



Terms of Reference of the Project Working Group on ICT for Development

Preamble

1. The Project Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies for Development (PWG on ICT) is a subsidiary body within the governing structure of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The member countries of the Programme are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) provide overall support to the Programme.

2. At the International Conference on Strengthening Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation and the Future Role of SPECA and the SPECA Regional Advisory Committee (Astana, Kazakhstan, 25-27 May 2005), it was decided to establish a SPECA Project Working Group (PWG) on ICT. It is also a follow-up initiative of the Bishkek Conference on Information Society and Regional Cooperation in Information and Communication Technologies for Development, held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, from 16 to 18 November 2004.

Objectives

3. In line with the overall objectives of SPECA to support its member countries in (i) developing sub-regional cooperation and (ii) in integrating their economies into the world economy, the PWG on ICT shall (i) facilitate cooperation in the initiatives related to knowledge-based economy development, in particular on ICT for development between the interested SPECA member countries; (ii) support and coordinate capacity-building activities and programmes in the area of ICT for development of the SPECA member countries; (iii) serve as a forum for discussion of issues on ICT for development; (iv) promote and support the knowledge-based economy development of the SPECA member countries.

Participants

4. The PWG on ICT shall comprise National Representatives, nominated by the Governments of SPECA member countries. The National Representatives shall be senior officials involved in the formulation and implementation or be aware of national policies and programmes, which affect national ICT policies in their respective countries and able to effectively follow up the recommendations and decisions of the PWG on ICT.

5. Each participating country shall also nominate, on a permanent or on an ad hoc basis, experts on various aspects of ICT for development as required.

6. Neighbouring countries of the SPECA region are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the PWG on ICT, especially when issues concerning cooperation with neighbouring regions are discussed.

7. Relevant sub-regional organizations implementing programmes related to knowledge-based economy and ICT for development are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the PWG on ICT.

8. United Nations bodies as well as other bilateral and multilateral agencies and organizations operating in the knowledge-based economy development and ICT for development issues in the SPECA member countries are invited to participate in the work of the PWG on ICT and to nominate liaison officers on matters related to its work.

Modalities of operation

9. The PWG on ICT shall elect two Co-Chairpersons from among the National Representatives nominated by the Governments of the SPECA member countries.

10. The Secretariats of UNECE and UNESCAP will provide secretarial support to the PWG on ICT. The Secretariats will facilitate the preparation and organization of the sessions of the Group and will maintain records of its activities.

11. The PWG on ICT shall hold annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries.

Funding

12. The operational costs of the PWG on ICT as well as the costs of participation of National Representatives and experts in its sessions shall as a rule be borne by the Governments of participating countries. In addition, the UNECE and UNESCAP shall support, within their available resources, the functioning of the PWG on ICT.

13. The PWG shall also seek funds and technical assistance for its operations from multilateral and bilateral donors.

Programme of work and activities

14. The PWG on ICT shall develop, agree upon and implement an annual work programme.

15. The PWG on ICT shall formulate and agree upon specific projects and programmes and seek extra-budgetary resources for their implementation.

16. Important policy conclusions should be brought to the attention of high-level policy making authorities in the SPECA member countries.

17. Recommendations along with agreed investment and project ideas should be presented to relevant international organizations and international programmes as well as to private investors.

Other matters

18. The current Terms of Reference shall be reviewed in 3 years or sooner if the SPECA member countries so decide.

* * * * *