



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 September 2017

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)

Twenty-seventh session

Geneva, 28 (pm) - 30 November 2017

Item 4(c) of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the Working Party's work plan 2018-2019

Programme of Work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization policies for 2018 - 2019

Submitted by the secretariat

Mandate

The Steering Committee adopted the Programme of Work for the ECE subprogramme 6 on Trade for the period 2018 – 2019 (ECE/CTCS/2017/10) and recommended it for the approval of the ECE Executive Committee

Summary

This document presents the “Programme of work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies” (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2017/6) based on the Programme of work of the trade subprogramme for 2018-2019 (ECE/CTCS/2017/10) as adopted at the third session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards. It lists specifically the outputs/activities of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies to be delivered during biennium 2018 - 2019.

Proposed decision:

“The Working Party adopts the Programme of work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies for 2018 - 2019”.

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I. Introduction

1. At its third session, the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards adopted the Programme of Work for the period 2018 – 2019 for the ECE subprogramme 6 on Trade (ECE/CTCS/2017/10) and recommended it for the approval of the ECE Executive Committee.
2. The part of the plan that concerns specifically the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies is as follows.

II. Outputs/activities to be delivered during the biennium 2018 - 2019

A. Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies

- (a) Substantive servicing of meetings
 - Plenary (10 half-day meetings)
- (b) Parliamentary documentation
 - Reports of the Working Party (2 reports);
 - Sets of pre-session documents, including reports of the Ad hoc Team of Specialists on Regulatory Techniques (START Team), the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance, the Group of Experts on Managing Risks in Regulatory Systems (GRM) and the Initiative on gender-responsive standards (14 documents per each set), 2 sets

B. Other substantive activities

- (a) Non-recurrent publications
 - Education and standards (1)
 - Disasters and Sustainable Development (1)
 - Risk Based Inspections (1)
 - Sustainable Development and Standards (1)
- (b) Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts, information kits
 - Information brochure on regulatory cooperation (1)
 - Explanatory video on standardization and standards-related issues (1 video)
- (c) Technical material
 - Update and maintenance of the website providing meeting documents, publications and other information on activities related to the subprogramme (2)

C. Technical cooperation

- (a) Training courses, seminars and workshops

- Workshops for policy makers and experts in low and middle income countries in the ECE region, on trade procedures, supply chain management, conformity assessment and market surveillance, and women entrepreneurship

III. List of planned activities and outputs of WP.6 in 2018-2019

3. Within this broad mandate, the Secretariat proposes to undertake the following activities:

Meetings

(a) To prepare and service the 28th and 29th Annual Sessions of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies

- 28 documents
- 12 half day meetings
- Reporting

(b) Support the work under the sectoral initiatives:

- Earth-moving machinery
- Explosive environments (Revision of the CROs (Common Regulatory objectives), Development of Market surveillance guidelines)
- Pipelines
- (if approved by the Working Party) Cyber-security

(c) To prepare and service the 16th and 17th MARS Group Annual meetings

Overall purpose: Promote an integrated and coherent approach to market surveillance based on best practices and international standards, with a special emphasis on best practices for countering sub-standard and counterfeit goods, exchange best practices between the region's MS authorities, etc.:

- Identify and invite the Market Surveillance Authorities of at least 10 UNECE member States
- Organize 4 webinars (March and July in 2018 and 2019)
- Update the online database on MS (<http://www.unece.org/trade/wp6/marsdbase.html>)
- Update to the information on global and regional market surveillance networks
- Finalization of the Market Surveillance Model initiative
- Reporting

(d) To prepare and service 12 webinars of the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM):

Overall purpose: To develop guidance and best practices on establishing regulatory frameworks for addressing the risks that confront consumers, citizens and communities:

- To collaborate with ISO/TC 262 and ISO/TC 292 in developing work on disruption related and supply chain risks.

- Identify and involve regulators in the group's work: in particular Chief Risk Management Officers.
- Finalize a recommendation aimed at improving consistency of risk management legislation.
- Seek resources for the implementation of Recommendation S on "Applying predictive risk management tools for targeted market surveillance".
- Support the organisation of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)/UNECE Symposium on "Management tools and standards in support of Sustainable Development Goal 14" in October 2018.
- Explore how the results of the GRM work could be used for managing risks related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development

(e) To support the activities of the START-Ed Group on "Education on Standards-related issues"

Overall purpose: Bringing the toolbox of standards to Universities and higher education institutions

- To organize two webinar meetings of the START-Ed Group
- Continue the cooperation with the League of European Research Universities and the University of Geneva

(f) To promote and advocate for the use of standards in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

- Liaise with the ISO TC 262 on "Risk Management"
- Participate in the development of new and revision of existing standards under the ISO/TC 262
- Contribute to UNECE and UN-wide initiatives on SDG implementation and support the participation of standards organizations
- Contribute to the work of the UNECE task force on "Energy efficiency in buildings"
- Explore the possibility of organizing a side event back to back to the ISO General Assembly in Geneva in 2018
- Explore cooperation with UNCTAD, UNEP, OECD in working towards harmonized technical requirements for the apparel and clothing industry.

(g) To promote and advocate for the use of standards in the context of the implementation of the Sendai Framework of Action:

- Liaise with ISO/TC 292 on "Security and Resilience"
- Act as co-coordinator of a task force on "Cooperation with UN Agencies"
- Participate in the development of new and revision of existing standards under the ISO/TC 292
- Review and summarize existing standards that are relevant for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for action
- Contribute to the UNISDR Guide on "Words into Action" on standards
- Contribute to the organization of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2018

(h) Participate at the meetings of Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification (EASC), during 2018 and 2019 (dates /locations to be confirmed).

(i) Cooperation with the World Trade Organization: WP.6 will participate in all the meetings of the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement in 2018 and 2019 and provide updates on its activities at each of them.

(j) Cooperation in the OECD initiative on “Fostering the contribution of international organisations to better rules of globalisation”, in particular by participating in one meeting per year and acting as the convenor of the Working Group 1 on “The variety of international instruments”. The Group will discuss the different kinds of instruments developed by the IOs (i.e. standards, recommendations, conventions...) and strive to:

- Identify existing definitions of the most important tools of IRC - if not available, develop new ones.
- Review the processes that lead to their adoption
- Reflect on which areas of work and which needs are best suited to the different tools.

(k) Contribution to the work of the initiative established by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development and the World Economic Forum (E15 Initiative) on “Strengthening the global trade and investment system for sustainable development”, specifically the task force on “Regulatory coherence”.

IV. Additional resources being sought

4. Given additional resources, the Working Party will:

(a) Continue to raise collective awareness of the importance of mainstreaming gender in standardization policies and realize the action plan agreed by the Initiative for gender-responsive standards.

(b) Develop approaches for using standards as tools for achieving the Goals of the 2030 Development Agenda and develop coherent regulatory frameworks that address risk and hazards and support the achievement of the SDGs.

(c) Develop a wiki-based online tool in regulatory cooperation and standardization (alike the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide at <http://tfig.unece.org/index.html>) enabling information sharing and educating public in main principles, work areas and achievements behind WP.6 work.

(d) Develop capacity-building for governments and in mainstreaming the use of standards in the management of disaster risks.

(e) Respond to requests for capacity-building by member states.

(f) Contribute to the organization of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)/UNECE Symposium on “Management tools and standards in support of Sustainable Development Goal 14” in October 2018.

(g) Implement UNECE WP. 6 Recommendations by Member States, in particular those adopted and revised at the 2016 and 2017 Session.

(h) Initiate consultations on developing a roadmap and a recommendation on mainstreaming gender into standards and regulatory policies at national and international levels.

V. Terms of reference of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (“MARS” Group), the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team) and the Group of Experts on Managing Risks in Regulatory Systems (GRM)

5. In the Annexes I, II and III are listed the terms of reference of the three groups. (The mandates of the groups need to be renewed by WP.6 for the biennium 2018 -2019).

Annex I.

Terms of reference of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (“MARS” Group)

A. Establishment of the Advisory Group

1. The establishment of a group of experts group on market surveillance matters was a recommendation of the UNECE International Forum on Market Surveillance (29 October 2002, Geneva), which was endorsed by the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and the UNECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development in May 2003.

B. Objectives of the Advisory Group

2. Market players such as public authorities, manufacturers, retailers, importers, and consumers/users need transparent rules of play. Consistent and effective procedures in the field of the protection of consumers and workers are a precondition to address this concern. Improved co-ordination and creation of “good practices” for market surveillance authorities is of great importance. Such co-operation and co-ordination is essential for the good functioning of both national markets and for the UNECE region at large in order to eliminate distortion of competition and to protect consumers. Transparent and consistent “good practices” will also contribute to the facilitation of international trade.

3. The general task of the Advisory Group of experts on MARKET Surveillance (“MARS” Group) is to contribute to the activities of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) aimed at creating conditions conducive to the development and promotion of global trade and economic cooperation.

4. The specific tasks of the Group are:

(a) To provide for interaction on a national/regional/international level between all players concerned, including public authorities, manufacturers, retailers, importers, and consumers/users against goods not in conformity with legislation being placed on the market;

(b) To increase transparency and attract attention to the responsibilities of public authorities and their staff for market surveillance with regard to their accountability in the chain of control;

(c) To identify good practices and methods ensuring fulfilment of legitimate objectives (such as protection of human health or safety, animal or plant life or health, or the environment and to ensure fair competition) in existing legislation;

(d) To promote (and when necessary initiate) coherent good practices and to elaborate relevant recommendations concerning market surveillance within the UNECE region.

C. Composition of the Advisory group, its membership and participation in its meetings

5. Members of the Group are representatives from UNECE Member States and other United Nations Member States.

6. The Group is open to participation by experts from international organizations as well as to representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as observers in their personal capacity.

7. The Group may establish sub-groups of experts to prepare projects requiring specific expertise, which are expected to become a part of the general activities of the Group. The Group can work with interested governments and organizations on financing and implementation of such projects.

8. The UNECE secretariat will provide necessary support to the Group and its subgroups within available resources.

D. Reporting

9. The Group works under the guidance of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and reports to it. The Group works on the understanding that its final proposals or recommendations will be decided by the WP.6 as an intergovernmental body.

Annex II.

Terms of Reference of The Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team)

A. Establishment of the START Team

1. The establishment of the START Team was suggested at the UNECE International workshop on implementation and use of international standards (18 May 1999, Geneva) which was organized in conjunction with the ninth session of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (17-19 May 1999, Geneva). The Working Party supported and approved this proposal. The establishment of the Team was endorsed by the third session of the UNECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (8-10 June 1999).

B. Objectives

2. The general task of the Team is to contribute to the activities of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) aimed at creating conditions conducive to the development and promotion of global trade and economic cooperation.

3. The specific task of the Team is to examine the possibilities for reducing non-tariff barriers to trade by limiting the content of related regulations to the essential requirements for meeting regulatory objectives and using reference to international standards as the preferred means for setting out detailed requirements, including conformity assessment requirements.

4. The Team works under the guidance of the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6), in accordance with terms of reference adopted by WP.6 and reports to it. Any reports and recommendations of the Team have preliminary and unofficial character and are subject to endorsement by WP.6.

C. Composition of the Team, its membership and participation in its meetings

5. The Team is composed of experts with the collective expertise to address the specific task defined for it.

6. The Team is composed of the members of the enlarged Bureau of the WP.6 (including coordinators and rapporteurs) and of specialists appointed by UNECE member states and invited by the Team.

7. The Team is open to participation by experts from interested United Nations Member States and international organizations as well as to representatives of the private sector as observers in their personal capacity. The Team works on the understanding that final recommendations and proposals of the Team will be endorsed by the Working Party 6 as an inter-governmental body.

8. The Team can establish sub-groups of specialists to prepare projects requiring specific expertise, which are expected to become a part of general activities of the Team.

9. The UNECE secretariat provides necessary support to the Team and its sub-groups within available resources.

D. Reporting

10. The Team reports to the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies. The Group works on the understanding that its final proposals or recommendations will be decided by the WP.6 as an intergovernmental body.

Annex III.

Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM)

A. Establishment

1. At its forty-fifth meeting, the EXCOM decided to establish a Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) on the recommendation by the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies and the Committee on Trade, to consider how risk management can contribute to an efficient regulatory framework.

B. Objectives

2. The Group of Experts aims at an improved management of hazards that have the potential to affect the quality of products and services, and/or cause harm or damage to people, the environment, property and immaterial assets.

3. To achieve this goal, the Group of Experts will:

(a) Collect and share information about hazards resulting from use of products and from production processes;

(b) Develop and share best practice on how to address these hazards through regulatory and managerial best practice.

4. The Group of Experts will develop and share best practice - including, if relevant, in the form of recommendations - as regards the use of risk management tools to:

(a) Achieve proportionality between technical regulations and the risks they set out to address, including through regulatory impact assessment and good regulatory practices;

(b) Choose among alternative regulatory instruments;

(c) Assess the respective merits of risk-based regulations and deterministic regulations in different contexts and sectors;

(d) Increase effectiveness of the implementation of regulations and standards as regards pre-market activities (certification, registration, conformity assessment) and post market ones (inspections and market surveillance);

(e) Improve managerial control of processes and operations as a contribution to a consistent and predictable implementation of standards and regulations;

(f) Analyse legal and supply chain requirements on traceability of goods as a means of meeting legitimate security and consumer safety concerns;

(g) Promote measures to build mutual confidence through better access and wider sharing of relevant information among regulatory agencies, both at a national and at a regional level (data banks on dangerous goods).

C. Composition of the Group of Experts, its membership and participation in its meetings

5. The Group is open to participation from any individual or organization from all United Nations member States. Participation from governmental authorities, intergovernmental organizations, business associations and private firms, standards-setting organizations, certification bodies, test houses, international schemes for conformity assessment, civil society and consumer organizations is particularly welcome.

6. The Group will mainly work through teleconferences, webinars, and an interactive website to elaborate recommendations and guidance documents.

D. Reporting

7. The Team reports to the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies. The Group works on the understanding that its final proposals or recommendations will be decided by the WP.6 as an intergovernmental body.
