



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

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SPECA WORKING GROUP ON WATER, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

I. PREAMBLE

1. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was established by the Tashkent Declaration on 26 March 1998. The SPECA participating countries 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 (ESCAP) provide overall support to the Programme.

2. The Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment¹ (further referred to as Working Group) is a subsidiary body of the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

3. The Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment was set up in compliance with the Tashkent Declaration on 26 March 1998. The Declaration recognized the rational and efficient use of energy and water resources in Central Asia as a priority area for cooperation under SPECA.

4. At the 10th session of the SPECA Governing Council (Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 11 November 2015) representatives of the SPECA participating countries adopted a Declaration reiterating their commitment to the Programme as a platform for promoting cooperation in the SPECA subregion and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

II. OBJECTIVES

5. In line with the overall objectives of SPECA to facilitate economic cooperation in the SPECA subregion as well as integration of the SPECA participating countries into the world economy for their attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and previous decisions of the Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment the Working Group shall, within its area of purview:

- (a) Provide a platform for supporting progress on strategic issues related to water, energy and environment, and towards achieving the respective SDGs with a focus on the SDGs (including, but not limited to SDG 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy);
- (b) Aim at improving awareness of SPECA countries on the water-, energy- and environment-related SDGs, provide information and share best practice experiences with regard to the implementation of these SDGs, taking into account interlinkages between the SDGs. Promote consideration of energy and water cooperation

¹ The SPECA Governing Council at its 10th session on 11 November 2015 decided to rename the SPECA Project Working Group on Water, and Energy Resources into the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy, and Environment.

opportunities and intersectoral and transboundary impacts in the SDG implementation and related action plans;

- (c) Promote compliance with relevant international legal instruments (to which the countries are Parties), norms, guidelines, standards and recommendations in the fields of competence of the Working Group;
- (d) Act as a platform for identification, development, support and coordination of technical programmes and projects within the scope of Working Group competence thereby building capacity, promoting best practices and strengthening mutual trust at political level among the SPECA participating countries;
- (e) Identify, in consultation with its participating countries, their priorities and emerging issues, and consult on regional approaches, taking into consideration subregional aspects;
- (f) Promote dialogue among its participating countries, including subregional synergies, and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes;
- (g) Monitor the implementation of the decisions of the Governing Council; and
- (h) Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges of the SPECA subregion, where appropriate, between Governments and civil society, the private sector, as well as the United Nations and other international organizations.

III. PARTICIPANTS

6. The Working Group shall comprise National Representatives from the water management, energy and environment sectors, as well as Focal points², nominated by the Governments of the SPECA participating countries. The two United Nations Regional Commissions shall nominate the Secretaries to the Working Group to provide support to the activities of the Group. Each participating country shall nominate, on a permanent or on an ad hoc basis, experts on various aspects of water, energy and environment management as required.

7. The National Representatives shall be senior officials involved in or aware of the formulation and implementation of national policies and programmes, which affect national policies related to water management, energy and environment sectors in their respective countries and able to effectively follow up the recommendations and decisions of the Working Group.

8. Governments of the SPECA countries shall nominate a focal point for the Working Group to ensure successful delivery of programmes of work of the Working Group. The focal point is responsible for coordinating work at the national level within the Terms of Reference of the Working Group and for providing assistance to the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats.

9. Relevant subregional organizations implementing programmes on water and energy resources management and environment are invited to nominate their representatives to participate as observers in the work of the Working Group.

10. Representatives of neighbouring countries are invited to nominate their representatives to

² Countries may decide to nominate Focal points from the nominated National Representatives or an additional official from any government entity.

participate as observers in the work of the Working Group, especially when issues concerning cooperation with neighbouring regions are discussed.

11. Other United Nations bodies as well as international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, and donors operating in the water management, energy and environment sectors in SPECA countries are invited to participate in the work of the Working Group as observers and to nominate liaison officers on matters related to its work.

IV. MODALITIES OF OPERATION

12. The Working Group is chaired by at least one SPECA country.

13. The Working Group develops and agrees upon its Terms of Reference and submits them to the Governing Council for adoption.

14. The two United Nations Regional Commissions shall provide substantive support to the Working Group by:

- (i) Providing expertise as well as assistance to activities implemented by the Working Group; and
- (ii) Providing secretariat support to the preparation and organization of sessions and meetings of the Working Group, including preparation of documents and studies as well as maintenance of records.

15. The Working Group shall hold annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries any time before or concurrent to the annual sessions of the SPECA Governing Council. There are also the options to hold additional meetings with a specific focus and with the possibility to hold them as virtual meetings.

16. The Working Group shall draw important policy issues to the attention of the SPECA Governing Council.

17. The working languages of SPECA are Russian and English.

V. FUNDING

18. The UNECE and the ESCAP shall support, within their available resources, the functioning of the Working Group.

19. The operational costs of the Working Group including the costs of participation of its members in the Working Group's sessions and meetings shall be borne, if possible, by the Governments of the SPECA participating countries.

20. The Working Group shall also seek funds and technical assistance for its operations from multilateral and bilateral donors for the implementation of projects falling within the scope of the approved work programmes.

VI. PROGRAMME OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES

21. The Working Group shall develop, agree upon and after adoption by the Governing Council

implement its biennial work programmes which are integrated into SPECA work plans.

22. The Working Group shall prepare its annual reports to the Governing Council sessions on progress made in their implementation.

23. The Working Group with support of the UNECE and ESCAP shall formulate and agree upon specific projects and programmes and seek extrabudgetary resources for their implementation.

VII. OTHER MATTERS

24. The current Terms of Reference shall be reviewed in 5 years or sooner if the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment so decides.

25. These Terms of Reference were adopted by the SPECA Governing Council on 21 November 2019.
