

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Sixty-fourth session
Geneva, 3-6 November 2008

Committee on Trade: Draft Programme of Work, 2010 – 2011

Work Items

This document has been drawn up by the secretariat. The document integrates the programmes of work of WP.6, WP.7 and UN/CEFACT into the programme of work of the Committee on Trade.

The Working Party is invited to decide on the content of its programme of work for 2010-2011 and recommend it to the Committee on Trade for approval.



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**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK, 2010-2011
WORK ITEMS**

DOCUMENT FOR APPROVAL

The Bureau of the Committee on Trade (CT) is submitting this draft programme of work for 2010 – 2011 to the Committee for approval.

Information on the work under the Committee can be found on its website:

<http://www.unece.org/trade>.

Previous, related documentation: ECE/TRADE/C/2007/14 (Programme of Work and its Evaluation: 2010-2011: Draft strategic framework and evaluation plans for the 2008-9 biennium), ECE/TRADE/C/2007/14/Corr.1 (Programme of Work and its Evaluation: 2010-2011: Draft strategic framework and evaluation plans for the 2008-9 biennium).

1. STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

1. Developing and maintaining trade-related instruments, norms and standards is one of the core activities of UNECE. In order to further this work, UNECE will undertake the following activities.

1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE FACILITATION STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER UN/CEFACT

2. UN/CEFACT will:

- Analyse and document key elements of international processes, procedures and transactions for each trade and business domain
- Identify trade facilitation needs and priorities
- Monitor technological and methodological developments and develop consequent e-business standards and trade facilitation instruments
- Bridge the gap between paper and electronic business documents
- Ensure technical quality of recommendations, standards and technical specifications

Outputs:

- Publish an integrated and detailed process model of the international supply chain based on the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM)
- As part of the Core Component Library (CCL), publish an integrated and detailed data model of the international supply chain supporting the international supply chain business process model
- Develop a list of requirements for technical instruments and syntax-specific solutions that meet the needs of its business domain groups (TBGs)
- Advance availability of a central Registry
- Regular ongoing publication of core UN/CEFACT standards such as UN/LOCODE, UN/EDIFACT, codes and UN CCL

Details regarding the UN/CEFACT Programme of Work are given in a separate document ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2008/16, available in English, French and Russian.

1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER THE WORKING PARTY ON REGULATORY COOPERATION AND STANDARDIZATION POLICIES

1.2.1. Development and Maintenance of Recommendations on Standardization and Regulatory Policies

3. The Working Party will:

- Review its current recommendations to Governments on establishing business friendly standardization and regulatory environments
- Draw up new recommendations
- Define the areas for future work on recommendations
- Identify and recommend best practices for countries to follow

Target Audience: Governments, intergovernmental organizations, international/regional trade organizations, quality inspection services, producers' organizations, consumer organizations
Target Date for Completion: Ongoing, 2010-11

Outputs:

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised recommendation on reference to standards (2010)
- Revised recommendation on revision of Recommendation "K", "Metrological Assurance of Testing"(2010)
- New guidelines on market surveillance (2009)

1.3 WORKING PARTY ON AGRICULTURAL QUALITY STANDARDS (WP.7)

4. The Working Party will:

- Review the recommendations made by its specialized sections
- Define the directions for their future work on standards
- Monitor the implementation of standards

Target Audience: Governments; quality inspection services; trade, producers' and consumers' organizations.

Outputs:

- 2 annual sessions
- Approximately one quarter of the current total of about 100 standards are reviewed for revision or updating
- Developing new standards

1.3.1. Development and Maintenance of UNECE Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1)

5. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1) will:

- Revise and update its standard layout and standards
- Develop new standards
- Develop explanatory material for implementation of the standards (subject to approval of the transfer of this work from OECD)

Target Audience: Governments, intergovernmental organizations, international/regional trade organizations, quality inspection services, producers' organizations, consumer organizations
Target Date for Completion: Ongoing, 2010-11

Outputs:

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised and/or new standards
- Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year) and explanatory guidelines

1.3.2. Development and Maintenance of UNECE Standards for Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2)

6. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2) will:

- Revise and update its standard layout and standards
- Develop new standards

- Develop explanatory material for standards (subject to approval of the transfer of this work from OECD)

Target Audience: Governments, intergovernmental organizations, international/regional trade organizations, quality inspection services, producer's organizations, consumer organizations
Target Date for Completion: Ongoing, 2010-11

Outputs:

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised and/or new standards
- Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year) and explanatory guidelines

1.3.3. Development and Maintenance of UNECE Standards for Meat

7. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (GE.11) will:

- Revise and update its standards
- Develop new standards

Target Audience: Governments, intergovernmental organizations, international/regional trade organizations, quality inspection services, producers' organizations, consumer organizations
Target Date for Completion: Ongoing, 2010-11

Outputs:

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised and/or new standards
- Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year)
- 2 standards publications

1.3.4. Development and Maintenance of UNECE Standards for Seed Potato

8. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes (GE.6) will:

- Revise and update the standard for seed potatoes
- Revise the list of diseases and pests
- Study issues related to further development and application of the standard

Target Audience: Governments, intergovernmental organizations, international/regional trade organizations, quality inspection services, producers' organizations, consumer organizations

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing, 2010-11

Outputs:

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised standard
- Revised Internet publication of the standard (once a year) and explanatory guidelines

1.3.5. Development and Maintenance of UNECE Standards for Eggs and Egg products and for Cut Flowers

The Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat will revise the five 1986 standards for eggs and egg products

2. IMPLEMENTATION/CAPACITY BUILDING

9. Over 30 UNECE Recommendations guide the implementation of trade facilitation, based on best practice and agreed international procedures. Many UNECE standards have been adopted worldwide and several have become United Nations Recommendations and standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

10. The Committee has also provided an important forum for policy discussion on issues related to trade facilitation and the development of trade infrastructure.

11. UNECE work on agricultural quality standards is widely used in global trade. UNECE has developed close to 100 standards in fresh fruit and vegetables, dry and dried produce, early and ware potatoes, seed potatoes, eggs, meat and cut flowers. Many of these standards serve as the basis for European Union legislation and Codex Alimentarius standards, and are actively promoted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

12. UNECE also carries out extensive work on technical harmonization and standardization policies, providing a unique intergovernmental forum for debating and addressing issues related to standardization, regulatory cooperation, conformity assessment, metrology accreditation and market surveillance issues.

13. The Trade and Timber Division contributes to policy-relevant cross-sectoral activities of the UNECE and contributes to UN global initiatives. The Division also provides focal points for UNECE regarding relations with a number of other organizations including the WTO, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and ISO .

14. Technical work is complemented by an active programme of capacity building and cooperation to support the implementation of existing trade norms and standards in the UNECE region, including the EECCA countries.

15. Current projects expected to continue through at least 2010-11? are listed below. Additional projects may be developed depending upon the demand from member States and available extrabudgetary funding.

- Participation in the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia

- Project on Capacity building in support of trade integration with emphasis on integrated trade information flow management and trade facilitation in Central Asia (UN Development Account Project)
- United Nations extensions for aligned electronic trade documents (UNeDocs)
- Development assistance for the implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations in selected transition economies
- Support to the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) for South Eastern Europe and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)
- Reducing barriers to trade in goods and services in all countries, and UNECE member States in particular, through greater implementation of international and UNECE norms, standards, instruments and recommendations, especially in trade facilitation
- UNDA project on Agricultural Quality Standards
- Russian Voluntary Contribution Fund projects on Agricultural Quality Standards

2.1 IMPLEMENTATION/CAPACITY BUILDING IN TRADE FACILITATION AND E-BUSINESS

16. UN/CEFACT will:

- Support implementation in transition economies
- Encourage efforts to make trade facilitation and e-business knowledge available

Outputs:

- Further secure financing and relevant partnerships
- Build awareness of UN/CEFACT work
- Undertake capacity building activities in transition economies

Details regarding the UN/CEFACT Programme of Work are given in document ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2008/16.available in English, French and Russian.

2.2 IMPLEMENTATION/CAPACITY BUILDING IN STANDARDIZATION AND QUALITY

17. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies will:

- Promote the principles of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, particularly in countries acceding to the WTO
- Develop proposals on how to use the “International Model for Technical Harmonization” for regulatory convergence in sectors of interest for Governments
- Promote the “International Model” in the UNECE and other regions (subject to the availability of extra budgetary funds)

Target Audience: Regulatory and trade authorities, private sector, consumers

Outputs:

- Workshop on regulatory and standardization matters in an EECCA or SEE country (2008)
- Workshop on regulatory and standardization issues in a country outside the UNECE region (subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds) (2009)

18. Additionally, to foster technical cooperation in the area of standard harmonization, the Working Party will also:

- Explore the possibility of raising extra-budgetary funds can for the implementation of Recommendation M in countries with economies in transition and developing countries
- Explore the possibility of raising extrabudgetary funds to assist regional trade agreements that involve developing countries or countries with economies in transition to further regulatory cooperation among their members, based on the principles of Recommendation L.

2.3 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGRICULTURAL QUALITY STANDARDS

19. During 2010-11 the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) and its specialized sections will carry out capacity-building activities for different countries and regions drawing on the resources from the UN Development Account and the Russian Voluntary Contribution Fund. These activities will be to:

- Promote the use of internationally agreed standards for agricultural produce
- Contribute to training of producers, traders and quality inspectors
- Help countries build capacity for the application of standards

Target Audience: Governments, traders, inspection agencies.

Outputs:

- 4 workshops to promote agricultural quality standards

2.4 REGIONAL ADVISORY SERVICES

20. Through its regional advisory services, the UNECE will:

- Promote UNECE recommendations, standards and tools, particularly those on trade facilitation and electronic commerce
- Support trade policy development in EECCA (Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia) and southeast European countries
- Develop and promote a subregional strategy for trade facilitation for the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus (drawing on the fifth tranche of the United Nations Development Account project and on the UNECE/Czech Republic technical assistance project)
- Develop trade facilitation projects EECCA countries and Southeast Europe
- Assist trade facilitation and e-business networks in Southeast Europe in applying UNECE recommendations, standards and tools

Target audience: Governments, business associations, private sector.

Outputs:

- 3 trade facilitation workshops in countries covered by the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)

- 2 new networks for trade facilitation in SPECA countries (subject to the demand and available funds)
- 3 trade facilitation workshops in the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other EECCA countries

3. PROMOTION

21. Promoting the value and effectiveness of the Committee's activities in trade and economic development.

22. There is a pressing need for greater awareness and understanding of the benefits, implications and available resources for improving the trade environment, particularly through the elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade. Clearly, more must be done to sensitise policy makers to the core issues involved, as well as to the strategies and approaches for implementation. UNECE plans to undertake the following projects to address this need

3.1 CONFERENCES

3.1.1. International Conferences

23. Building on its expertise in the development of its norms, standards and best practice recommendations and its experience in organizing such events and on its existing network of contacts, UNECE will host two conferences as part of the annual session of the Committee on Trade in 2010 and 2011. The two forums will build opportunities for cooperation at all levels between the Committee and its subsidiary bodies as well as with other UNECE bodies and other international organizations.

Target Audience: Governments, business organizations, Standards-setting and inspection agencies, trade practitioners, trade-related international organizations.

Target Date for Completion: 2010-11

Outputs:

- 2 Conferences in 2010 and 2011

3.2 MULTIPLIER POINT NETWORK

3.2.1. Development and Maintenance of the Multiplier Point Network

24. The Trade Development and Timber Division has set up a network of Multiplier Points in 27 transition economies. The organizations in the network promote, distribute and translate into national languages UNECE reports, recommendations, standards, documents, publications, guidelines and other information. The programme aims at reaching as many potential beneficiaries of the UNECE work in member States as is possible, including:

business, trade associations, Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and other groups. Since April 2001, 59 organizations from 27 transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States have joined the network and now participate in its activities.

Target audience: Business community, including start-up entrepreneurs, local, regional and national authorities in charge of business and trade, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Governments, missions, delegations, international organizations, and civil society groups
Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

3.3 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

3.3.1. Promoting UN/CEFACT Work

25. UN/CEFACT will publish promotional material explaining the use of UN/CEFACT instruments relevant to the work of WTO, WCO and other international organizations. It will also discuss a strategy on communications with major stakeholders

Target Audience: Countries and international organizations, UN/CEFACT Plenary
Target date for completion: 2010-11

3.3.2. Promotional Material on Standardization Policies

26. The Working on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) will prepare information booklets on its projects to promote the use of the policy mechanisms and approaches developed and recommended by WP6

Target Audience: Governments and business
Target date for completion: 2010-11

3.3.3. Promotional Material on Agricultural Quality Standards

27. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) will work on promotional material (e.g. a booklet on UNECE Standards) for the use by the secretariat and delegations in promoting knowledge and application of UNECE Standards. It will also encourage the promotion of its work at relevant regional and international agricultural trade events.

Target Audience: Governments and trade
Target Date for Completion: 2010-11

3.4 PUBLICATIONS

28. The Trade Development and Timber Division prepares a large range of publications, both non-recurrent and recurrent. These are sources of highly relevant information and also serve as reference guides to facilitate the implementation of standards, norms and recommendations in member States. A list of publications scheduled for 2010-11 is given below.

Non-Recurrent Publications:

- Recommendations on Standardization Policies
- Report on Regulatory Cooperation
- ECE Standards for Meat – Carcasses and Parts/Cuts
- Interpretive guides for agricultural quality standards

Recurrent Publications:

- Compendium of Norms, Standards and Best Practices for International Trade and Business (CD-ROM) Trade Development Directory (Internet publication)
- CEFACT Business Requirements Specifications Library (Internet publication)
- CEFACT Core Component Library (Internet publication)
- CEFACT Schema Library (Internet publication)
- ECE Standards and Recommendations for Trade and Electronic Business (Internet publication)
- ECE Standards for Dry and Dried Produce (revision) (Internet publication)
- ECE Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (revision) (Internet Publication)
- ECE Standards for Meat (revision) (Internet publication)
- ECE Standards for Seed Potatoes (revision) (Internet publication)
- United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (Internet publication)
- United Nations Trade Data Interchange Directory, also known as the United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport Directory - UN/EDIFACT(Internet publication)