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Programme of work**Biennial evaluation report for 2012-2013
Subprogramme 6: Trade*****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

This report is prepared pursuant to the decision of the Economic Commission for Europe (document E/2004/37-E/ECE/1416) requesting sectoral committees to conduct biennial performance evaluations of their work programmes. It provides the 2012-2013 biennial performance evaluation of the UNECE programme of work under the Trade subprogramme. The evaluation follows the 2012-2013 biennial evaluation plan (document ECE/Trade/C/2012/14), which was endorsed by the Committee on Trade at its fifth session, in 2012.

The biennial performance evaluation establishes links between the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement of the 2012-2013 Strategic Framework, as well as the more detailed clusters of the biennial programme of work (document ECE/TRADE/C/2011/2), which was endorsed by the Committee at its fourth session.

The Committee is invited to endorse the evaluation report.

* This document was submitted late due to delayed inputs.

Cluster 1: Support to the formulation and adoption of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business

Expected accomplishment

1. Enlarged set of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business

Indicators of achievement:

- (i) Number of new and/or revised ECE recommendations, norms, standards and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business agreed upon by member States

Performance measures:

Baseline: 2008-2009: 24 recommendations, norms, standards and tools

Estimate: 2010-2011: 24 recommendations, norms, standards and tools

Target: 2012–2013: 24 recommendations, norms, standards and tools

Achieved: 25 recommendations, norms, standards and tools

- (ii) Number of countries (regions), international organizations and sectors involved in development of ECE recommendations, norms, standards and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business

Performance measures:

Baseline: 2008-2009: 40 actors involved

Estimate: 2010-2011: 40 actors involved

Target 2012–2013: 40 actors involved

Achieved: 43 actors involved

Statement of accomplishments

2. The programme activities are carried out by UN/CEFACT (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business), which comprises experts that meet twice a year at forums. The forums discuss achieved outcomes and propose plans that are presented to the UN/CEFACT plenary for approval.

3. During the 2012-2013 biennium, 25 new/revised standards and tools were adopted, which slightly exceeds the expected target. New versions were issued for the United Nations Location Code standard (UN/LOCODE), the Core Component Library (CCL), the United Nations rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT), and the extended Mark-up Language (XML) Schema Library as well as revisions to Recommendation 20 - Codes for Units of Measure Used in International Trade and Recommendation 28 - Codes for Types of Means of Transport. This biennium also saw the adoption of two guides: the *Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide* and the *Single Window Planning and Implementation Guide*, which provide strategic guidance to policy makers and the private sector. The *Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide* is an Internet-based tool that can be easily accessed and that provides comprehensive information on trade facilitation. It has become popular among stakeholders from the public and the private sector, who are requesting the secretariat to further expand its content.

4. In 2012-2013, the UN/CEFACT Forum held four sessions in: Geneva (April 2012 and 2013); Vienna (September 2012); and in Chia Laguna, Sardinia (October 2013).

Participants continued to come from a wide number of countries, although the European, North American and Asia-Pacific regions were relatively more represented than Latin America and Africa. A wide range of stakeholders continued to be involved, ranging from universities to companies in different sectors such as telecoms or banks to government representatives to officials of the United Nations and other international organizations. The 2012-2013 target of 43 stakeholders was reached (delegations from 30 countries and 13 international organizations and other institutions took part in the 2012 and 2013 Forums, which were attended by 438 participants). The participants were involved in the development of UN/CEFACT standards during each meeting.

Lessons learned

5. The number of trade facilitation and electronic business standards finalized could be still further improved if more resources were allocated by member States and other stakeholders for UN/CEFACT's work.

Cluster 2: Support to the implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business

Expected accomplishment

6. Increased implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business

Indicators of achievement:

(i) Number of downloads of key trade facilitation and electronic business recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools from the ECE website, as a proxy for their use.

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: 119,000 downloads
 Estimate 2010-2011: 120,000 downloads
 Target 2012-2013: 120,000 downloads
 Achieved: 1 300 000 reviews

(ii) Number of countries in which ECE took action in response to their requests for assistance in promoting and implementing trade facilitation and electronic business instruments

Performance measures:

Baseline: 2008-2009: 5 countries
 Estimate: 2010-2011: 5 countries
 Target: 2012-2013: 6 countries
 Achieved: 13 countries

Statement of accomplishments

7. As part of a broader effort to further develop its management information systems, ECE adopted new website monitoring software. The software records web page views instead of the number of downloads (compared with the previous software), thereby making

it impossible to compare performance across time. The software recorded 1, 300, 000 views of key trade facilitation and electronic business recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools. The LOCODE (UN location code) web page accounted for the largest share of total views, as was the case during the previous biennium.

8. Requests for technical assistance exceeded the secretariat's expectation by more than 50 per cent. The secretariat responded to 13 requests, as opposed to 6, and these requests were made not only by countries but also by international organizations (e.g. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, WCO, the Commonwealth secretariat). The most comprehensive technical assistance activities were carried out in Greece, funded by the European Union, and related to supporting the implementation of reform plans in the area of customs and trade facilitation in general. Often organized in cooperation with other international organizations, UNECE activities helped further develop the institutional capacity and expertise of the public and private sectors in transition and developing economies.

Lessons learned

9. Owing to regular budget cuts and an explicit request by the Executive Committee (EXCOM), the secretariat will no longer be able to use resources from the regular budget to respond to member countries' requests for technical assistance. This will require significantly increased fundraising. Currently, support to the publication of standards also needs increased resources. The new website monitoring software does not allow for comparing performance across time. Owing to this change, the number of downloads for this measure was replaced by number of reviewed standards and could only be measured until 30 June 2011 and the figures for the rest of the year were extrapolated.

Cluster 3: Dissemination of information and awareness-raising about ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business

Expected accomplishment

10. Increased awareness and understanding of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business.

Indicators of achievement:

(i) Number of requests received by ECE to deliver presentations/ speeches on ECE recommendations, instruments and activities

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: not applicable

Estimate: 2010-2011: 8 requests

Target 2012-2013: 10 requests.

Achieved: 10 requests.

(ii) Reference to ECE recommendations, etc. and activities in publications, press and official documents by national, regional and international institutions

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: not applicable

Estimate: 2010-2011: 8 references

Target 2012–2013: 10 references

Achieved: 10 references

Statement of accomplishments

11. ECE recommendations and standards were discussed in trade press and national printed periodicals in all regions throughout the biennium. In particular ECE's updates of e-business standards (including UN/EDIFACT, UN/LOCODE and the Core Component Library) were widely referenced in the media. ECE keeps records on media clips.

Lessons learned

12. Owing to regular budget cuts and staff reductions due to the Review of the 2005 ECE Reform, the secretariat will be extremely limited in its future capacity to participate in capacity-building events related to norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business.

Cluster 4: Support to the formulation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for regulatory cooperation

Expected accomplishment

13. Enlarged set of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for regulatory cooperation

Indicators of achievement

(i) Number of new and/or revised recommendations and tools for regulatory cooperation agreed upon by Member States

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: 2 recommendations and tools

Estimate: 2010-2011: 2 recommendations and tools

Target 2012–2013: 2 recommendations and tools

Achieved: 3 recommendations

Statement of accomplishments

14. Activities under this cluster are carried out by the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6), which comprises three subgroups: the ad hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team), the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS Group), and the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM), as well as four sectoral initiatives on: Telecommunication equipment; Earth-Moving Machinery; Equipment for Explosive Environments; and Pipeline Safety. The Working Party, START Team and MARS Groups hold one session each per year, while the GRM holds bi-monthly webinars.

15. In 2012/13 member States adopted two recommendations on "Education on standards-related issues" and on "Reference to standards in Regulations", and a new tool

for supporting regional and worldwide regulatory cooperation and implementation of risk assessment systems (“Risk Management in Regulatory Frameworks”). Strategic cooperation with other international organizations made it possible to increase implementation, capacity-building and promotion efforts. This resulted in authorities from Central Asia being trained in ECE’s regulatory cooperation tools, and in ECE promoting the worldwide application of its model for risk management in regulatory systems to address disaster risk reduction.

Lessons learned

16. Despite the limited resources, partnerships with other international UN organizations and consultations with national authorities made it possible to deliver and enhance the programme’s implementation efforts. These collaborative approaches and consultative processes will have to be expanded in the future.

Cluster 5: Support to the formulation and implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for agricultural quality standards

Expected accomplishment

17. Enlarged set of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for agricultural quality standards

Indicators of achievement

(i) Number of new and/or revised ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for agricultural quality standards agreed upon by Member States

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: 39 recommendations, etc.
Estimate: 2010-2011: 25 recommendations, etc.
Target 2012–2013: 25 recommendations, etc.
Achieved: 50 recommendations, etc

Statement of accomplishments

18. Activities under this cluster are carried out by the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) and its four specialized sections on fresh fruit and vegetables; meat; dry and dried produce; and seed potatoes. The Working Party sets internationally harmonized commercial quality standards for agricultural produce, which are widely used by UNECE member States and beyond. During this biennium, 50 new and/or updated ECE recommendations and standards for agricultural produce were adopted. Explanatory materials were published for three fresh and dried produce products, as well as for eight meat items. The *Guide for Seed Potato Inspectors* also was finalized, thereby exceeding the planned target of 25.

19. This level of output was due to requests from member States. ECE recommendations and explanatory material are today used worldwide by regulators and national quality inspection services, as well as by producers and traders as references in their international and regional trade transactions.

Lessons learned

20. Accomplishments under this indicator point to the success of the secretariat's targeted efforts to promote ECE agricultural quality standards worldwide.

Cluster 6: Support to the implementation ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for agricultural quality standards

Expected accomplishment

21. Increased implementation of ECE recommendations, standards, guidelines and tools for agricultural produce.

Indicators of achievement

(i) Number of implementations ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for agricultural quality standards in Member States.

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: not applicable
 Estimate 2010-2011: 970 implementations
 Target 2012–2013: 970 implementations
 Achieved: 1,390 implementations

(ii) Number of downloads of ECE recommendations and standards for agricultural quality from the ECE website, as a proxy for their use.

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: 1,085,000 downloads
 Estimate: 2010-2011: 1,000,000 downloads
 Target 2012–2013: 1,000,000 downloads
 Achieved: 47,100 downloads

(ii) Number of countries in which ECE took action in response to their requests for assistance in the promotion and implementation of agricultural quality standards.

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: 5 countries
 Estimate: 2010-2011: 5 countries
 Target 2012–2013: 6 countries
 Achieved: 2 countries

Statement of accomplishments

22. The new website monitoring software does not allow for comparing performance across time. Owing to this change, the number of downloads could only be measured until 30 June 2011 and the figures for the rest of the year were extrapolated. For 2012-2013, indicators show that ECE agricultural quality standards are used worldwide by governments, producer associations and retailers as a basis for their standards. During this biennium, the European Union continued to make adherence to 10 ECE agricultural quality

standards obligatory, and included another 40 standards among its recommended list, whereby traders are offered to choose from the EU's General Marketing Standard or specific ECE standards. The total number of implementations in the EU alone amounted to some 1,350. In 2013 transition economies continued their implementation efforts and transposed 16 more ECE standards into country standards, to reach a total of 34 including 2 dried fruit standards adopted by Tajikistan. ECE standards have also been the basis of national regulations in countries outside the region, including Australia, China, India, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and South Africa 23. ECE carried out an important technical assistance project in the Russian Federation to support the modernization of potato production. A regional Northern Caucasus seed potato production centre was established, and equipped with a biotechnological and a diagnostics laboratory. Technical assistance was also provided to Tajikistan, and a training course was organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A further response to the emerging needs expressed by member States was undermined by the lack of extra-budgetary resources.

Lessons learned

24. More funds are required to ensure the continued and consistent use of ECE standards and to help countries worldwide understand and establish the necessary technical and legal infrastructure needed to produce goods and to inspect their quality in accordance with the standards

Cluster 7: Awareness-raising about the ECE trade programme

Expected accomplishment

25. Increased awareness about the Trade subprogramme's activities

Indicators of achievement

(i) Number of national action matrices for trade development agreed upon with countries.

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: not applicable

Estimate: 2010-2011: 2

Target 2012-2013: 2

Achieved: 4

(ii) The number of national trade assessments with recommendations agreed upon with the countries assessed

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: not applicable

Estimate: 2010-2011: 2

Target 2012-2013: 2

Achieved: 2

(iii) Total references to ECE Trade subprogramme outputs and activities

Performance measures:

Baseline 2008-2009: not applicable

Estimate: 2010-2011: 20

Target 2012–2013: 30

Achieved: 30 references

Statement of accomplishments

26. ECE work in developing and maintaining recommendations and standards in support of trade, including work undertaken in order to assist transition economies and developing countries to implement ECE's norms, standards and best practices, was widely discussed in the press, including national printed periodicals in all regions throughout the biennium. ECE keeps records on media clips.

Statement of accomplishments

27. In 2012-2013, the secretariat carried out an assessment of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Kazakhstan and in Tajikistan, with the former carried out jointly with the International Trade Centre. These studies feature detailed recommendations that could be turned into action plans in the future, with an eye to fostering joint action with neighbouring countries.

28. In addition, four national action matrices were prepared for supporting trade development efforts—in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan— which exceeds the expected target. These matrices were based on consultations with all relevant stakeholders from State agencies and market support institutions.

29. The secretariat also helped the four countries prepare bankable project documents in support of the successful implementation of AfT activities. Consistent with the ECE mandate in the area of trade, these projects focused on addressing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in goods. This activity was not originally planned, and came in response to explicit requests from the four member States

Lessons learned

30. These accomplishments were made possible by the availability of extrabudgetary resources that were made available to the secretariat, which enabled it to ensure prompt responses to member States' needs. Activities under this cluster also show the importance of collaborating with other development partners, not only to avoid the duplication of efforts, but also to create synergies and ensure the broadest possible participation of national stakeholders. Collaboration with the International Trade Centre provides a clear example of the additional value that a joint analysis could offer to ECE member States.
