



**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA  
(SPECA)**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
OF THE SPECA WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT,  
TRANSIT AND CONNECTIVITY**

**A. PREAMBLE**

1. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia was established by the Tashkent Declaration on 26 March 1998, signed by the Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Executive Secretaries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan joined the Programme later. The current SPECA participating countries are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific provide overall support to the Programme.

2. The SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (WG-STTC) is a subsidiary body of the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

3. The PWG on Transport and Border Crossing was set up in compliance with the Tashkent Declaration of 26 March 1998, and held its first meeting on 20-22 October 1998 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. At the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the SPECA Governing Council (Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 11 November 2015) representatives of the SPECA participating countries adopted a Declaration: (i) reiterating their commitment to the Programme as a platform for promoting cooperation in the SPECA sub-region and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and (ii) revising the Project working group name to the TSPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity.

4. The SPECA Evaluation carried out in 2017-2018 recommended that SPECA, including the WG-STTC, should become more country-owned and country-driven and should organize activities related to policy dialogue, capacity development, elaboration of strategies, expertise and become a service-oriented, flexible and strategic platform for cooperation and policy coordination. The overall goal is to build cooperation among the SPECA countries for the implementation of transport-related SDGs that can be best achieved through subregional cooperation. This includes cooperation and coordination in the areas of transport infrastructure development, international and subregional connectivity, border-crossing facilitation and safe and environmentally friendly transport system development. The purpose of the WG shall be to assist in the development of transport infrastructure, efficient transport operations and removal of physical and non-physical barriers for inland transport.

**B. OBJECTIVES**

5. In line with the overall objectives of SPECA to support its participating countries in: developing subregional economic cooperation, integrating their economies into the world economy, and attaining

the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the WG-STTC shall foster subregional cooperation to promote development of sustainable transport systems and improvement of international and regional connectivity in the SPECA countries. To achieve this through subregional cooperation, the Working Group shall:

- (i) Provide a platform for strategic discussions on supporting progress towards achieving the directly transport-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3, SDG 9 and SDG 11) and targets, and contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, as a whole, through subregional cooperation, exchange of best practices and experiences, consultations, relevant activities and implementation of projects in SPECA countries;
- (ii) Raise awareness of SPECA countries on the transport-related SDGs and the role of transport and connectivity in supporting the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda; provide information and share best practice experiences, taking into account interlinkages between the SDGs;
- (iii) Promote policy dialogue: to support accession and efficient implementation of the United Nations transport-related legal instruments; for coordinated development of road and railway networks, dry ports and intermodal transport; for elimination of physical and non-physical barriers to transport, and for safer and more environmentally friendly transport system; and
- (iv) Provide analytical work and capacity development activities and tools in the areas of transport infrastructure development, sustainable transport operations, operationalization of international transit corridors, use of new technologies and innovation, regulatory harmonization, intermodal transport, border crossing facilitation, transport of dangerous goods, and other areas, including identification of funding modalities for SPECA activities.

6. The thematic orientation of the activities of the WG-STTC will include, but not be limited to, areas such as:

- (i) Sustainable transport development, to enhance subregional and international connectivity in line with the needs of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, harnessing the opportunities arising from global and regional transport trends and technological advances;
- (ii) Accession and efficient implementation of the United Nations inland transport-related legal instruments, to further develop legal framework for efficient transport, transit and connectivity;
- (iii) Inland transport infrastructure development; identification of the missing links, removal of bottlenecks, increasing the quality of the infrastructure, transport project financing (including public-private partnership) and promotion of intermodal transport and development of dry ports and terminals;
- (iv) Development of efficient transport operations; transport facilitation and removal of non-physical barriers to transport (including border crossing facilitation);
- (v) Development of a monitoring mechanism for sustainable transport connectivity in support of SDGs, collection of transport and border crossing statistics, harmonization of data collection, publishing of subregional transport statistics;
- (vi) Road safety; activities to reduce road traffic fatalities and casualties in the SPECA region; and
- (vii) Promotion of subregional cooperation for sustainable transport connectivity which plays an important role in addressing the economic development challenges faced by landlocked SPECA countries.

### **C. PARTICIPANTS**

9. The Working Group on STTC shall comprise National Representatives, nominated by the Governments of SPECA countries and the UNECE and ESCAP Secretaries to the SPECA WG-STTC. The National Representatives shall be senior officials involved in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes, which affect national policies related to sustainable transport, transport

infrastructure development, transport operations, border crossing facilitation and road safety in their respective countries and able to effectively follow up the recommendations and decisions of the WG-STTC.

10. Each SPECA country shall also nominate, on a permanent or *ad hoc* basis, experts on various aspects of sustainable transport if required.
11. Governments of SPECA countries shall nominate Focal Points for the Working Group to ensure successful delivery of the programme of work, according to the adopted Terms of Reference.
12. Relevant subregional organizations implementing programmes related to sustainable transport are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the Working Group as observers.
13. Neighbouring countries of the SPECA subregion are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the WG-STTC, especially when issues concerning cooperation with neighbouring regions are discussed.
14. Other United Nations bodies as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies, banks and organizations dealing with sustainable transport development in the SPECA countries are invited to participate in the Working Group as observers and to nominate liaison officers on matters related to its work.

#### **D. MODALITIES OF OPERATION**

15. The WG-STTC is chaired by Kazakhstan.
16. The WG-STTC develops, agrees upon, approves and/or reviews, if necessary, its Terms of Reference and submits them to a SPECA Governing Council session for adoption.
17. The two Regional Commissions shall provide substantive support to the WG-STTC by:
  - (i) Providing expertise and assistance to activities implemented by the Working Group; and
  - (ii) Providing secretariat support to the preparation and organization of sessions and meetings of the Working Group, including preparation of documents and studies as well as maintenance of records.
18. The WG-STTC shall hold its annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the SPECA countries any time before or concurrent to the annual sessions of the SPECA Governing Council.
19. The WG-STTC shall draw important policy issues to the attention of the SPECA Governing Council.
20. The working languages of SPECA are Russian and English.

#### **E. FUNDING**

21. The operational costs of the WG-STTC as well as the costs of participation of National Representatives and experts in its sessions and meetings shall as a rule be borne by the Governments of the SPECA countries. To support participation of National Representatives, financing from external partners, including but not limited to multilateral banks, can be sought.

22. In addition, the UNECE and ESCAP shall support, within their available resources, the functioning of the WG-STTC.

23. The WG-STTC shall also seek funds and technical assistance from multilateral and bilateral development partners for: (i) its operations; (ii) for the implementation of specific capacity development projects falling under the scope of the approved work programme.

#### **F. PROGRAMME OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES**

24. The WG-STTC shall prepare its annual reports on progress made in the implementation of its activities to the Governing Council sessions.

26. The WG-STTC shall develop, agree upon and implement its biennial work programmes which are integrated into SPECA Work Plans.

27. The WG-STTC shall formulate and agree upon specific projects and programmes on sustainable transport development and seek extrabudgetary resources for their implementation.

#### **G. OTHER MATTERS**

28. The current Terms of Reference shall be reviewed in 5 years or sooner if the SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity so decides.

29. These Terms of Reference were reviewed and adopted by the SPECA Governing Council on 21 November 2019.

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