



Second Session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development

(Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 9 November 2008)

REPORT

The second session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD), jointly organized by UNECE and ESCAP and hosted by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, was held on 9 November 2009 in Bishkek. In conjunction with the session, a Regional Capacity-building Seminar on Financing Innovative Enterprises, Commercialization of Intellectual Property and Public-Private Partnerships was also organized by UNECE in cooperation with ESCAP in Bishkek on 10-11 November 2009. Also related to that, the UNECE organized in cooperation with the Intellectual Property Office of the Kyrgyz Republic and the United States Patent and Trademark Office a Seminar on the Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights, which took place on 11 November 2009 in Bishkek.

Representatives of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan participated in the session along with representatives of UNECE and ESCAP.

Opening session

Mr. Turuspek Koenaliev, Deputy Director, Intellectual Property Office of the Kyrgyz Republic welcomed the representatives from SPECA member countries participating in the session. He highlighted the importance of the knowledge-based sector's activities for economic development and expressed appreciation to UNECE and ESCAP for the support extended to the PWG on KBD within the SPECA framework.

Mr. Andrey Vasilyev, Director, UNECE Economic Cooperation and Integration Division, expressed appreciation to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for hosting this important event. He addressed the fact that the UNECE Economic Cooperation and Integration Division is committed to support the PWG by providing secretariat support, contributing capacity-building of senior policymakers in areas such as ICT for development, innovation and competitiveness policies, financing innovative development, commercialization and protection of intellectual property rights and public-private partnerships.

Mr. Xuan Zengpei, Director, ESCAP Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division, in his speech expressed appreciation to the host Government and UNECE for taking the lead in organizing this important event. He

expressed continued support from ESCAP to the PWG under its mandates on ICT and disaster risk reduction.

Election of officers and adoption of the agenda

Mr. Andrey Vasilyev recalled that Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan were elected as Co-Chairs of the Group at the inauguration session of the PWG on KBD, held in Baku on 12 November 2008. The inauguration session of the PWG on KBD was chaired by the representative of Azerbaijan. Mr. Vasilyev, therefore, suggested that the representative of Kyrgyzstan chair the second session of the PWG on KBD.

The PWG endorsed the Chairmanship of Kyrgyzstan and elected Mr. Akylbek Aidraliev, Head, Electronic Government System Introducing Division, Prime Minister Office, as Chairperson of the second session of the PWG on KBD.

In taking his functions as Chairperson, Mr. Aidraliev introduced the annotated provisional agenda, which had been circulated to the participants in advance of the meeting, and asked if delegations had any amendment. In absence thereof, the Chairperson invited the Project Working Group to adopt the agenda.

Decision: The PWG on KBD adopted the agenda for its second session.

Substantive Segment

Review of programme implementation in 2009

Ms. Michiko Enomoto, UNECE Secretary to the PWG on KBD, and Mr. Xuan Zengpei reported on activities carried out within the framework of the Programme of Work of the PWG on KBD for 2009.

As proposed by the Chairperson, comments made by delegates on the activities of the PWG on KBD are reflected in the text of the following decisions:

Decisions:

- 1. The PWG took note of the report on the activities carried out within the framework of the Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development in 2009. It acknowledged with satisfaction the usefulness of the work accomplished in the period.**
- 2. Delegates agreed that the PWG on KBD is a useful forum for exchange of experiences and best practices, as well as capacity-building in such areas as ICT for development, economic competitiveness and innovative development, attracting financial resources in support of innovative sectors of economy, commercialization and protection of intellectual property rights and public-private partnerships, and supported further work in these areas.**

Adoption of the Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2010-2011

Mr. Andrey Vasilyev and Mr. Xuan Zengpei made proposals on the possible structuring of the Programme of Work of the PWG on KBD for 2010-2011 and on activities to be included in the Programme of Work.

The Chairperson invited country representatives to provide comments and feedbacks on the Programme of Work of the PWG on KBD.

All country delegates considered that the proposed Programme of Work is highly relevant to the needs of their countries, and supported the activities listed in the Programme of Work for 2010-2011.

In addition, delegates from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan noted that the PWG on KBD could become a useful instrument for disseminating relevant national information on innovation performance and knowledge-based development.

Furthermore, a delegate from Azerbaijan highlighted the fact that there are already a number of studies/information related to innovative development conducted by academic and research institutions in his country as well as in other SPECA member countries. However, these studies/information are not utilized widely, therefore, they could be better shared among SPECA member countries and beyond. He considered that regional cooperation through the PWG on KBD could provide a further boost to national efforts in this area. He also added in this regard that countries could also cooperate in publishing a joint newsletter with relevant up-to-date information on national and regional innovation activities and practices.

This suggestion was supported by a delegate from Uzbekistan. He further suggested that countries could cooperate in exchanging and sharing existing national information on innovative projects as well as other related information through the PWG on KBD. This information sharing process could be facilitated further if it could be linked through a common platform, to be eventually developed into a regional database on innovative projects.

A delegate from Kazakhstan informed that her country organizes the annual Astana Economic Forum, a high-level event, in which UNECE has been providing expertise in organizing sessions that are highly relevant to the thematic orientation of the PWG on KBD. She encouraged the participation of interested policymakers and experts from SPECA member countries in this event in the context of regional cooperation in the exchange of information and good practices through the PWG on KBD.

A delegate from Kyrgyzstan underscored the importance of commercialization of intellectual property for Kyrgyzstan and requested to explore the possibilities for future technical assistance on this issue within the framework of the PWG on KBD, in particular, as regards the organization of a technology transfer office in Kyrgyzstan. Another delegate from Kyrgyzstan enquired whether SPECA member countries can receive information related to the work of the PWG on KBD (such as newsletters and others), being translated

into the languages of the SPECA member countries. He suggested that local academic institution and NGO could be invited by the Government to provide support for such translation.

Mr. Andrey Vasilyev highlighted the fact that the UNECE Information Exchange Platform, web-based secure tool, has been developed and already made available to delegates for the purpose of facilitating information sharing, networking of the policymakers and experts working in the field of knowledge-based development. He informed that more than 1000 policymakers and experts from UNECE member States are already using the tool, and encouraged the delegates to be part of the network and subscribe the Information Exchange Platform. He welcomed delegates to place national information, databases on innovative projects and other relevant information to the PWG on KBD to the Information Exchange Platform.

Mr. Zengpei introduced to the meeting the ESCAP Training Center "Asian and Pacific Training Center for Information and Communication Technology for Development" (APCICT) with the funding support of the Government of the Republic of Korea. He especially highlighted the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders and its modules. Mr. Zengpei briefed the session on the APCICT activities to roll out the Academy in Central Asia, including those in Tajikistan, October 2009, and Kyrgyzstan, October-November 2009. Many participants showed great interest in the APCICT work and one participant from Kyrgyzstan enquired if ESCAP or UNECE could provide funding support to translation of the Academy into the Kyrgyz language for the purpose of extending the service in the rural areas.

Mr. Vasilyev and Mr. Zengpei explained that the secretariat of the Regional Commissions is not in a position to provide information in the Central Asian languages due to the fact that they are not the United Nations' official languages. However, the SPECA member countries are welcomed to post information in local languages to the Information Exchange Platform. SPECA member countries could also support the dissemination of information in local languages by mobilizing local institutions and NGOs to translate relevant documents and other information shared through the Group.

Decisions:

- 1. The PWG took note of the presentation made by UNECE and ESCAP on possible future PWG activities to be supported by the two Regional Commissions for the period of 2010 and 2011. It noted with appreciation the high relevance of the proposed activities to the knowledge-based development of the SPECA member countries.**
- 2. The PWG adopted the Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2010-2011. It agreed that the details of the envisaged activities in the Programme of Work could be further elaborated in consultations with the host countries of the future activities.**
- 3. The PWG noted with interest the proposals made by the representatives of SPECA member countries and invited secretariat of UNECE and ESCAP to take them into account during the implementation of the Programme of Work.**

4. The PWG noted the importance of partnerships with all national and international stakeholders. In this regard, it recommended that national representatives actively involve relevant national stakeholders in the PWG activities. It recommended that host countries of the future activities of the PWG encourage representatives of international and regional organizations, in particular those present in the host countries to participate in such activities, in support to the invitations extended by UNECE and ESCAP.

Network of SPECA Policymakers on Knowledge-based Development

Ms. Michiko Enomoto reported on the establishment of a Network of SPECA Policymakers on Knowledge-based Development and on the available web-based tool in facilitating the networking of its members. Ms. Enomoto commented the cooperation of Azerbaijan in nominating experts in every thematic area, which the PWG on KBD is covering. She requested further cooperation from other countries to nominate additional policymakers and experts to be included the Network of SPECA Policymakers on Knowledge-based Development. Mr. Tony Bonnici, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE Economic cooperation and Integration Division, presented a demonstration of the UNECE Information Exchange Platform and its functions. Please refer to the previous section of this report (adoption of the Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2010-2011) which contains discussed points on the Information Exchange Platform.

The Chairperson underscored the importance of enriching the established Network and requested delegates to provide further nominations to the UNECE secretariat.

Decision:

The PWG took note of the efforts made towards the establishment of a Network of SPECA Policymakers on Knowledge-based Development (KBD) and of available web-based tool developed by UNECE in facilitating the networking of its members. It agreed that more efficient networking among policymakers in the region could facilitate the future activities of the PWG and promote knowledge-based development in the SPECA member countries. It recommended that national representatives of the PWG provide additional contact details of policymakers and experts to be included in the Network of SPECA Policymakers on KBD.

Date and venue for the third session of the SPECA PWG on KBD

The representative of Kazakhstan announced that her country is exploring the possibility to host the third session of the PWG in Astana in conjunction with 2010 Astana Economic Forum. This would need to be confirmed formally by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in due course. The announcement was met with interest by all delegates.

The Chairperson then recalled the recommendation of the PWG of its first session that “national representatives of the PWG submit names and contact details of national focal points to the UNECE and ESCAP to facilitate future communications”. He invited countries that have not yet done so to inform UNECE and ESCAP on the national focal

points to facilitate organization of the third session and other capacity-building activities under the Programme of Work of the PWG on KBD.

Decisions:

- 1. The PWG agreed to hold the third session of the SPECA PWG on KBD tentatively in Astana and in conjunction with 2010 Astana Economic Forum (subject to formal confirmation of the offer by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan).**
- 2. The PWG recalled the recommendation of the first session that “national representatives of the PWG submit names and contact details of national focal points to the UNECE and ESCAP to facilitate future communications” and invited countries that have not yet done so, to inform UNECE and ESCAP on the national focal points.**

Closing session

The Chairperson expressed satisfaction with the achievements that the PWG on KBD made during the second session, and encouraged the members of the PWG for further good works in implementing forthcoming project activities. The Chairperson and other delegates of the session expressed appreciation to the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats for successful preparation and organization of the second session.

Mr. Andrey Vasilyev and Mr. Xuan Zengpei expressed gratitude to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for hosting this important event and the hospitality extended to its participants. They also expressed sincere appreciation to all delegates from SPECA member countries for their active participation and cooperation which made this event successful.

Conclusion:

The PWG expressed its appreciation to the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats for organizing the second session of the SPECA PWG on KBD and to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for hosting this important event and the hospitality extended to its participants.

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ANNEX I

PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE SPECA PWG on KBD FOR 2010-2011

Background

The Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (PWG on KBD) supports capacity-building activities of its member countries in the following thematic areas: (i) ICT for development; (ii) promoting innovation and innovative development; (iii) supporting knowledge-based competitiveness; (iv) financing ICT infrastructure and innovative development; (v) commercialization and protection of intellectual property; and (vi) private-public partnerships.

The activities to be carried out by the PWG on KBD are demand-driven, focused on a limited number of priority topics and matched with available resources.

ACTIVITIES ENVISAGED FOR 2010-2011

1. Capacity-building in policy options and practical instruments for promoting knowledge-based development

Objectives

To strengthen the national capacity of the SPECA member countries to advance knowledge-based development by developing relevant substantive skills and increasing the organizational capacity of the institutions involved.

Rationale

The project is in line with the objectives of the PWG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Implementation will be financed from the UNECE extrabudgetary funds.

Proposed activities

- (i) Regional/subregional capacity-building seminar on knowledge-based development with a focus on financing of innovative enterprises and commercialization of intellectual property, possibly in conjunction with annual session of the PWG on KBD (tentatively envisaged for 2011);
- (ii) Participation of SPECA experts in the UNECE capacity-building meetings and seminars on promoting knowledge-based development for policymakers and practitioners (UNECE region); and

- (iii) Participation of SPECA experts in UNECE policy-oriented meetings, expert seminars and capacity-building activities on promoting knowledge-based development (Geneva, Switzerland and other locations).

2. Capacity-building on ICT applications for disaster management

Objectives

To strengthen the national capacity of SPECA member countries in the use of ICT including space-based tools and access to the relevant information and technical resources for effective disaster risk reduction and management.

Rationale

Disaster reduction is a major concern against sustainable development. Effective disaster reduction depends on, among others, the capacity to manage the relevant information and knowledge. This project is in line with the objective of the PWG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Project implementation will be financed by the extrabudgetary resources of ESCAP.

Proposed activities for 2010-2011

- (i) Subregional capacity-building activities of SPECA member countries on ICT applications for knowledge-based disaster reduction and management; and
- (ii) Participation of experts from the SPECA member countries in meetings, seminars and capacity-building activities on ICT applications for disaster management (ESCAP region).

3. Capacity-building on ICT policy for promoting innovation-based competitiveness and facilitating eCommerce

Objectives

To empower senior decision makers with relevant ICT policy in promoting innovation-based competitiveness and eCommerce development.

Rationale

The project is in line with the objectives of the PWG on KBD as specified in its Terms of Reference. Implementation will be financed from the UNECE extrabudgetary funds.

Proposed activities for 2010-2011

Regional/subregional capacity-building event on ICT policy and regulatory framework for promoting innovation-based competitiveness and facilitating e-commerce (upon request, tentatively envisaged for 2010).

4. ICT policies and applications to achieve MDGs and WSIS goals

Objectives

- (i) To enhance knowledge of senior decision makers of the SPECA member countries with the best practices for promoting ICT policies and applications, and thereby empower them for better achievement of the MDGs and WSIS goals; and
- (ii) To facilitate expansion of ICT access in the under-serviced areas of the LLDC, taking into account the new and emerging ICT applications.

Rationale

The project will support the objectives of the PWG on KBD in the areas of ICT for development, financing ICT infrastructure and innovative development, and public-private partnerships. Project implementation will be financed by the extrabudgetary resources of ESCAP.

Proposed activities for 2010-2011

- (i) After a subregional workshop in October 2009, selected decision makers on ICT policy will be invited to participate in the follow-up discussions and interactions with their counterparts from other subregions, so that they are able to gain knowledge on application and implementation of the emerging technologies for socio-economic development (tentatively scheduled for 2010); and
- (ii) A concluding regional workshop (tentatively scheduled for 2011).

5. Capacity-building on APCICT Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders - National Roll-Outs and the APCICT Virtual Academy

Objectives

To equip policymakers, trainers and project managers with the essential ICT knowledge and skills to fully leverage opportunities presented by ICT to achieve national development goals and bridge the digital divide.

Rationale

The project is in line with the objectives of the PWG on KBD. The Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders (Academy) has been translated into Russian and there is strong demand from the SPECA member countries in using the Academy in their own ICT capacity-building activities. Afghanistan has already started the national roll-out in May 2009 and plans are in place to organize other Academy workshops until 2010. Another organization that has shown great interest in using the Academy for its own capacity-building efforts is the Central Asian Research and Education Network (CAREN). CAREN covers five SPECA member countries. Project implementation will be financed by

the extrabudgetary resources of ESCAP provided to APCICT, as well as by its regional and national partners.

Proposed activities for 2010-2011

- (i) Regional/subregional capacity-building events covering the Russian version of the eight Academy modules. This will be used as training of trainers (TOT) events to build a pool of competent resource persons who will serve as trainers/lecturers in their own countries;
- (ii) National Academy in SPECA member countries. This will be organized by the regional and national partners in SPECA member countries in collaboration with ESCAP/APCICT; and
- (iii) Development and use of the Russian version of the APCICT Virtual Academy.

6. Inter-regional cooperation project on capacity-building in multi-hazard disaster management and socio-economic assessment of disaster impacts

Objective

To make countries of the region of Central Asia more resilient to natural and man-made disasters through capacity-building in disaster damage, loss and need assessment.

Rationale

The project will respond the objective of the PWG on KBD in the area of ICT for development. Implementation will be undertaken jointly by ESCAP and ECLAC, with financial support from the World Bank.

Proposed activities for 2010-2011

SPECA member countries which are considered most vulnerable to and less institutionally-prepared for disasters will participate in future activities on the adaptation of the ECLAC Disaster Damage and Loss Assessment (DALA) methodology for estimating socio-economic and environmental effects of disasters in the subregion.

SUMMARY TABLE

Area of Activity	Lead Executive Agency	Timeframe
Capacity-building in policy options and practical instruments for promoting knowledge-based development	UNECE	2010-2011
Capacity-building on ICT applications for disaster management	ESCAP	2010-2011
Capacity-building on ICT policy for promoting innovation-based competitiveness and facilitating eCommerce	UNECE	2010-2011
ICT policies and applications to achieve MDGs and WSIS goals	ESCAP	2010-2011
Capacity-building on APCICT Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders - National Roll-Outs, and the APCICT Virtual Academy	ESCAP	2010
Inter-regional cooperation project on capacity-building in multi-hazard disaster management and socio-economic assessment of disaster impacts	ESCAP	2010

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ANNEX II

DECISIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE SPECA PWG ON KBD

1. The PWG took note of the report on the activities carried out within the framework of the Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development in 2009. It acknowledged with satisfaction the usefulness of the work accomplished in the period.
2. Delegates agreed that the PWG on KBD is a useful forum for exchange of experiences and best practices, as well as capacity-building in such areas as ICT for development, economic competitiveness and innovative development, attracting financial resources in support of innovative sectors of economy, commercialization and protection of intellectual property rights and public-private partnerships, and supported further work in these areas.
3. The PWG took note of the presentation made by UNECE and ESCAP on possible future PWG activities to be supported by the two Regional Commissions for the period of 2010 and 2011. It noted with appreciation the high relevance of the proposed activities to the knowledge-based development of the SPECA member countries.
4. The PWG adopted the Programme of Work of the SPECA PWG on KBD for 2010-2011. It agreed that the details of the envisaged activities in the Programme of Work could be further elaborated in consultations with the host countries of the future activities.
5. The PWG noted with interest the proposals made by the representatives of SPECA member countries and invited secretariat of UNECE and ESCAP to take them into account during the implementation of the Programme of Work.
6. The PWG noted the importance of partnerships with all national and international stakeholders. In this regard, it recommended that national representatives actively involve relevant national stakeholders in the PWG activities. It recommended that host countries of the future activities of the PWG encourage representatives of international and regional organizations, in particular those present in the host countries to participate in such activities, in support to the invitations extended by UNECE and ESCAP.
7. The PWG took note of the efforts made towards the establishment of a Network of SPECA Policymakers on Knowledge-based Development and of available web-based tool developed by UNECE in facilitating the networking of its members. It agreed that more efficient networking among policymakers in the region could facilitate the future activities of the PWG and promote knowledge-based development in the SPECA member countries. It recommended that national representatives of the PWG provide additional proposals and contact details of policymakers and experts to be included in the Network of SPECA Policymakers on KBD.

8. The PWG agreed to hold the third session of the SPECA PWG on KBD tentatively in Astana and in conjunction with 2010 Astana Economic Forum (subject to formal confirmation of the offer by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

9. The PWG recalled the recommendation of the first session that “national representatives of the PWG submit names and contact details of national focal points to the UNECE and ESCAP to facilitate future communications” and invited countries that have not yet done so, to inform UNECE and ESCAP on the national focal points.

10. The PWG expressed its appreciation to UNECE and ESCAP for organizing the second session of the SPECA PWG on KBD and to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for hosting this important event and hospitality extended to its participants.

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