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Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies

Twentieth session

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda

Programme of work and priorities of the Working Party

Evaluation of the Working Party: Accomplishment accounts for the 2008-2009 biennium

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

To date, the Working Party has drawn up 13 recommendations. At the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions, the secretariat carried out a survey to assess how the participants were using the recommendations.

Ninety-five per cent of make use of the recommendations, mainly for their policy work or business activities. The recommendations they mostly use are:

- Recommendation B "Coordination of Technical Regulations and Standardization"
- Recommendation L "International Model for Technical Harmonization Based on Good Regulatory Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Technical Regulations via the Use of International Standards"
- Recommendation M "Use of Market Surveillance Infrastructure as a Complementary Means to Protect Consumers and Users against Counterfeit Goods".

The report is submitted to the Working Party for information and discussion.

I. Purpose

1. The self-evaluation is intended to provide information on the use made of recommendations. Since its creation in 1970, the Working Party has developed 13 recommendations, but little is known about how these recommendations are being used. The purpose of the self-evaluation was also to find out which recommendations are the most widely used

II. Scope

2. The scope of the analysis includes the extent to which WP.6 recommendations are used, and the environments in which they are used.

III. Methodology

3. The input to conduct the self-evaluation was collected from participants in the annual session, by asking them to return an evaluation form. Results based on answers collected during the eighteenth annual session (3-4 November 2008) were presented in document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2009/16, and submitted to the Working Party for discussion during the nineteenth annual session (3-4 November 2008).

4. The results presented below are based on all answers received: 30 participants returned the questionnaire in 2008, and 24 in 2009. The questionnaire asked about the level of satisfaction of participants about several aspects of the annual session of WP.6 and the use that participants make of WP.6 recommendations. As the same questionnaire was distributed both years, answers can be added up and, to strictly answer the questions raised in the terms of reference, the results of the second part only are presented below.

IV. Findings

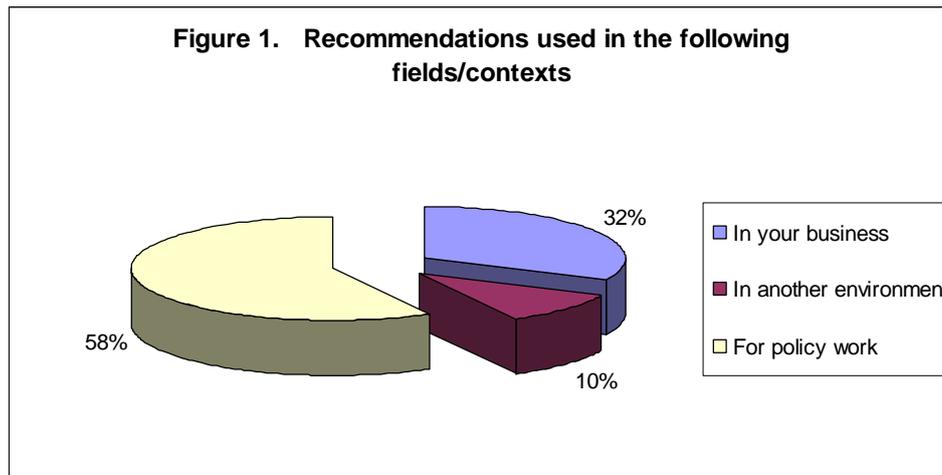
5. The second part of the questionnaire was intended to gather information on three aspects of the use they make of the recommendations of the Working Party. These three aspects correspond to the three parameters of the evaluation (see the scope of the terms of reference of the self-evaluation in annex).

6. Results of the survey show that 51 out of 54 participants (95%) said they make use of UNECE recommendations.

7. Secondly, the survey invited respondents to specify in which field or context they are using these recommendations. Results show 58% of respondents use them for policy work and 32% in their business activities and 10% in another environment (see figure 1).

8. Finally, in response to the question as to which recommendation they specifically use, the replies were as follows:

- B (Coordination of Technical Regulations and Standardization)
- L (International Model for Technical Harmonization Based on Good Regulatory Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Technical Regulations via the Use of International Standards)
- M (Use of Market Surveillance Infrastructure as a Complementary Means to Protect Consumers and Users against Counterfeit Good).



V. Conclusions

9. The results of the answers to the survey collected in 2008 were presented at the meeting of the WP.6 Bureau and rapporteurs/coordinators (held in May 2009), and were used in preparing the provisional agenda for the nineteenth session of the Working Party (e.g. break-out sessions, panel discussion).

10. The self-evaluations show that most of the participants (95%) in the WP.6 annual session are using our recommendations in their work environment, mostly in a policy context. It is not surprising to observe that the latest recommendations of the Working Party are also those most referred to, but some participants have also reported using other recommendations that were revised recently.

VI. Lessons learned

11. The self-evaluation proved a useful way to know more about the use made of WP.6 recommendations. The results confirmed what the secretariat could infer from its discussions with Bureau members and delegates. The broader sample enables the secretariat to be more confident about the usefulness of its work to policy-makers, but also to the actors from the private sector and other environments. It is therefore very important to continue to involve actors from all environments in the development work of recommendations.

12. Recommendations can become outdated and new work is needed to maintain their usefulness and their capacity to answer the challenges faced by regulators and other actors. Initiatives to revise and create new recommendations involving state-of-the-art techniques should therefore be encouraged, including in the area of risk assessment and management.

Annex

Terms of reference for the self-evaluation of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)

Survey on the use of WP.6 recommendations in national policy frameworks and business environments

I. Purpose

What is the primary purpose of the evaluation? What topic will the evaluation address?

1. To improve the knowledge on the use made of recommendations

II. Scope

What are the parameters of the evaluation? What will be included or excluded in the review?

2. It is proposed that the survey includes all the recommendations of WP.6 to evaluate the use which is being made of them. The interest lies in knowing:
 - (a) The extent to which participants in WP.6 meeting actually use the recommendations;
 - (b) The field/context in which they use the recommendations;
 - (c) Which recommendations are the most useful to them?
3. The scope of the evaluation is limited to these characteristics of the usage made of recommendations, and does not touch upon other activities of WP.6.

III. Background

Relevant background information such as brief synopsis of the programme or activity to be evaluated, summary of pertinent resolutions, findings from recent reports

4. WP.6 (and its predecessor) has issued recommendations since its creation in 1970. Many member States have expressed their appreciation of the overall work by the Working Party. However, the usage made of recommendations of WP.6 is difficult to evaluate and has never been evaluated as such. It is the first time a survey is being carried out to investigate this issue and there are no previous reports on that.

IV. Issues

What are the primary questions the evaluation will seek to answer?

5. The primary issue is to obtain a confirmation that recommendations of WP.6, which are a key aspect of its work, are used by participants in WP.6 meetings in their work environment. Another interesting issue is to get an estimation of the fraction of private-

sector users and to know if some recommendations are significantly more intensively used than others.

V. Methodology

What method(s) such as desk review of records and data, surveys and interviews, field visits, focus groups, etc. will be used for the evaluation? What data are already available from other sources?

6. No data from other sources exist on this issue. All data will be collected through a survey distributed to participants to WP.6 meetings.

VI. Evaluation schedule

7. Develop a timetable for the following phases of the self-evaluation:

(a) Preliminary research: An informal meeting was held to discuss candidate topics for self-evaluation (October 2008);

(b) Data collection: A survey has been distributed during the eighteenth annual session of the Working Party. It will be distributed again at other meetings of the Working Party (November 2008 – October 2009);

(c) Data analysis: Data gathered from the first distribution of the survey has already been analysed. It will be merged with future data for final analysis (October 2009);

(d) Draft report (include timing for peer review): A report, based on this analysis, will be drafted and reviewed by persons involved in WP.6 activities (end of October 2009);

(e) Final report: The final report will be ready (November 2009).

VII. Resources

What staff will be involved in undertaking the evaluation? Are there any other resources required?

8. The secretariat staff servicing will monitor the implementation of the survey and analyse the data.

VIII. Intended use/next steps

How are the findings of the self-evaluation expected to be used? What procedures/arrangements will be established to consider the results of the self-evaluation and to formulate an action plan?

9. Through the survey, it can be expected the WP.6 will better get to know the actual as well as the potential users of the recommendations and their needs. Furthermore, WP.6 would improve its monitoring and continuous evaluation systems, processes and procedures.
