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**TERMS OF REFERENCE
OF THE
TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

MANDATE

1. The mission of the Team of Specialists (Advisory Group) on Quality Management Systems (QMS) is to assist governments and enterprises, in particular SMEs, to the ECE region in the implementation of quality management systems in order to increase the competitiveness of enterprises in their countries. To this end, the Team of Specialists:

- examines the best practices of national policies for promoting quality assurance systems in the ECE region and organizes the exchange of information and experience between governments, business community, national quality organizations and civil society;
- collects information on the use of national quality awards schemes and excellence quality models implemented in the UNECE region;
- develops a dissemination strategy for the works of the Team of Specialists on QMS. This will include: overview of all national & international quality processes and research of use and development of quality processes by SMEs;
- develop and promote benchmarking to measure the competitiveness of enterprises in the UNECE region;
- raises quality awareness through promotion of quality excellence models in countries in transition in order to accelerate the participation of the enterprises in these countries in the European Quality Award scheme;
- promotes the creation of quality development centers to enhance Total Quality Management in countries in the UNECE region;
- creates a web-site within the framework of the UNECE web-system in co-operation with the participating specialists in order to promote quality awareness amongst the Member States of the Commission.

ESTABLISHING THE TEAM OF SPECIALISTS

2. The proposal on establishing the Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems (further as Team of Specialists) was made at the Expert Meeting on "Creation of Quality Assurance Systems for Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs" held on 24-25 October 2001 at the Palais des Nations. This proposal was also presented at the annual session of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) on 28 October 2002 and supported by it.

3. The proposal on the establishment of the Team of Specialists was also presented at the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED) bureau meeting on 11 February 2002, which supported it subject to further endorsement by CTIED at its May 2002 session.

4. The Meeting of Experts on Quality Management Systems held on 13 February 2002 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva discussed the Terms of References, elected its Chairpersons and agreed on Programme of Work for 2002-2003.

METHODS OF WORK

5. To fulfill its mandate, the Team of Specialists may convene ad hoc meetings and seminars, initiate studies, organize study tours, assist in organizing workshops, and may adopt any other appropriate methods of carrying out its agreed programme of work.

ORGANIZATION

6. The Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development (WP.8) approves the mandate of the Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems initially for the duration of two years. After the first two years of operation, the Working Party will consider the need for renewal of this mandate.

7. Participation in the activities of the Team of Specialists on QMS is open to all Governments, private sector representatives, academic experts, quality oriented NGOs, who are willing to contribute to its objectives. All costs associated with their participation in these activities are borne by its members.

8. At its first meeting, the Team of Specialists elected its Chairperson and vice-Chairpersons. These officials will be responsible for coordinating the Team's activities and working in conjunction with the UNECE secretariat.

9. The Team of Specialists will hold its sessions when required. It will review the results of its work and report to the Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development at its annual sessions.

10. The Team of Specialists will also report to the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and cooperate with it.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER UN BODIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

11. The Team of Specialists together with the UNECE secretariat works in close consultation with other regional economic commissions, the ILO, ITU, WIPO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, the EU, EFQM and EOQ and other relevant international organizations to promote quality consciousness and the European excellent quality model in transition economies and benchmarking these in advanced market economies and EU candidate countries.

EXTRA-BUDGETARY RESOURCES

12. The Team of Specialists on QMS will investigate the possibilities to raise further extra-budgetary resources to complement existing resources and to facilitate the creation of quality development centres in the countries in transition.