

## Project Concept Note Template for the follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum

**Ashgabat 7-8 June 2011**

<b>Project Title</b>	Integrating the Management of Trade Information Flows in Central Asia: Harmonizing documents, data and documentary procedures	
<b>Outcome</b>	More harmonized trade and transport documents, data and documentary procedures in the SPECA countries: a key prerequisite for the success of trade facilitation and Single Window projects carried out by various agencies in the region.	
<b>Indicative Funding Requirements</b>	Total estimated budget:	\$ 330,000 (over three years)
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	[Donor(s): [Development Bank(s): Other Resources:	\$ 330,000 \$
<b>Expected start date</b>	January 2012	
<b>Expected Duration</b>	3 years (July 2012 - June 2015)	
<b>Implementing Organisation(s)</b>	UNECE, UNESCAP, UNCTAD, national ministries of economy and trade and Customs services, in collaboration with GTZ, USAID	
<b>Country/Countries</b>	All SPECA countries	
<b>Submitted by</b>	UNECE	
<b>Contact information</b>	Name:	Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser
	Tel	+41 22 917 11 34
	Fax	
	Email	<a href="mailto:mario.apostolov@unece.org">mario.apostolov@unece.org</a>
	Mailing Address	

### 1 Background

UNECE's studies and experience on trade in Central Asia have indicated that the creation of a more integrated regional market (among the countries rather than with other groupings and large neighbours) would create an attractive environment for foreign investments and bring new technologies needed for the modernization of the economies of the region. Tariffs in the countries' mutual trade have been lowered through bilateral and multilateral FTAs (with the exception of trade with Afghanistan), but what remains to be done is trade facilitation: elimination of red tape, border crossing formalities, lack of cooperation among agencies, public and private entities, etc.

UNECE, in collaboration with the Czech Republic, UNESCAP, EurAsEC, TRACECA, UNDP, UNCTAD, GTZ, USAID, the World Bank and other institutions, has developed a series of capacity-building projects and activities and a strong network of policy makers and experts in trade facilitation, the Single Window and data harmonization in the region. As a result work has begun on trade facilitation and the Single Window in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as a Document Repository project in Kyrgyzstan. National trade control agencies, the business community, and international development partners have taken up the concepts, recommendations and standards offered at the capacity-building events that have been organized. What is needed is further capacity building on the use of UNECE, UNCEFACT and World Customs Organization (WCO) standards for trade information exchange, in order for the various implementing agencies not to make mistakes, and to use international standards for trade information exchange.

The UNECE and its subsidiary body UNCEFACT, in collaboration with the WCO, the European Commission, ISO and other agencies have been developing recommendations, standards, and tools for trade facilitation and the Single Window for export and import clearance for decades (e.g. UN/EDIFACT - the only global standard for Electronic Data Interchange, the United Nations Trade Data Elements Directory (UNTDDED) and a number of specific data element codes, Recommendations 33, 34, and 35, on the Single Window, etc. Using these standards in the various local, national, and regional projects for trade facilitation and the Single Window is very important, so that the countries of Central Asia do not become isolated islands of trade information gathering and exchange.

## **2 Justification**

The studies developed and discussed under the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade clearly indicated the need of more trade facilitation measures, streamlining and automating information gathering and distribution. The projects implemented in the field indicated very high interest among the national authorities and the development partners in the Single Window (a concept introduced by those projects in the region) based on established international standards. Various actors have demanded further cooperation.

## **3 Expected Output(s)**

- More efficient trade information flows in terms of both trade efficiency and growth and efficiency of official controls
- Improved local capacity to deal with innovative tools for trade facilitation and integrated management of trade information flows.
- Increased capacity of local government agencies and the business community to implement international standards for trade facilitation and electronic business.

## **4 Proposed Approach & Strategy, including Capacity Development Response**

The implementation strategy of this project will be based on the following steps:

- 4.1 *Field work* by consultant(s) and UN staff to visit all SPECA countries, meet and interview officials responsible for documentary procedures, trade facilitation and Single Window projects; gather as much as possible information (and trade and transport documents), which will then be assessed against the feasibility of adopting international standards for data harmonization and alignment with international standards. The resulting report will form the basis for a feasibility study.
- 4.2 *Business process analysis* (in at least three countries); organize one regional training for local specialists on how to carry out business process analyses on their own; issue a set of recommendations on priority measures to be taken for reforming the business processes in such a way that they allow for the implementation of international standards.
- 4.3 Organize 6 *training seminars* to (1) assist the development of Master Action Plans for a Single Window with stages and objectives, which would provide both technical guidelines and organizational-political guidelines on which organization does what in building the Single Window (prepare a Guidelines publication); (2) finalize the Kyrgyzstan Forms Repository and foster implementation of this solution in the SPECA countries; and (3) provide guidance on implementing international standards for trade information exchange.
- 4.4 Assist the national partners to *identify co-financing* for the continuation of the project with other partners. Cooperation on previous stages has indicated that there are many potential partners and donor assistance for such innovative projects that would raise both efficiency and governance in the countries. Involve all the development partners in the region from the very beginning.
- 4.5 Organize a *concluding conference* to endorse the results of the project and identify next steps.

## 5 Annual Work Plan

Year: 2012

PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME				PLANNED BUDGET
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Amount
1. Activity: Field work and needs assessment		√	√		40,000 US\$
2. Activity: First workshop in Uzbekistan / First draft of guidelines on how to prepare a Master Action Plan for building a Single Window (including guidelines on how to align data requirements to international standards.			√		40,000 US\$
3. Activity: Second workshop in Kyrgyzstan / development of guidelines on how to develop a Forms Server and link it to the Single Window project, using the experience of Kyrgyzstan.				√	40,000 US\$
<b>TOTAL</b>					120,000 US\$

Year: 2013

PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME				PLANNED BUDGET
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Amount
1. Activity: workshop in Kazakhstan / Second draft of guidelines on how to prepare a Master Action Plan for building a Single Window	√				40,000 US\$
2. Activity: Support for ongoing Single Window and trade facilitation projects in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan; technical assistance with interagency cooperation and data harmonization (advisory missions)		√	√		30,000 US\$
3. Activity: Capacity-building seminar in Azerbaijan				√	30,000 US\$
4. Activity: Support for ongoing trade facilitation project in Uzbekistan data harmonization and interagency cooperation (advisory missions)					30,000US\$
<b>TOTAL</b>					130,000 US\$

Year: 2014

PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME				PLANNED BUDGET
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Amount
1. Activity: Workshop in Kazakhstan / Finalization of guidelines on how to prepare a Master Action Plan for building a Single Window; data harmonization and alignment with international standards.	√				30,000 US\$
2. Activity: Support for ongoing Single Window and trade facilitation projects in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (advisory missions)		√	√		25,000 US\$
3. Activity: Support for ongoing projects in Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan (if demanded, advisory missions)			√	√	25,000 US\$
<b>TOTAL</b>					80,000 US\$