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## Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

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

#### Twenty-ninth session

Geneva, 20–22 November 2019

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the programme of work for 2019-2020

### Draft Programme of Work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies for 2020

**Submitted by the secretariat**

#### *Summary*

This document presents the draft “Programme of Work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies” based on the Programme of Work of the Trade Subprogramme for 2018-2019 (ECE/CTCS/2019/10) as adopted at the fifth session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards.

#### *Proposed decision:*

“The Working Party adopts the Programme of Work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies for 2020. It additionally recommends the extension of the mandates of the START Team, of the MARS Group and of the GRM Group and requests the secretariat to seek, as appropriate, the approval of the Committee on Trade and of the UNECE Executive Committee”.

## I. Introduction

1. The present document sets out the draft Programme of Work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies” for 2020. This reflects the change of the overall budgetary cycle of the United Nations secretariat from a biannual to an annual planning and reporting system. It is based upon the Programme of Work of the Trade Subprogramme for 2018-2019 (ECE/CTCS/2019/10) as adopted at the fifth session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards.



2. The Working Party is invited to discuss and adopt it.
3. The draft Programme of Work applies a results-based management (RBM) approach, a broad management approach which establishes a logical relationship between the hierarchical results (deliverables – objectives – impact) known as ‘results chain’, the resources (human and financial) known as ‘inputs’ and the external factors (strategic, governance, operational, financial) that may affect the achievement of the objective.
4. The objective, the highlighted expected achievement and the deliverables in the draft Programme of Work correspond to those contained in the ECE proposed Programme Budget for 2020 and in the Programme of Work of the Trade Subprogramme.
5. The objective of the Working Party is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In attaining its objective, the Working Party builds on cross-sectoral collaboration with other subprogrammes in relevant ECE nexus areas where multiple SDGs converge<sup>1</sup> and on well-established cooperation with external partners. This type of collaboration enables the subprogramme to maximize existing synergies, increase the efficiency of its work and have a multiplying effect on the impact of its actions to support countries to implement the SDGs.
6. The deliverables of the subprogramme fall into the following main categories: (a) facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert groups; (b) generation and transfer of knowledge, including technical cooperation projects, training events, seminars, workshops, and publications; (c) other substantive deliverables, and (d) communication deliverables.

## **II. Objective and alignment with the SDGs**

7. As per its terms of reference, the objective of the Working Party is to: “serve as a forum for the exchange of information on developments and experiences in the areas of technical regulations, standardization, conformity assessment and related activities at the national, regional and international levels” 2.

8. The responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the Regulatory Cooperation Unit.

9. The objective is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 8, ‘promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all’, and in particular Target 8.4: “Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation”.

10. The objective is also aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, and in particular Target 5.5: “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”.

11. Further the objective is aligned with SDG 12, ‘ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns’, particularly as regards “encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices”; “promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and practices”; “ensure that people have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development”; and

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<sup>1</sup> The ECE nexus areas are as follows: 1) Sustainable use of natural resources; 2) Sustainable and smart cities for all ages; 3) Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity; and 4) Measuring and monitoring the SDGs.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the Annex of document TRADE/2004/11.

“support developing countries to strengthen their technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production”.

12. Additionally, the objective is aligned with SDG 11, with an emphasis on SDG 11.5, “significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters”, and SDG 9 “Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure”, notably as regards quality infrastructure.

13. Finally, the objective is further aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 17, ‘strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development’, with an emphasis on: promoting a multilateral trading system; increasing the exports of developing countries and enhancing the use of information and communications technology.

### **III. Highlighted expected achievement during 2020**

14. Lack of awareness about best practice contained in standards leads policymakers to develop homegrown solutions rather than relying on internationally available best practice. This results not only increased regulatory fragmentation and technical barriers to international trade but also deprives local consumers and citizens of access to cutting-edge technology that has a potential to raise their standards of living.

15. At a recent event bringing together 150 standards experts from 30 countries, attendees were asked to identify the most important challenges for standards development and implementation. 77% of respondent prioritized “regulators not using or supporting standards” as the single most important. Lack of expertise and awareness were also ranked very highly.

16. The need for continuing to raise policymakers’ awareness of value of standards for the achievement of the SDGs was also buttressed by the feedback gathered from the attendees of the ‘Standards for the SDGs’ event, organized as a side session to the 41st General Assembly of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in September 26th, 2018. In a post-evaluation survey of the event, upwards of 90% of respondents expressed an interest in participating in future events related to Standards for the SDGs. Additionally, during the day of the event, video interviews were conducted with selected experts who also emphasize the importance of greater cooperation between UN agencies and standardization bodies (see video).

17. Additionally, preliminary observations reveal that only an estimated 11% of experts involved in the development and implementation of standards are women. Methodologies for assessing whether a standard contributes to or undermines women empowerment are yet to be developed. Most standards bodies lack a policy for mainstreaming gender in their activities and in the management of their organizations.

18. In response to this challenge, in 2020 the UNECE will prioritize the support to Member States in the uptake of standards for the achievement of the SDGs, with a focus on SDG 5 and SDG 8. This will also contribute to the achievement of SDG 9, SDG 11 and SDG 12.

19. In pursuing this result, the Working Party will leverage and continue to expand the portal “Standards for the SDGs”, developed thanks to the regular budget funds as well as generous contributions of the Government of Germany, through the PTB, as well as other donors. The development of the portal and the outreach activities will support policymakers in identifying, adopting and implementing standards-based and risk-based regulatory practices in support of the SDGs.

20. Additionally, the Working Party will support the implementation of the Recommendation U on “Gender Responsive standards” and encourage more organizations

to sign the Declaration on “Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development”, while working with signatories to develop and implement organizational gender action plans. This will enhance the use of standards and technical regulations as tools for implementation of SDG 5; mainstream a gender perspective in the development and implementation of standards; and mainstream a gender perspective in the development and enforcement of technical regulations.

21. The highlighted activities – namely the continued development of the Standards for the SDGs portal and the support to the implementation of Recommendation U – will contribute to the planned result – i.e. the continued support to Member States in the uptake of Standards for the achievement of the SDGs. This in turn will contribute to the overall objective of the Working Party, which is to serve as a forum for the exchange of information on developments and experiences in the areas of technical regulations, standardization, conformity assessment and related activities at the national, regional and international levels.

22. Evidence of the result, if achieved, include: the number of visits to the “Standards for the SDGs” portal, the number of new case studies collected, the number of new signatories to the Gender Responsive Standards Declaration, and the number of action plans shared by international, regional and national standards bodies that are signatories of the Declaration. Additional indicators may be added in due course.

#### **IV. External factors**

23. The Regulatory Cooperation Unit is expected to achieve its objective on the assumption that: (a) there is political will and cooperation among Governments, standards bodies and other key quality infrastructure institutions; (b) there is demand for ECE standards and recommendations; (c) Member States provide the necessary information and support; (d) there is active participation by experts in ECE technical meetings; and (e) donor support for the work of the subprogramme is adequate.

#### **V. Deliverables to be implemented in 2020**

<b><i>Deliverables</i></b>	<b><i>2020 plan</i></b>
<b>Quantified deliverables</b>	
Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies:	
<b>Parliamentary documentation</b> (Number of documents)	<b>13</b>
Parliamentary documentation for the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies	13
<b>Substantive services for meetings</b> (Number of 3-hour meetings)	<b>5</b>
Plenary meetings of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies	5
<b>Seminars, workshops and training events</b> (Number of days)	
Seminars for policymakers and experts in transition economies and developing countries in the ECE region or beyond to raise awareness and build capacity on the value of standards for the SDGs	3
<b>Publications</b> (Number of publications)	<b>2</b>
Publication on Standards for SDGs	2
<b>Technical materials</b> (Number of materials)	<b>2</b>
Leaflets, posters, videos	2
<b>Non-quantified deliverables</b>	

<b>Communication deliverables:</b>	
Outreach programmes, special events and information materials: Booklets, fact sheets, information brochures	
Update and maintenance of the website and databases of the subprogramme as well as of the portal on “Standards for the SDGs”	
External and media relations: Annual press releases for the unit	

## VI. List of planned activities and outputs in 2020

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

### *Meetings*

(a) To prepare and service the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Sessions of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies

- 5 half day meetings

Parliamentary documentation

- 13 documents
- Report of the Working Party;

(b) Support the work of the sectoral initiative: earth-moving machinery, explosive environments, pipelines, and cybersecurity;

(c) To prepare and service the 18<sup>th</sup> MARS Group Annual meeting

- Organize 2 webinars
- Reporting

(d) To prepare and service 6 webinars of the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM):

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

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

- Contribute to UNECE and UN-wide initiatives on SDG implementation and support the participation of standards organizations
- Contribute to the work of the UNECE Nexuses
- Explore the possibility of organizing a side event back to back to the ISO General Assembly in 2020

(g) To prepare and service 6 webinars of the Gender Responsive Standards initiative

(h) Resources permitting, participate at the meeting of Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification (EASC), during 2020 (date /location to be confirmed); and

(i) Cooperation with the World Trade Organization: WP.6 will participate in all the meetings of the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement in 2020 and provide updates on its activities at each of them.

*Seminars, workshops and trainings*

To organize and service 3 Seminars for policymakers and experts in transition economies and developing countries in the ECE region or beyond to raise awareness and build capacity on the value of standards for the SDGs subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources.

*Publications*

2 Publications on Standards for SDGs – title to be decided later.

*Technical materials*

2 Leaflets, posters, videos

*Communication deliverables*

Update and maintenance of the website and databases of WP6 as well as of the portal on “Standards for the SDGs” and press releases.

## VII. Additional resources being sought

25. Given additional resources, the Working Party will:
  - (a) Respond to requests for capacity-building by member states.
  - (b) Support the implementation of UNECE WP. 6 Recommendations by Member States, in particular those adopted and revised at the 2018 and 2019 Sessions.

## VIII. Extension of mandates

26. The mandates of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (“MARS” Group) of the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team) and of the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM Group) have elapsed.

27. The Working Party is therefore called upon to decide on an extension of their respective mandates, for a two-year period. The mandates are laid out, respectively, in Annex I (MARS Group), in Annex II (START Team) and in Annex III (GRM Group).

## **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:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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:

- Collect and share information about hazards resulting from use of products and from production processes;
- 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.

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