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Capacity-building and technical assistance activities

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Submitted by the Secretariat

Summary

This document provides an overview of capacity-building and technical assistance activities carried out under the ECE sub programme on trade during the period April 2016 – March 2017. It includes activities carried out under the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS) and its subsidiary bodies, namely, Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7); the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) and the Regional Adviser.

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I. Introduction

1. The trade sub programme supports trade and economic cooperation among ECE member States and facilitates their integration into global value chains, drawing on the work of its intergovernmental bodies and expert groups. To be more specific, the sub programme contributes to ensuring:

(a) A predictable, transparent and harmonized regulatory environment for commerce and business through strengthening of the convergence of regulations, as well as through the promotion of international standards and best practices in areas of regulatory cooperation, conformity assessment and market surveillance.

(b) Sustainable trade in agricultural produce, integration into international supply chains and food loss reduction through the development of agricultural quality standards and related international best practice for implementation and use by regulatory authorities as well as the private sector.

(c) Simple, transparent and effective processes for global commerce through the development and maintenance of international trade facilitation instruments including global standards and best practices for moving from paper-based to automated electronic environments and for the harmonization and simplification of the business processes underpinning export and import activities.

2. Technical assistance and capacity building activities are geared towards supporting ECE member States, especially less economically developed and landlocked countries, in their efforts to implement ECE trade-related standards, recommendations and best practice guides. Activities also seek to support the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade caused by capacity shortfalls as well as by differences in administrative procedures, regulations and standardization policies.

3. Technical assistance and capacity building activities are delivered in close cooperation with development partners, including: the United Nations Regional Commissions; Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); sub regional groupings and organizations such as the European Commission; the Commonwealth of Independent States; the Eurasian Economic Commission; donor agencies and a wide variety of private sector organizations, including industry associations.

4. The next section provides an overview of the trade sub programme's capacity building and technical assistance activities for the period April 2016 – March 2017, highlighting the main objectives, achieved results, and development partners. Section three lists activities carried out by the Regional Adviser during the same period. A more detailed account of the subprogramme's capacity building and technical assistance activities, including updates and associated expenditures, is available at <https://www.unece.org/info/open-unece/pmt.html>.

II. Capacity – building activities for the period April 2016 – March 2017

<i>No.</i>	<i>Title, Venue, Dates</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Partners</i>
1.	Maintenance and updating of the UN Trade Facilitation and Implementation Guide (TFIG) 1 Sep 2015 -31 Jan 2016	To update TFIG based on international tools, standards and best practices in the area of trade facilitation.	New content developed, including two new itineraries. The updates and new content available on line in Spanish, Arabic, Russian and French. A training kit on the new itineraries for trainers in English, Spanish, French and Russia. New cases studies on good trade facilitation practices in the UN five regions.	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden
2.	Information sessions for students on ECE subprogramme on Trade	To introduce the ECE and its work in the areas of trade facilitation and e-business, regulatory cooperation and standardization policy.	Three information sessions took place in 2016 for a total of about 50 students.	St. Petersburg Institute for International Business and Law (IMBIP), Brussels Vrije Universiteit, Moscow State Regional University
3.	Removing Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in the Republic of Moldova 1 August 2015-31 July 2016	To support the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Republic of Moldova in a manner that contributes to the successful implementation of national trade development and regional integration efforts, taking into account the needs and economic realities in all the country and the challenges stemming from its landlocked status.	Draft study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade finalized , including 2 detailed business process analysis to support the agricultural sector's export competitiveness and an analysis of policy implications for regional cooperation and integration into global value chains. National experts trained on the use of the UNECE evaluation methodology.	The Republic of Moldova and the Swiss Government (donor)
4.	Strengthening national capacities of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries to implement ECE agricultural quality	To strengthen the capacity of the CIS countries to produce quality agricultural products, strengthen the implementation of ECE quality standards in the region, and support the broader UN-wide goal of ensuring food security and nutrition for all.	The procurement of equipment for a laboratory in Leningrad Region, Russian Federation.	The Leningrad Oblast Branch of the Federal State Institution "Russian Agricultural Centre", Switzerland and the Russian Federation

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	standards October 2014-August 2016			(donor).
5.	Capacity Building Workshop on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation Bangkok, Thailand 25 March 2016	To support the implementation of UN/CEFACT Agriculture messages Presentation of regional case studies. Exchange of lessons learned.	Several countries have started preparation for the implementation of UN/CEFACT electronic phytosanitary documents.	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
6.	Workshop on cross-border trade of nuts and dried fruit at a workshop jointly organized with UNDP and supported by GIZ. July 2016, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Carried out as part of United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project, 9 th tranche (2014-2017) Strengthening the capacity of transition economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	The workshop (the first of its kind in Uzbekistan) sought to support increased implementation of ECE standards, export and import inspection methods, food safety, quality assurance and marketing issues. It contributed to existing field projects (UNDP's regional Aid for Trade project as well as GIZ's "Support to Regional Trade in Central Asia") and featured participation in Uzbekistan's first International Fruit and Vegetable Fair. As a result of this workshop, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan decided to adopt the ECE standard for dried apricots and develop jointly with ECE related training material. This will make it possible to market similar quality apricots in the Fergana Valley (small farmers and women), pool them cross-border, and create a sustainable economic base. Based on these very positive results, donor agencies active in Tajikistan (including Hilfswerk Austria) have obtained funding from the European Union to support the implementation phase. To strengthen the food safety capacities of this sector, WTO's STDF facility will provide multi-year funding to a project led by the International Trade Centre (ITC). Both projects' activities are coordinated with the ECE's project and increase its impact and sustainability beyond the project's life cycle.	UNDP, GIZ, Hilfswerk Austria, WTO STDF Facility, ITC

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7.	Business process analysis of the export of dried grapes from Uzbekistan. Carried out as part of UNDA project, 9 th tranche (2014-2017)	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	The business process analysis was prepared and reviewed at the capacity-building event on nuts and dried fruit in Uzbekistan. It increased participants' understanding on how best to optimize export processes given current documentary and procedural requirements.	
8.	Workshops on the development of standards for fresh and dried produce. April and June 2016, Geneva, Switzerland. Carried out as part of UNDA project, 9 th tranche (2014-2017)	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	The workshops were organized as part of regular WP.7 sessions, and resulted in increased understanding amongst participants from the Balkan and the Central Asian regions of the development and implementation of international best practices for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	GIZ and Hilfswerk Austria
9.	Seminar on new trends in international meat trade. September 2016, Geneva, Switzerland. Carried out as part of UNDA project, 9 th tranche (2014-2017)	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	The seminar was organized as part of WP.7 Specialized Section session, and enhanced the understanding of experts from selected Balkan countries of international best practices in the areas of electronic sanitary and phytosanitary certificates for meat, sustainability standards, and eating quality research. Linkages with two Balkan target countries, Albania and Serbia, was intensified and resulted in their adoption of international best practice and standards as first steps towards increased agricultural trade	GIZ and Hilfswerk Austria
10.	Joint ECE – ESCAP workshop on promoting cross-border agricultural trade for sustainable development. November 2016 Bangkok, Thailand. Carried out as part of UNDA project, 9 th tranche (2014-2017)	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	The workshop contributed to building the capacity of private and public sector stakeholders in implementing ECE agricultural quality standards, food safety and related export control systems for horticultural produce, effective post-harvest technologies, and business process analysis for supply chain optimization.	ESCAP and Agriculture and Food Marketing Association for Asia-Pacific (AFMA)
11.	Trade Facilitation	To support increased understanding of trade	The workshop featured interactive exercises	Ghana Revenue

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	Implementation Guide Training Workshop 19-20 and 21-22 September Accra, Ghana	facilitation measures and promote the use of the TIFG	and tailor-made presentations, participants gained significant knowledge of trade facilitation measures, the Agreement on Trade Facilitation (ATF), and the use of TFIG. Participants were encouraged to share best practices and to reflect upon avenues for enhanced interagency cooperation for overcoming major trade facilitation barriers	Authority
12.	Improved capacity of governmental trade control agencies in Albania to implement Single Window 13 to 17 June 2016, Tirana, Albania	Strengthen the capacity of State agencies and the business community in Albania to simplify, harmonise and automate administrative procedures through a Single Window	Increased knowledge of relevant international recommendations, standards and tools (e.g. ECE recommendations related to Single Window, TFIG, Business Process Analysis and ASYCUDA system). Improved understanding of existing customs procedures through a technical visit to a port. Draft outline of a National Trade Facilitation Roadmap in relation to Single Window establishment. Draft terms of reference for a working group for the establishment of a Single Window.	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Entrepreneurship of Albania, the Albanian Customs Administration, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
13.	Information sessions for students of different European universities on ECE Trade sub-programme	To introduce ECE and familiarize the participants with the ECE trade subprogramme activities.	Three information sessions were organized for 50 students in total. These were undertaken as part of the ECE WP. 6 work on “Education on standards and standards-related issues”	St. Petersburg Institute for International Business and Law (IMBIP), Brussels Vrije Universiteit, Université de Bourgogne, Moscow State Regional University
14.	Promoting the role of WP.6 role education on standards-related issues at the World Standards Cooperation (WSC) Academic Day in October 2016	Knowledge sharing on WP.6 work and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Explore avenues for increased collaboration between United Nations and standards community.	Presentation and discussion at the 11th International Cooperation for Education about Standardization (ICES) conference that focussed on “What industry needs from education on standardization”. ICES conferences bring together representatives of industries, standards organizations, academia and public authorities to foster the exchange of	WSC (ISO, ITU and IEC), ICES

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			insights and views on all issues surrounding education about standardization and to raise awareness.	
15.	Awareness raising activities. December 2016, Geneva, Switzerland	Promote the work of WP.6 on gender issues, conformity assessment, risk management and sustainable development goals.	Mini-workshops were organized as art of the at the 26th Plenary session of WP.6.	The International Electrotechnical Commission, the International Organization for Standardization, UNDP, UNCTAD, ITC, International Risk Governance Council (IRGC) Foundation

III. Regional Adviser's capacity-building and technical assistance activities during the period April 2016 – March 2017

<i>No.</i>	<i>Title, Venue, Dates</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Partners</i>
1.	ECE-WTO Trade Policy Forum and the 10 th session of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) Working Group on Trade, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. 11-13 May 2016	Consolidate regional coordination and cooperation mechanism to support the region's trade negotiations. Identify sustainable development goals (SDGs) that can be supported under the SPECA WG on Trade and in what form.	Countries proposed concrete forms of working together on regional trade (a mechanism of cooperation of trade negotiators, trade facilitation strategy strategy). An agreement on how best to support the achievement of SDGs was reached	WTO, Government of Turkmenistan, UNDP, UNCTAD, World Bank, GIZ, etc.
2.	Contributed to workshop on Trade Facilitation and Good Governance at the OSCE Conference on Connectivity (Berlin,	Delivered a keynote speech at a workshop. Discussed further cooperation with GIZ and the German Ministries of international development and foreign affairs.	Fruitful discussions with the representatives of GIZ, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Foreign Ministry. The German OSCE Chairmanship identifies trade facilitation as	OSCE, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

No.	Title, Venue, Dates	Objective(s)	Results	Partners
	18-19 May 2016)		a key priority.	
3.	Contributed to ECE-OSCE training on the use of TFIG, the OSCE Border Management Staff College, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 13-15 June 2016	Delivered training for SPECA countries (Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan)	Participants (middle to senior level managers from ministries of economy and trade, Customs and other regulatory agencies and the business community in the four countries) improved their capacity to analyse trade facilitation issues and use the TFIG for this purpose. Identified gaps and future areas of work in trade facilitation for the SPECA countries	OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.
4.	Contributed to the 6 th ECE Seminar on Trade Facilitation and the Single Window in Odessa "Trade Facilitation, Trade and Transport Corridors Development in Ukraine", Odessa, 31 May 2016	Organized, jointly with the Transport Division, the 6 th UNECE seminar in Odessa on trade facilitation and corridor development, on 31 May 2016, with special emphasis on (1) trade facilitation, Single Window and corridor development; and (2) corridor development.	The seminar provided: (i) a platform for exchange of views and positions on building a Single Window, demonstrating various views and projects, which need joint strategic planning; (ii) a place for contacts among Ukrainian and international stakeholders involved in trade facilitation, Single Window and corridor development projects; and (ii) an event for promoting the full implementation of ECE transport conventions for supporting cross-border corridors. Training materials are available at: http://unece.plaske.ua/ and http://www.unece.org	Government and business community in Ukraine. Odessa Port Community System
5.	Participated in the Regional seminar organized by Moroccan maritime Single Window (PortNet), the 5 th International Conference on Single Window, and UN/CEFACT Conference on standards and the Single Window, Marrakech, 5-	Provided presentations on trade facilitation, the Single Window and the use of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations	The presentations were well received and made an excellent contribution the awareness raising and networking objectives of the conference.	PortNet Morocco, African Single Window Alliance

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7 September 2016				
6.	Participated at a seminar on Single Window and Data Harmonization, University of the State Fiscal Service, Irpen (next to Kiev) and the 23 rd meeting of the Interagency Working Group on trade facilitation (TF) and logistics in Ukraine, 19-21 October 2016	Delivered a statement at the 23 rd meeting of the Interagency Working Group on Trade Facilitation and Logistics	<p>Seminar on Single Window and Data Harmonization was co-organized with EUBAM and Government of Ukraine (State Fiscal Service) attained its goals. In particular, building synergies among the various projects related to a Single Window for export, import and transit clearance</p> <p>The interagency WG defined its objectives in relation to the 3rd stage of development of the ECE-Ukraine cooperation project on Single Window (the national regulatory Single Window).</p>	EU border assistance mission to Ukraine and Moldova (EUBAM), Government of Ukraine (State Fiscal Service), European Commission (DG TAXUD), WCO, and the Interagency Group on Trade Facilitation and Logistics of Ukraine (IWG)
7.	Seminar on National Trade Facilitation Committees and notification of B and C measures with regard to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), Astana, 10-11 Nov.2016	As a follow up to the TFA readiness assessment in Kazakhstan carried out by ECE and UNCTAD in collaboration with the Ministry of National Economy (Sept.2015-Jan.2016), the seminar focused on the establishment of a National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) as per ATF and ECE Recommendations 4 and 40.	<p>Reviewed current state of readiness for the implementation of the ATF as well as the B and C category measures. Prepared a draft decree on the establishment of a national trade facilitation committee (NTFC), the terms of reference and draft structure of the NTFC as well as elements for its work plan.</p> <p>Discussed with the Ministry of National Economy, GIZ, USAID, and the World Bank, future cooperation.</p>	Ministry of National Economy, GIZ, USAID, and the World Bank
8.	Seminar on ATF in collaboration with USAID, the World Bank, as well as WCO and CEFTA2006, Belgrade, 16-17.11.2016	Organize, together with USAID and the International Finance Corporation / World Bank, a seminar for the 7 CEFTA Parties on WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation.	Countries requested additional seminars on national trade facilitation committees and Single Window.	USAID, the World Bank, WCO and CEFTA2006
9.	2016 SPECA Economic Forum and 11 th session of the SPECA Governing Council and	Delivered a lecture to staff of various regulatory agencies in Azerbaijan, at the Ministry of Economy, on the details and tasks stemming from the preparations for entry into force of the	<p>ATF readiness assessment requested by Azerbaijan.</p> <p>2016 SPECA Economic Forum and 11th session of the SPECA Governing Council</p>	ESCAP and the Government of Azerbaijan

<i>No.</i>	<i>Title, Venue, Dates</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Partners</i>
	a small seminar on the WTO TFA at the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan	WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation. Organized, together with ESCAP and the Government of Azerbaijan, the 2016 SPECA Economic Forum and 11 th session of the SPECA Governing Council.	focused on strengthening regional cooperation for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including the Sustainable Development Goals in the SPECA region. For further details see: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/SPECA/documents/gc/session11/Ganja_Declaration_English.pdf it.	
10.	Participated in the meetings of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Working Group (WG) on Customs and Trade, Istanbul, 28-29 November 2016	Finalized the text of the BSEC Regional Trade Facilitation strategy for adoption by a Ministerial Meeting or summit in 2017 and discuss strengthening collaboration with UNDP.	Discussed ECE's support for the SPECA high-level events in 2017. A text of the BSEC Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy (initially drafted by the ECE Regional Adviser) agreed at the Expert Meeting on 28 November and adopted at the BSEC Trade WG on 29 November, with some points for clarification by participating States. Discussed future cooperation in support of the Single Window and Port Community Systems implementation in the BSEC Agreed on avenues for strengthening cooperation with UNDP	BSEC, UNDP
11.	1 st meeting of a new EU Task Force on Single Window Legal Issues; European Commission, DG TAXUD, Brussels, 5-6 Dec.2016.	Participated at the launching meeting of a new EU Task Force on Single Window Legal Issues by informing them about the ECE activities on the Single Window (SW), and the ECE trade facilitation (TF) recommendations.	ECE standards and Single Window recommendations, notably Rec. 35 on Legal Issues, taken into account in the work of the Task Force. Reinforced relations with EU DG TAXUD in the area trade facilitation, including SW.	European Commission, DG TAXUD,