



UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA
(SPECA)

SPECA WORK PLAN FOR 2016-2017

**(Ongoing, planned and possible UNECE and ESCAP activities in support of
the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA))**

WATER, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

In light of a large degree of interdependence of most of the SPECA countries, efficient use of water and energy resources on mutually agreed and beneficial terms is critical for economic and social development in the region and meeting basic human needs of its populations. The theme of Water and Energy was among the initial work areas of SPECA and is addressed through the Project Working Group on Water and Energy Resources. Earlier work has resulted in the elaboration of the Strategy for the Rational and Efficient Use of Water and Energy Resources in Central Asia (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/SPECA/documents/wer/effuse_e.pdf).

On-going projects contribute to the implementation of the SPECA Strategy as well as are being part of the Work Programme of the UNECE Water Convention. Work on regional water cooperation including on water quality and dam safety, bilateral cooperation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on the Chu and Talas rivers as well as between Afghanistan and Tajikistan on hydrology and environment on the Pyanj river are part of the work programme.

The Programme “Trans-boundary Water Management in Central Asia” was launched in 2008 by the Government of Germany. A Programme component “Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management” is being implemented by the UNECE. In a third project phase work continues to support regional institutions and to raise the capacity to apply international water law in the region.

The main activities on sustainable energy in the SPECA region will include work, in particular capacity-building activities, on energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy, clean fossil fuel technologies, energy investments for climate change mitigation and sustainable development, as well as on strengthening cooperation on energy security and sustainable energy for all, including energy-related SDGs. These activities will be contributing to the implementation of the outcomes of the annual Forums on Sustainable Energy Development organized by UNECE and ESCAP and the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (APEF) convened by ESCAP in 2013.

In 2016–2017, the following projects and activities are envisaged:

WATER, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Dam safety in Central Asia: capacity-building and subregional cooperation, third phase	2012-2016	US\$ 200,000 (Funded by Russia)
Enabling transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management in the Chu and Talas River Basin	2015-2017	US\$ 1,000,000 (Funded by Global Environmental Facility)
Enhancing capacity to adapt to climate change in the transboundary Chu and Talas River Basin	2015-2018	Euro 300,000 (Funded by Finland)
Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management in Central Asia	2015-2016	Euro 130,000 (Funded by Germany)
Water quality in Central Asia	2015-2018	Euro 175,000 (Funded by Finland)
Strengthening cooperation on hydrology and environment between Afghanistan and Tajikistan in the Upper Amu Darya River basin	2014-2018	US\$ 275,000 (Funded by Russia and Finland)
Promoting Renewable Energy Investments for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Development	2014-2017	UNDA project
Strengthening cooperation on energy security and sustainable use of energy in North and Central Asia	2014-2018	Funded by Russia
Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Beneficiary countries: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan)	2016-2018	UNDA project US\$ 188,000 (per country)

TRANSPORT

The annual sessions of the Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing serve as an effective cooperation mechanism to address the specific problems of transit transport from, in and through SPECA countries. Improvement of international transport infrastructure and services, as recognized in the Vienna Programme of Action, will facilitate further integration of SPECA countries into the world economy. The support for the Almaty programme of Action followed by the Vienna Programme of Action was reiterated in ESCAP resolution 63/9 and 68/4 through the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific phase II (2012-2016) for the benefit of landlocked and transit developing countries.

The 20th session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG on TBC) was held on 10-11 September 2015 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It adopted its Programme of Work for 2016-2017, which includes: organization of regular sessions of the SPECA PWG; implementation of subregional projects of common interest to SPECA countries and development

of SPECA Transport database (road-rail-intermodal), identification and isolation of bottlenecks both physical and non-physical, enhancement of legal frameworks for transport and accession to and efficient implementation of UN legal instruments, technical assistance for development of efficient transport system, transport infrastructure investment promotion, making more efficient transport corridors through simplification/harmonization of border-crossing procedures (including through ICT), and improvement of road safety in the SPECA countries.

TRANSPORT		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Organization of regular sessions of the SPECA PWG on TBC	One per year	Regular budget
Development and implementation of sub regional project proposals of common interest to SPECA countries to address transport issues in and across the SPECA region and to promote investment in transport infrastructure, efficient operation of transport corridors in the SPECA region, and sustainable development of transport system, through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro-Asian Transport Links Project follow-up (Phase III); • Strengthening connectivity of countries in South and Central Asia, particularly Land-Locked and Least Developed Countries, to link with, subregional and regional transport and trade networks. (Implemented by the ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia). 	<div style="text-align: center;">2016-2017</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2014-2017</div>	<div style="text-align: center;">US\$ 50,000</div> <div style="text-align: center;">US\$ 632,000 (UNDA)</div>
Development and maintenance of SPECA PWG-TBC database (road-rail-intermodal) through: Technical assistance to SPECA countries in transport data collection and harmonization	2016	US\$ 50,000
Enhancement of legal frameworks for international transport to reflect suitable legal regimes for international land transport facilitation, of which: Technical assistance to SPECA countries in the field of international transport of dangerous goods	2016-2017	US\$ 50,000
Operationalization of transport corridors in the SPECA region through: Workshop on deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems and UNECE Road Map on ITS	2017	US\$ 50,000

Simplification/harmonization of border-crossing procedures and documentation for international transport and the application of new technologies, including ICT, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop to present Unified Railway Law to SPECA countries • Workshops for simplification and harmonization of border-crossing procedures 	2016	US\$ 50,000
	2016-2017	US\$ 100,000
Increased awareness and understanding of road safety issues, and improved collaboration in the SPECA region, of which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar on UN Regulations on vehicle safety and on periodical technical inspection of vehicles in view of accession of SPECA countries to UNECE Agreements (1997 Agreement and 1958 Agreement) • Workshop on implementation of Decade of Action for road safety 2011-2020 	2017	US\$ 50,000
	2016-2017	US\$ 50,000
Possible projects/activities in areas where UNECE/ESCAP have considerable experience and in-house expertise and which could be implemented if supported by interested donors/partners. These projects could be implemented in addition to and in coordination with projects/activities listed above.		
Technical assistance to SPECA countries in the field of international transport of Perishable Foodstuff and Dangerous Goods	2016-2017	US\$ 50,000
Follow up seminar on UN Regulations on vehicle safety and on periodical technical inspection of vehicles in view of accession of SPECA countries to UNECE Agreements (1997 Agreement and 1958 Agreement)	2017	US\$ 50,000
Pilot projects for implementation of “SafeFITS” and “Strengthening of the national road safety management capacities of selected developing countries and countries with economies in transition” project results	2017	US\$ 100,000 (per country)

TRADE DEVELOPMENT

At its ninth session, which took place in Geneva on 3 July 2015, the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade (PWG on Trade) identified the following areas for SPECA work on trade: trade facilitation (notably, a regional trade facilitation strategy); implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA); integration into the global rules-based trading system (Global Goal 17.10); regional mechanism to exchange information on WTO negotiations; monitoring implementation of the Global Goals in trade; overcoming obstacles to cross-border supply chains in Central Asia; regional and national studies on non-tariff barriers to trade, benefits from regional trade, the economic impact of WTO membership, and trade with major partners outside the region.

The PWG Work Plan includes the following projects:

TRADE DEVELOPMENT		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities will be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners could expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities		
Support the Government of Kazakhstan in assessing its readiness to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (UNECE, GIZ and UNCTAD funding)	2015-2016	US\$ 15,000
Capacity-building for the implementation of international agricultural quality standards in the Central Asian countries (UNDA project)	2016	appr. US\$ 10,000 (for Central Asia)
Regional brainstorming event and recommendations on regional trade and WTO rules-based trading system in the SPECA region (Ashgabat, spring 2016)	2016	US\$ 17,000
Tajikistan: Strengthening export competitiveness of SMEs in the textile and clothing sector and enhancing trade support institutional capacities (ITC)	2016	US\$ 750,000
Tajikistan: WTO Negotiations of Accession - Policy Advice and Capacity-building (ITC)	2016	US\$ 100,000
Kyrgyzstan: Strengthening export competitiveness of SMEs in the textile and clothing sector and enhancing trade support institutional capacity (ITC)	2016	US\$ 450,000
Regional study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade (SPECA countries need to request this project, so that UNECE can raise funds)	2016-2017	US\$ 60,000
Draft and adopt a regional trade facilitation strategy	2016-2017	US\$ 60,000
Study on removing impediments to cross-border supply chains in the SPECA region (SPECA countries need to request this project, so that UNECE can raise funds)	2016-2017	US\$ 100,000
Follow-up to studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	2016-2017	US\$ 60,000
Support the establishment of bilateral agreements on simplified advance information exchange on Customs transit (UNCTAD and UNECE, UNCTAD lead agency)	2016-2017	US\$ 757,030 (funding currently being raised)
Strengthening the capacity of SPECA countries to formulate projects to benefit from Aid for Trade (AfT) interventions (to be implemented in cooperation by UNECE, UNDP, and the Islamic Trade Finance Corporation)	2016	US\$ 2,000,000

STATISTICAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

Official statistics are essential tools for evidence-based policymaking, ensuring transparency and accountability in the process of economic, social and environmental reforms and enabling decision makers to formulate policies and to monitor and evaluate their deliveries.

Over the last 20 years, SPECA countries were confronted with the necessity, but also with the opportunity, for a rapid and complete transformation of their national statistical systems. Although official statistics in these countries have developed considerably, the broadening of the scope of traditional statistical measures to include emerging users' needs for integrated social, demographic, economic and environmental data will require further improvement of their organizational and technical capacities to collect, process and disseminate official statistics.

This will be achieved by promoting the exchange at subregional level of national good practices, undertaking benchmark studies and stimulating the establishment of an active network of experts. Advisory missions and training workshops will be conducted in response to specific request for assistance to improve the statistical capacity of SPECA countries in all relevant statistical areas, such as economic and business statistics, demographic and social statistics, gender statistics, migration statistics, environmental-economic accounting with major focus on water and energy accounts, and sustainable development indicators (Rio+20 initiative and 2030 Development Agenda).

The activities under the SPECA PWG on Statistics will strongly rely on findings and recommendations provided in recent global assessments reports of national statistical systems conducted jointly by the UNECE, Eurostat and EFTA. One of the major expected accomplishments is that countries systematically integrate these recommendations into their National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) developed by the World Bank, jointly with national statistical authorities and the UNECE. NSDS will serve as a framework for international and bilateral assistance and will be used to mobilise resources from various multilateral and bilateral partners, including the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building.

The major expected accomplishments of the 2016-2017 SPECA statistical programme of work will be to improve the efficiency of statistical production, increase the coverage and accuracy of statistical indicators, and enhance the capacity to disseminate statistical information using modern web-based technologies and software in order to collect and process baseline statistical data for the countries in the SPECA region as an input to the first annual SDG progress report.

Regular UNECE resources will be complemented by Development Account resources, as well as extrabudgetary funds. To ensure the effective delivery of the technical cooperation activities on statistics, UNECE with ESCAP will continue to forge partnerships with major international and bilateral partners in the subregion, in particular with the World Bank, CIS-STAT, Eurostat, EFTA, OECD, ESCAP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO and the IMF.

STATISTICAL CAPACITY-BUILDING		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in a mutually reinforcing manner. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Annual meetings of the SPECA PWG on Statistics	2016-2017	2 x US\$ 50,000 EFTA-ESO (expected)
Enhance coherence and integration of economic and social statistics in support of the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA)	2016-2018	US\$ 900,000 World Bank (ECASTAT) (expected for the whole project)
Strengthening national capacity in the most vulnerable UNECE countries for the sustainable development of statistics	2014-2017	US\$ 532,000 UNDA 9 th tranche (expected for the whole project)
Promoting equality: Strengthening the capacity of select developing countries to design and implement equality-oriented public policies and programmes	2015-2017	US\$ 100,000 UNDA 9 th tranche
On request, advisory services, training seminars and workshops	2016-2017	RPTC and XB (depending on availability of funds)
Strengthening statistical and inter-institutional capacities for monitoring the SDGs	2016-2017	US\$ 500,000 UNDA 10 th tranche
Increase the capacity for achieving the comparability and reliability of the poverty statistical indicators in transition to sustainable development indicators	2016-2017	US\$ 230,000 Russian Federation (expected)
Possible projects/activities in areas where UNECE/ESCAP have considerable experience and in-house expertise and which could be implemented if supported by interested donors/partners. These projects could be implemented in addition to and in coordination with projects/activities listed above.		
Capacity-building programme on adapting economic statistics to new prerequisites of the market economy, including implementation of the UN System of National Accounts 2008	2013-2016	US\$ 620,000 (full project)

KNOWLEDGE-BASED DEVELOPMENT

The activities to be carried out by the Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD) are demand-driven, focused on a limited number of priority topics and matched with available resources.

ACTIVITIES ENVISAGED FOR 2016-2017

Capacity-building in policy options and practical instruments to promote knowledge-based development

Objectives: To strengthen the national capacity of the SPECA countries to advance knowledge-based development by developing relevant substantive skills, increasing the organizational capacity of the institutions involved, promoting regional cooperation and fostering investment in modern infrastructure. Proposed activities:

- (i) Organization of a regional/subregional capacity-building event on knowledge-based development, possibly in conjunction with annual session of the PWG on KBD;
- (ii) Participation of experts from SPECA countries in UNECE policy-oriented meetings and capacity-building events on promoting knowledge-based development for policymakers and practitioners; and
- (iii) Policy advisory services and other events promoting knowledge-based development at the request of Governments of SPECA countries.

Implementation of the UNECE project on innovation performance reviews of selected countries

Objectives: To increase the role of innovation in promoting further economic development of the SPECA countries. Proposed activities: Undertaking Innovation Performance Reviews and supporting implementation of policy recommendations in selected countries of the SPECA region.

Implementation of ESCAP activities in support to the Asia-Pacific information superhighway initiative

Objectives: To strengthen the capacity of SPECA countries to contribute to regional discussions in the Working Group on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway. Proposed activities:

- (i) Participation of experts from SPECA countries in a regional capacity-building event on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway's principle and norms, in parallel to one of the sessions of the Working Group on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway;
- (ii) Development of a repository of cross-border infrastructure projects susceptible to host fiber optic cables co-deployment; and
- (iii) Preparation of a policy tool-kit on good practices in terms of co-deployment of fiber optic cables along other utilities infrastructure.

Enhancing national capacities to use ICT for socio-economic development

Objectives: To enhance the capacities of policymakers, government officials and other relevant stakeholders to promote, adopt and utilize ICT for achieving national sustainable development goals. Proposed activities:

- (i) Conduct capacity-building workshops on APCICT's flagship ICT for development programmes;
- (ii) Development of localized versions of the APCICT training modules, targeted at SPECA countries;
- (iii) Conduct subregional training-of-trainers workshops. These workshops aim to strengthen the pool of national resource persons capable of delivering the various training modules;

- (iv) Provide advisory services to SPECA countries in areas related to ICT for socio-economic development, subject to funding and resource availability; and
- (v) Conduct capacity-building workshops on the application of ICT tools for renewable energy resource assessments at the national level in SPECA countries, subject to funding and resource availability (APCTT).

Capacity development on the utilization of ICT for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

Objectives: Develop knowledge-based tools for disaster risk management, and build resilience into development policy and planning of SPECA countries. Proposed activities:

- (i) Assist SPECA countries to access cooperation mechanisms such as RESAP and RIMES;
- (ii) Conduct activities on measuring resilience;
- (iii) ESCAP provides continued support on DRR and climate change adaptation in the context of the Ministerial Regional Conference on disaster risk reduction; and
- (iv) Conduct APCICT workshops and TOTs on the use of social media in DRM subject to availability of funding.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED DEVELOPMENT		
Name of Project/Activity	Timeframe	Budget
Ongoing and planned projects/activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.		
Capacity-building in policy options and practical instruments to promote knowledge-based development	2016-2017	UNECE extrabudgetary funds
Implementation of the UNECE project on innovation performance reviews of selected countries	2016-2017	UNECE extrabudgetary funds
Implementation of ESCAP activities in support to the Asia-Pacific information superhighway initiative	2016-2017	Subject to the availability of ESCAP extrabudgetary funds
Enhancing national capacities to use ICT for socio-economic development	2016-2017	Funded by APCICT, ESCAP extrabudgetary funds to be mobilized
Capacity development on the utilization of ICT for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation	2016-2017	ESCAP extrabudgetary funds

GENDER AND ECONOMY

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2016-2017

Capacity-building

Building on the successful cooperation with the Centre for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre since 2006, training workshops in support of women entrepreneurship in Central Asia are expected to continue in 2016 and 2017.

Forum for Women Entrepreneurs

UNECE plans to hold a region-wide forum for women entrepreneurs in 2017. Women entrepreneurs from SPECA countries will be invited to actively participate.

Fundraising for new project activities

Funds are currently sought for two projects proposals outlined below which could be implemented in close collaboration with the Working Group in 2016-2017:

1. Strengthening institutional support for women entrepreneurs through business associations in SPECA countries

The proposed project would contribute to strengthening an enabling business environment for women entrepreneurs in the SPECA region through a capacity-building and networking programme. It would cover four subregional training workshops for women business associations in the SPECA region. These workshops would strengthen the capacity of women's business associations to: (1) advocate the needs of business women to policymakers, in particular on their role in a new model in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, and (2) provide business training and support services to women entrepreneurs in their respective countries.

2. Enhancing the capacity of governments in the SPECA region to mainstream gender in economic policies supporting the implementation of the SDGs

The project would develop and provide tailored gender trainings for economic policymakers on the implementation of gender-transformative policies. Special attention will be given to SDG 5 and how the achievement of gender equality could be enshrined into policy actions and programmes. While gender trainings have become more wide-spread across the region, they are often only offered on an ad hoc basis and provide general framework on women's participation in the policymaking process. In order to achieve gender-transformative policies, it is important to integrate gender trainings into existing training curricula for policymakers on a permanent basis. This project would address this challenge in three steps: first, by developing a training module which is tailored to the practical needs of economic policymakers on the achievement of SDG 5; second, by delivering trainings to government trainers to use the module, who would then, in a third step, train economic policymakers to formulate and implement gender-transformative policies.

GENDER AND ECONOMY	
Name of Activity	Timeframe
Ongoing and planned activities with funding secured or expected. These activities would be implemented in mutually reinforcing way. Additional support from interested partners would expand the scope and the number of beneficiaries of these projects/activities.	
Training workshops on support systems for women in small business in Haifa, Israel to strengthen the business environment for women's entrepreneurship in Central Asia	2016 - 2017
Two training workshops on the use of information and communication technologies targeted at women entrepreneurs in Central Asia	2016 - 2017
Region-wide Women's Entrepreneurship Forum	2017
