



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

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF SPECA

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.

2. The Tashkent Declaration invites United Nations agencies and programmes, United Nations member States, in particular donor countries, international financial organizations as well as the private sector to provide financial and other types of support to the Programme.

OBJECTIVES

3. The objective of the Programme is to facilitate regional economic cooperation in Central Asia and the integration of the participating countries in the world economy.

4. The Programme (a) provides a neutral United Nations platform for discussions on strategic issues of regional economic cooperation; (b) develops, supports and coordinates relevant capacity-building activities in SPECA countries; (c) promotes compliance with relevant international legal instruments, norms, guidelines, standards and recommendations; (d) stimulates the exchange of best national practices among SPECA countries; and (e) raises funds from multilateral and bilateral donors for capacity-building activities in participating countries.

GOVERNING STRUCTURE

SPECA Governing Council

5. The supreme governing and decision making body of SPECA is the Governing Council, composed of National Coordinators at the deputy prime minister or minister level or their representatives appointed by the Governments of SPECA participating countries as well as the Executive Secretaries of the UNECE and ESCAP. It meets annually at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries.

6. SPECA is chaired by one of the participating countries. The Chair country is elected by the Governing Council on a rotational basis normally for a period of one year. A chairmanship can be extended for one or more years with the consensus of SPECA countries.

7. The official working languages of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia are Russian and English.

8. The Governing Council holds its annual sessions, chaired by a National Coordinator of a SPECA Chair country or its representative. Decisions are taken by consensus.

9. The Governing Council provides overall policy and strategic guidance to the work carried out within the Programme, including:

- Taking decisions on setting up or disbanding Project Working Groups;
- Approving the Terms of Reference of the SPECA Project Working Groups;
- Identifying priorities for the future work and adopting biennial SPECA Work Plans, consisting of work programmes for the six Project Working Groups;
- Reviewing progress reports from the SPECA Project Working Groups on the implementation of their work programmes and making relevant decisions;
- Discussing the recommendations from the SPECA Economic Forums and adopting decisions;
- Reviewing the work carried out by the Joint ESCAP/UNECE SPECA Office;
- Reviewing cooperation between SPECA and partner organizations, programmes and donors;
- Discussing strategic issues pertaining to regional economic cooperation and making decisions; and
- Discussing issues related to the United Nations Development Agenda, in particular the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

10. Representatives of neighbouring countries, other countries interested in supporting the Programme, United Nations agencies and programmes, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions and donor agencies can attend the sessions of the SPECA Governing Council as observers.

11. Representatives of the private sector and the academic community may be invited to participate in the discussion of specific agenda items by a decision of the Governing Council.

SPECA Economic Forums

12. SPECA Economic Forums are organized, as a rule, annually in conjunction with the sessions of the Governing Council.

13. SPECA Economic Forums focus on selected strategic issues of economic development and cooperation in the SPECA region, provide a platform for high-level policy dialogue among all relevant stakeholders and make concrete recommendations to the Governing Council.

14. Government representatives of United Nations member States, representatives of United Nations agencies and programmes, relevant international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, donors as well as representatives of the private sector and the academic community are invited to participate in the SPECA Economic Forums.

SPECA Project Working Groups

15. The SPECA Governing Council has six subsidiary bodies:

- Project Working Group on Water and Energy
- Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing
- Project Working Group on Trade
- Project Working Group on Statistics
- Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development
- Working Group on Gender and Economy

16. The Project Working Groups shall comprise National Representatives, nominated by the Governments of the SPECA countries. The National Representatives shall be senior officials involved in the formulation and implementation of national policies and programmes or who are aware of them.

17. The Project Working Groups are chaired by one or two SPECA participating countries.

18. The Project Working Groups shall hold annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries.

19. The Project Working Groups develop, agree upon and adopt their Terms of Reference and/or review them if necessary, and submit them to the Governing Council for final approval.

20. The Project Working Groups shall develop, agree upon and implement their annual work programmes.

21. The Project Working Groups draw up their biennial work programmes which are integrated into SPECA Work Plans.

22. The Project Working Groups prepare annual reports to the Governing Council on progress made in the implementation of their work programmes and any other relevant issue.

23. Important policy conclusions should be brought to the attention of the SPECA Governing Council.

24. Neighbouring countries, relevant bilateral and multilateral agencies and organizations as well as the private sector and the academic community are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the SPECA Project Working Groups as observers.

RESOURCES AND FUNDING

25. The two Regional Commissions provide substantive support to SPECA by:

- (a) Providing assistance in project implementation and supporting other activities within the framework of the Programme;
- (b) Supporting programme and project implementation through the Joint ESCAP/UNECE SPECA Office;

- (c) Supporting the activities of the six SPECA Project Working Groups by experts within each Regional Commission; and
- (d) Providing secretariat support on a rotational basis to the preparation and organization of the sessions of the Governing Council, Economic Forums and sessions of the Project Working Groups, including the preparation of documents and studies as well as maintaining records of their activities.

26. The costs of participation of National Coordinators and experts in the sessions of the Governing Council and Economic Forums as well as in the sessions of the SPECA Project Working Groups shall, as a rule, be borne by the Governments of the participating countries. In addition, the UNECE and ESCAP shall provide financial support, within their available resources.

27. The Project Working Groups shall, to the extent possible, seek extrabudgetary resources and technical assistance from multilateral and bilateral donors for the implementation of specific capacity-building projects falling under the scope of the approved work programmes.

28. SPECA participating countries are invited to provide financial and other types of support to the implementation of the Programme.

OTHER MATTERS

29. The current Terms of Reference shall be reviewed after 5 years or sooner if the SPECA Governing Council so decides.
