



UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS WITHIN THE ECE

18 June 2003

1. Status and Characteristics

A team of specialists¹ is an expert body which is established through a procedure set by an ECE Principal Subsidiary Body (PSB) and supervised either directly by the PSB or by one of its Working Parties. Its main characteristics are as follows:

- (a) It addresses a specific area of activities under the broader theme covered by the parent body;
- (b) Its central function may be of an advisory or operational nature, or a combination of the two, depending on the tasks assigned by the parent body;
- (c) It normally has a two-year duration but can be extended after careful evaluation, by the parent body, of the work achieved and the need to perform additional tasks;
- (d) In line with the provision of the 1997 Plan of Action concerning these entities, its meetings do not require full interpretation and translation, unlike the meetings of the formal ECE intergovernmental bodies.

2. Membership and Officers

Teams of specialists are comprised of governmental experts and they can also include eminent specialists or representatives of international organisations, NGOs and the private sector, in compliance with the UN rules and practices in this respect. The procedure of nomination is established by the parent body. To the extent possible, consideration should be given to ensuring an appropriate geographical balance in the representation of these teams.

A team of specialists appoints its officers: a Chairperson and, if deemed necessary, one or two Vice-Chairpersons.

3. Methods of Work

- (a) The Principal Subsidiary Body and, where relevant, the Working Party under it, have to determine the scope of issues and the achievements expected of the team of specialists, as well as to decide on the membership of the team;
- (b) At its first meeting, the team of specialists adopts its work plan for a two-year period, clearly defining its objectives and activities and making a time schedule for their implementation; the activities can include: undertaking studies and advisory missions; organising seminars and training workshops; drafting policy models and guidelines; collecting data; and providing information and training kits etc.;

¹ These teams of specialists can also be named “advisory groups”, “ad hoc groups”, “task forces” etc.

- (c) The resources required for implementing the work plan have also to be identified; depending on the amount of regular budget resources that can be devoted to servicing the team of specialists and the magnitude of the work to be done, the team of specialists may raise funds and/or solicit in-kind contributions in support of its activities, in compliance with the relevant UN rules and regulations;
- (d) The team of specialists reports to the annual session of its parent body;
- (e) At the end of the two-year period, the team submits a full report on its accomplishments to the parent body in order to share the achievements and conclusions of its work to the wider ECE membership.
- (f) On the basis of this report, the parent body makes an evaluation and, if there is a request for extension, determines whether the team needs to be re-conducted in order to undertake supplementary activities. The Commission should also be notified of any such extensions.
- (g) In the case where the duration of the team is extended, the membership should be reviewed by the parent body and, at the end of the new period of extension, a report on its achievements should also be submitted by the team of specialists to the parent body.
- (h) Should the parent body feel that a particular team of specialists has a standing character by nature of its continuing activity, it can on an exceptional basis propose to the Commission to exempt that team of specialists from the sunset clause, giving appropriate justification.

4. The Secretariat

The ECE secretariat, with the support of the members of the team of specialists, has the responsibility for:

- (a) Handling official contacts, including correspondence, with governmental and nongovernmental experts as well as experts from international agencies involved;
- (b) Assisting in the scheduling of meetings and other activities for adoption by the group;
- (c) Cooperating with the members of the team in organising missions, workshops, seminars and training in member countries;
- (d) In cooperation with the Chairperson of the team, preparing the report on the team's accomplishments at the end of the two-year period and of any new period of extension.

5. Role of the members of the Team of Specialists

Members of the team of specialists, with the support of the secretariat as resources permit, undertake the substantive work, in particular the preparation of substantive documentation for the meetings and the reports to be submitted to the annual session of the parent body.
