approximately one-quarter of the current total of 100 standards;
- (c) New standards;
- (d) Activities to support the harmonized application of standards by national quality inspectors (subject to approval of the transfer of this work from OECD).

**A. Development and maintenance of UNECE Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables**

13. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1) will:
- (a) Revise and update its standard layout and standards;
  - (b) Develop new standards;
  - (c) Develop explanatory material for implementation of the standards (subject to approval of the transfer of this work from OECD at the end of 2009).
14. The outputs of the specialized section will be the following:
- (a) Two annual sessions of the specialized section and supporting parliamentary documentation;
  - (b) Revised and new standards;
  - (c) Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year) and explanatory guidelines.

**B. Development and maintenance of UNECE Standards for Dry and Dried Produce**

15. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2) will:
- (a) Revise and update its standard layout and standards;
  - (b) Develop new standards;
  - (c) Develop explanatory material for standards (subject to approval of the transfer of this work from OECD).
16. The outputs of the specialized section will be:
- (a) Two annual sessions and supporting parliamentary documentation;
  - (b) Revised and new standards;
  - (c) Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year) and explanatory guidelines.

**C. Development and maintenance of UNECE Standards for Meat, Eggs and Egg Products**

17. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (GE.11) will:
  - (a) Revise and update its standards;
  - (b) Develop new standards.
18. The outputs of the specialized section will be:
  - (a) Two annual sessions and supporting parliamentary documentation;
  - (b) Revised and new standards;
  - (c) Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year);
  - (d) Two standards publications;
  - (e) Revisions of the five 1986 standards for eggs and egg products.

**D. Development and maintenance of UNECE Standards for Seed Potato**

19. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes (GE.6) will:
  - (a) Revise and update the standard for seed potatoes;
  - (b) Revise the list of diseases and pests;
  - (c) Study issues related to further development and application of the standard.
20. The outputs of the specialized section will be:
  - (a) Two annual sessions and supporting parliamentary documentation;
  - (b) Revised standard;
  - (c) Revised Internet publication of the standard (once a year) and explanatory guidelines.

**III. IMPLEMENTATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING**

21. Over 30 UNECE Recommendations guide the implementation of trade facilitation, based on best practice and agreed international procedures. Many UNECE standards have been adopted worldwide and several have become United Nations Recommendations and standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
22. The Committee on Trade provides an important forum for policy discussion on issues related to trade facilitation and the development of trade infrastructure.
23. UNECE work on agricultural quality standards is widely used in global trade. UNECE has developed close to 100 standards on fresh fruit and vegetables, dry and dried produce, early and ware potatoes, seed potatoes, eggs, meat and cut flowers. Many of these standards serve as the basis for European Union legislation and Codex Alimentarius standards, and are actively promoted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

24. UNECE also carries out extensive work on technical harmonization and standardization policies, providing a unique intergovernmental forum for debating and addressing issues related to standardization, regulatory cooperation, conformity assessment, metrology accreditation and market surveillance issues.

25. The Trade and Timber Division contributes to policy-relevant cross-sectoral activities of the UNECE and contributes to United Nations global initiatives. The Division provides focal points for UNECE relations with a number of other organizations including the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and ISO.

26. Technical work is complemented by an active programme of capacity-building and cooperation to support the implementation of existing UNECE trade norms and standards in the UNECE region, with a special emphasis on Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) countries and Southeast Europe.

27. Current capacity-building projects expected to continue through the biennium 2010-2011 are listed below. Additional projects may be developed, depending upon the demand from member States and available extrabudgetary funding.

- (a) Development assistance for the implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations in selected transition economies (Regional Advisor and Czech Trade Facilitation Fund);
- (b) Project on capacity-building in support of trade integration, with emphasis on integrated trade information flow management and trade facilitation in Central Asia (UN Development Account Project);
- (c) Support to the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) for South Eastern Europe and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI);
- (d) United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on Agricultural Quality Standards;
- (e) Russian Voluntary Contribution Fund projects on Agricultural quality standards, Single window implementation and the Establishment of a national trade facilitation body;
- (f) Participation in the Trade Working Group of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).

**A. Trade Facilitation and e-Business**

28. UN/CEFACT will provide the following trade facilitation and e-business implementation and capacity-building activities:

- (a) Support for implementation in transition economies;
- (b) Encourage efforts to make trade facilitation and e-business knowledge available.

29. The outputs:

- (a) Seek sponsorship and funding to conduct a series of regional workshops based on the successful publication of the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide;
- (b) Build awareness of UN/CEFACT work;
- (c) Two workshops on UN/CEFACT instruments with Member States and international organizations represented at the WTO, in cooperation with the UNECE Transport Division;
- (d) Conduct studies and workshops, subject to the availability of extra budgetary resources, to support: (i) Implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and instruments, with special emphasis on countries in transition. (ii) Wider participation of experts from countries in transition in the standardization process and technical assistance activities;
- (e) Develop training materials and tools, subject to the availability of extra budgetary resources, to support the implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and instruments in countries;
- (f) Subject to the availability of extra budgetary resources, review the current situation and trade procedures in countries in transition and, based on that analysis, draw up recommendations to improve trade facilitation and e-business, including special measures to ensure better alignment with other regions.

30. Details regarding the UN/CEFACT programme of work are given in document ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2008/16.

#### **B. Standardization and Quality Assessment**

31. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies will:
- (a) Promote the principles of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, particularly in countries acceding to the WTO;
  - (b) Develop proposals on how to use the “International Model for Technical Harmonization” for regulatory convergence in sectors of interest for governments;
  - (c) Promote the “International Model” in the UNECE and other regions (subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds).
32. The target audience: Regulatory and trade authorities, private sector and consumers.
33. The outputs:
- (a) Workshop on regulatory and standardization matters in an EECCA or SEE country (2008);
  - (b) Workshop on regulatory and standardization issues in a country outside the UNECE region (subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds) (2009).
34. Additionally, to foster technical cooperation in the area of standard harmonization, the Working Party will also:

- (a) Explore the possibility of raising extrabudgetary funds for the implementation of Recommendation M in countries with economies in transition and developing countries;
- (b) Explore the possibility of raising extrabudgetary funds to assist regional trade agreements (that involve developing countries or countries with economies in transition) to further regulatory cooperation among their members, based on the principles of Recommendation L.

**C. Capacity-building for the implementation of Agricultural Quality Standards**

35. During this biennium, the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) and its specialized sections will carry out capacity-building activities for different countries and regions, drawing on the resources from the United Nations Development Account and the Russian Voluntary Contribution Fund. These activities will be to:

- (a) Promote the use of internationally agreed standards for agricultural produce;
- (b) Contribute to training producers, traders and quality inspectors;
- (c) Help countries build capacity for the application of standards.

36. The target audience: Governments, traders and inspection agencies.

37. The outputs: Four workshops to promote agricultural quality standards.

**D. Regional advisory services**

38. Through its regional advisory services, the UNECE will:

- (a) Promote UNECE recommendations, standards and tools, particularly those on trade facilitation and electronic commerce;
- (b) Support trade policy development in EECCA (Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia) and southeast European countries;
- (c) Develop and promote a subregional strategy for trade facilitation for the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus (drawing on the fifth tranche of the United Nations Development Account project and on the UNECE/Czech Republic technical assistance project);
- (d) Develop trade facilitation projects in EECCA countries and Southeast Europe;
- (e) Assist trade facilitation and e-business networks in Southeast Europe in applying UNECE recommendations, standards and tools.

39. The target audience: Governments, business associations and the private sector.

40. The outputs:

- (a) Three trade facilitation workshops in countries covered by the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECAs);

- (b) Two new networks for trade facilitation in SPECA countries (subject to demand and available funds);
- (c) Three trade facilitation workshops in the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other EECCA countries.

#### **IV. POLICY AND PROMOTION**

##### **A. Promoting the value and effectiveness of the Committee's activities in trade and economic development**

41. There is a pressing need for greater awareness and understanding of the benefits, implications and available resources for improving the trade environment, particularly through the elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade. Clearly, more must be done to raise the awareness of policy makers with regard to the core issues involved, as well as to the strategies and approaches for implementation. UNECE plans to undertake the following projects to address this need.

##### **B. Policy Conferences**

42. Building on its expertise in the development of its norms, standards and best practice recommendations, on its experience in organizing such events and on its existing network of contacts, UNECE will host two conferences as part of the annual session of the Committee on Trade in 2010 and 2011. The two forums will build opportunities for cooperation between the Committee and its subsidiary bodies as well as with other UNECE bodies and other international organizations.

43. The target audience: Governments, business organizations, standards-setting and inspection agencies, trade practitioners and trade-related international organizations.

44. The outputs:

- (a) Annual sessions of the Committee on Trade and supporting parliamentary documentation;
- (b) Two conferences in 2010 and 2011.

##### **C. Multiplier Point Network: Development and maintenance of the Multiplier Point Network**

45. The Trade Development and Timber Division has set up a network of Multiplier Points in 27 transition economies. The organizations in the network promote, distribute and translate into national languages UNECE reports, recommendations, standards, documents, publications, guidelines and other information. The programme aims at reaching as many potential beneficiaries of the UNECE work in member States as possible, including: business, trade associations, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and other groups. Since April 2001, 59 organizations from 27 transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States have joined the network and participate in its activities.

46. Outputs:

- (a) Regular communications to the Multiplier Point Network;
- (b) Identification and enrolment of additional participants.

47. The target audience: Business community, including start-up entrepreneurs, local, regional and national authorities in charge of business and trade, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, missions, delegations, international organizations, and civil society groups.

#### **D. Information Dissemination**

##### **1. Promoting UN/CEFACT Work**

48. UN/CEFACT will liaise with other standards-setting organizations and agencies for the promotion of its work. It will publish promotional material explaining the use of its instruments relevant to the work of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Customs Organization (WCO) and other international organizations. It will also discuss and plan a strategy on communications with major stakeholders.

49. In addition, an efficient, documented and managed production process will be established for the regular ongoing development and maintenance of e.g. the UN/LOCODE, UN/EDIFACT, codes, UN Core Components Library, among others.

50. Target audience: Countries and international organizations and the UN/CEFACT Plenary.

##### **2. Promotional Material on Standardization Policies**

51. The Working on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) will prepare information booklets on its projects to promote the use of the policy mechanisms and approaches developed and recommended by WP.6.

52. Target audience: Governments and the business community.

##### **3. Promotional Material on Agricultural Quality Standards**

53. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) will work on promotional material (e.g. a booklet on UNECE Standards) for the use by the secretariat and delegations in promoting awareness and application of UNECE Standards. It will also encourage the promotion of its work at relevant regional and international agricultural trade events.

54. Target audience: Governments and the business community.

## V. PUBLICATIONS

55. The Trade and Timber Division prepares a large range of publications, both non-recurrent and recurrent. These are sources of highly relevant information and serve as reference guides to facilitate the implementation of standards, norms and recommendations in member States.

56. Non-recurrent publications:

- (a) Recommendations on Standardization Policies;
- (b) Report on Regulatory Cooperation;
- (c) ECE Standards for Meat – Carcasses and Parts/Cuts;
- (d) Interpretive guides for agricultural quality standards (previously OECD);
- (e) Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business Guidelines.

57. Recurrent publications:

- (a) Compendium of Norms, Standards and Best Practices for International Trade and Business (CD-ROM);
- (b) Trade Development Directory (Internet publication);
- (c) CEFACT Business Requirements Specifications Library (Internet publication);
- (d) CEFACT Core Component Library (Internet publication);
- (e) CEFACT Schema Library (Internet publication);
- (f) ECE Standards and Recommendations for Trade and Electronic Business (Internet publication);
- (g) ECE Standards for Dry and Dried Produce (revision) (Internet publication);
- (h) ECE Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (revision) (Internet Publication);
- (i) ECE Standards for Meat (revision) (Internet publication);
- (j) ECE Standards for Seed Potatoes (revision) (Internet publication);
- (k) United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (Internet publication);
- (l) United Nations Trade Data Interchange Directory, also known as the United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport Directory - UN/EDIFACT (Internet publication).

58. Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts and information kits:

- (a) Information Kit on Standardization Policies;
- (b) Information Brochure on Agricultural Standards;
- (c) Information Brochures on Trade facilitation and Electronic Business.

-----