

TRADE DEVELOPMENT

At its thirteenth session (Geneva, 4 July 2019) and fourteenth session (Ashgabat, 19 November 2019), the SPECA Working Group on Trade (WG on Trade) continued working on the following areas of trade: SPECA trade facilitation strategy and implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA); trade and sustainable development in the SPECA subregion; non-tariff measures and barriers to trade; integration into the international rules-based trading system (SDG 17.10); the economic impact of WTO membership, and trade with major partners outside the region; and cooperation among trade negotiators from the SPECA countries. These activities are in compliance with the updated ToR of the SPECA WG on Trade.

The Programme of Work of the WG on Trade for the next two years concentrates on follow-up to the programmatic that the WG on Trade elaborated in 2018-2019: the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy; the Principles for Sustainable Trade; and the research and projects on non-tariff measures and barriers in the SPECA subregion, namely:

1. Develop a Roadmap for implementation of the SPECA Strategy on Trade Facilitation. The countries, with support from the United Nations, to start activities on the implementation of the Strategy. Identify which development partners can be involved (e.g. OSCE, GIZ, ADB, etc.) and engage them in this work.
2. Organize activities on the promotion of the Principles for Sustainable Trade. Draft projects to boost work on sustainable trade in the subregion. In collaboration between UNECE and the countries, continue raising funds for the project proposal “Building Cross-border Cooperation for Sustainable Trade in the SPECA Subregion: Using innovative approaches for the advancement of regional trade” and other projects on the subject.
3. Raise funds and draft studies on non-tariff measures and barriers. Upon approval by the SPECA Governing Council of a SPECA study on non-tariff barriers to trade, raise funds, develop a methodology and prepare the study.
4. Strengthen the network of WTO negotiators from the SPECA countries.
5. Promote the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the 2019 SPECA Economic Forum on *Connectivity: Sustainable Trade and Transport Facilitation in the SPECA Subregion*, 20-21 November 2019.
6. Cooperation with other organizations working on trade facilitation: OSCE, CAREC, GIZ, EAEU, etc. For example, there was a proposal to jointly establish expert/working groups with the relevant CAREC expert working groups.

The Programme of Work of the WG on Trade includes the following projects:

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Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities will be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners could expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities		
Strengthening the capacity of SPECA countries for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals <i>(proposal for continuation of this project submitted, waiting for approval by the donor)</i>	2016-2019	US\$ 547,000
Evidence-based trade facilitation measures for economies in transition (UNDA project), in the SPECA countries: support the Government of Kazakhstan in implementing 4 items of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement	2018-2021	US\$ 490,000
Strengthening the capacity of the Central Asian countries to implement trade facilitation measures and better integrate into the international rules-based trading system	2018-2020	US\$ 351,900
Supporting the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the SPECA countries (project proposal)	2020-2022	US\$ 190,000 - US\$ 400,000