

## Project Concept Note

### Follow-up meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum

Ashgabat, 2011

<b>Project Title</b>	Strengthening institutional support for women entrepreneurs through business associations in SPECA countries	
<b>Outcome</b>	Increased capacity of women's business associations to advocate the needs of business women to policy makers, to encourage and enable women to set up and develop their own businesses, and to facilitate trade relations between women entrepreneurs in the SPECA region	
<b>Indicative Funding Requirements</b>	Total estimated budget:	US\$ 913,240 (over 24 months)
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	[Donor(s): [Development Bank(s)]: Other Resources:	\$ No funding pledged so far.
<b>Expected start date</b>	January 2012	
<b>Expected Duration</b>	2 years	
<b>Implementing Organisation(s)</b>	UNECE, Women's Business Associations	
<b>Country/Countries</b>	All SPECA countries	
<b>Submitted by</b>	UNECE Gender	
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## 1 Background

Women's entrepreneurship is an important driver of job creation, economic growth and development in the member countries of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). Many micro and small businesses are run by women making an important contribution to national economies. Women are however still under-represented among business owners and their potential to contribute to economic growth and integration is under-utilised. Few policy programmes and investments in the region are directly targeted at creating a more enabling business environment for women and investing in women-owned businesses. In order to fully promote women's economic potential in the SPECA region, adequate support systems are needed across the different stages of entrepreneurship development.

Prevailing gender stereotypes in education and society can deter young women from envisaging themselves as future entrepreneurs. Women need role models, access to information, business education and a supportive public climate to increase their confidence and self-esteem and to encourage them to make the step of setting up their own business. Women's business associations play an important role in providing this support to women entrepreneurs. They provide information, training and business support services, including micro-finance to help women setting up, managing, and growing their businesses. The project proposes to strengthen the capacity of women's business associations to deliver this support and to connect with others in

neighbouring countries. Stronger collaboration between women's business associations at the regional level will facilitate economic integration through connecting enterprises across the region.

Mandated by the Beijing Platform for Action to improve women's situation in the economy, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has a long-standing commitment to promoting women's entrepreneurship development in South-East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Under the SPECA programme, a Project Working Group on Gender and Economy was set up in 2006 to raise awareness among all stakeholders on gender and economy issues and to develop projects to support women's entrepreneurship. Activities include research assessing the business environment for women entrepreneurs and sub-regional forums for women entrepreneurs to address issues of particular concern such as the lack of networking opportunities, difficult access to credit and lack of specific knowledge and skills. In collaboration with the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center (MCTC) and Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV), UNECE organises bi-annual capacity-building workshops for women entrepreneurs in Central Asia and Caucasus on information and communication technologies and support systems for women entrepreneurs.

## **2 Justification**

Research conducted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the International Labour Organization in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan has pointed to the need for an institutional environment to provide access to entrepreneurship training, advisory services, relevant information on markets and networking opportunities in the region. Women's business associations in SPECA countries are an important provider of training and services reaching out to women in both rural and urban areas. Their capacity to deliver the needed support is however limited by financial and human resource constraints. The project proposes to address this constraint by offering tailored trainings to women's business associations to enhance their capacity to provide more effective business training and business support services to women. The training programme will provide an important opportunity for women's business associations in the region to connect, build their relationships, exchange experience and information, and foster new cross-country collaborations. This will facilitate trade relations between women entrepreneurs in SPECA countries and strengthen economic integration in the region.

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

The project will contribute to strengthening an enabling business environment for women entrepreneurs in the SPECA region through a capacity-building and networking programme consisting of four sub-regional training workshops for women business associations in the SPECA region. These workshops will strengthen the capacity of women's business associations to: (1) advocate the needs of business women to policy makers, and (2) provide business training and support services to women entrepreneurs in their respective countries.

The capacity-building programme will furthermore enhance regional integration through strengthening networks among women's business associations in SPECA countries, facilitating exchange of information and experience and fostering collaboration and trade relations in the region.

### Project outputs:

- 4 sets of training materials on topics such as policy-oriented advocacy, information campaigns, business training and trade facilitation
- Resource kits for women business associations
- A network of women's business associations in SPECA countries

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

The approach of the project consists of designing and implementing a two-year capacity-building and networking programme for women's business associations in SPECA countries. In an initial recruitment & needs assessment phase, women's business associations from the region will be recruited into the capacity-building programme. As strengthening the regional network is an important element of the project, continuity of participation over the four workshops is encouraged. Participating women's business associations will be surveyed about their training programmes and business support services and their needs for capacity building will be taken into account in the preparation of the workshop modules to ensure demand-led and needs-tailored training.

Subject to the needs assessment, the four capacity-building workshops are suggested to cover the following topics:

- Policy-oriented advocacy bringing business women's needs to the attention of policy makers
- Encouraging women to become entrepreneurs: role models, mentoring, raising self-esteem and confidence
- Business training for entrepreneurs-to-be: how to start one's own business
- Business training for women business owners: how to grow and develop one's business
- Facilitating access to credit and financial services: how to effectively support women entrepreneurs
- Developing opportunities and barriers for cross-border trading and gaining access to markets

Drawing on the pool of expertise in the wider UNECE region, training experts from women's business associations in other parts of the region will be invited to share their methods, experience and lessons learnt at the workshops.

In addition to the training delivered, women's business associations will be provided with a resource kit with relevant information and training materials which can be used and adapted to their own training courses. Relevant training materials developed by women's business associations in other countries of the ECE region will be translated and included in the resource kits.

The training workshops will be organised at the sub-regional level for SPECA member countries, thus providing the opportunity for mutual exchange of information and experience, the identification of common challenges and possibilities for regional collaboration. It is envisaged to organise one out of the four workshops with a particular focus on collaboration across the neighbouring countries Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

## 5 Annual Work Plan

Year: 2012

PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME				PLANNED BUDGET
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Amount (USD)
1. Activity: Recruitment of participating WBA & Needs assessment	x				101,185
2. Activity: Development of training modules and resource kit for the Workshop 1	x	x			
3. Activity: Regional Capacity-building Workshop for Women's Business Associations (1)		x			127,125
4. Activity: Development of training modules and resource kit for Workshop 2			x	x	101,185
5. Activity: Regional Capacity-building Workshop for Women's Business Associations (2)				x	127,125
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>456,620</b>

Year: 2013

PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME				PLANNED BUDGET
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Amount (USD)
1. Activity: Development of training modules and resource kit for Workshop 3	x	x			101,185
2. Activity: Regional Capacity-building Workshop for Women's Business Associations (3)		x			127,125
3. Activity: Development of training modules and resource kit for Workshop 4			x	x	101,185
4. Activity: Regional Capacity-building Workshop for Women's Business Associations (4)				x	127,125
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>456,620</b>

## PROJECT SUMMARY

Strengthening Institutions for Women's Entrepreneurship Development in the SPECA region

### **Institutional support for women entrepreneurs in SPECA countries**

### **Институциональная поддержка женщин-предпринимателей в странах региона СПЕКА**

UNECE proposes to develop and run a **capacity-building programme** for women business associations in all SPECA member countries. This programme will consist of four sub-regional training workshops for women business associations in the SPECA region at a total estimated cost of **US\$ 913,240 over a two year period.**

Donor funding is sought for this project.

Европейская Экономическая Комиссия ООН предлагает разработать и осуществить **программу по наращиванию потенциала** для женских бизнес ассоциаций во всех странах-членах СПЕКА. Данная программа будет включать в себя четыре субрегиональных учебных семинара для женских бизнес ассоциаций региона СПЕКА общей стоимостью **913 240 долларов США в течение двухлетнего срока реализации программы.**

Поиск источников финансирования для данного проекта продолжается.

#### *Why women's business associations need capacity-building....*

Women are still under-represented among business owners in SPECA countries and their potential to contribute to economic growth and integration is under-utilised. Few policy programmes and investments in the region are directly targeted at creating a more enabling business environment for women and investing in women-owned businesses. In order to fully promote women's economic potential in the SPECA region, adequate support systems are needed across the different stages of entrepreneurship development.

Women's business associations in SPECA countries are an important provider of training and services reaching out to women in both rural and urban areas. Their capacity to deliver the needed support is however limited by financial and human resource constraints.

#### *Почему женские бизнес ассоциации нуждаются в наращивании потенциала....*

В странах региона СПЕКА женщины до сих пор остаются в меньшинстве среди владельцев собственного бизнеса, их потенциал недостаточно используется в качестве вклада в экономический рост и интеграцию. Лишь несколько политических и инвестиционных программ в регионе напрямую направлены на создание более благоприятной деловой среды для женщин и инвестирования в предприятия, которыми

владеют женщины. Для содействия более полной реализации женского экономического потенциала в регионе СПЕКА необходимы соответствующие системы поддержки на различных стадиях развития предпринимательства.

Женские бизнес ассоциации в странах региона СПЕКА являются важным поставщиком услуг и учебных программ, ориентированных на женщин, как сельских областей, так и городов. Потенциал данных организаций в предоставлении необходимой поддержки, однако, ограничен финансовыми и человеческими ресурсами.

*....and what the project will deliver*

The project proposes to address this constraint by offering tailored trainings to women's business associations to enhance their capacity to provide more effective business training and business support services to women and to advocate the needs of business women to policy makers.

Subject to identified needs and demand, the four capacity-building workshops will cover policy-oriented advocacy, role models and mentoring for women, business trainings for start up and business development, access to credit and financial services, and opportunities and barriers for cross-border trading and access to markets.

In addition to strengthening capacity to provide training and support services to women and women entrepreneurs in both urban and rural areas, the training programme will provide an important opportunity for women's business associations in the region to connect, build their relationships, exchange experience and information, and foster new cross-country collaborations. This will facilitate trade relations between women entrepreneurs in SPECA countries and strengthen economic integration in the region.

*.... и какие возможности может предоставить данный проект*

Проект предлагает обратиться к проблеме ограниченности ресурсов, разработав специальные учебные программы для женских бизнес ассоциаций, направленные на увеличение их потенциала в проведении более эффективных бизнес тренингов, оказании поддержки женщинам, а также для защиты прав и потребностей деловых женщин на законодательном уровне.

С учетом выявленных нужд и потребностей четыре семинара по наращиванию потенциала будут посвящены: деятельности по защите интересов на стадии разработки политики; ознакомлению с успешными примерами и наставничеству; бизнес-тренингам по организации и развитию бизнеса; доступу к кредитным и финансовым услугам; а также возможностям и барьерам международной торговли и доступа к рынкам.

В дополнение к деятельности по усилению потенциала в области обучения и услуг для поддержки женщин и женщин-предпринимателей городской и сельской местностей обучающая программа предоставит женским бизнес ассоциациям региона возможность общения, установления полезных контактов, обмена опытом и информацией, и стимулирует формирование межстранового

сотрудничества. Это будет способствовать развитию торговых отношений между женщинами-предпринимателями в странах СПЕКА и позволит усилить экономическую интеграцию в регионе.