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### Economic Commission for Europe

#### Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

##### First session

31 August-2 September 2015

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

##### Programme of work

### Inter-sessional implementation plan for the programme of work

#### *Summary*

This document provides the implementation plan for activities covered by the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, which will be undertaken between the 2015 and 2016 annual sessions.

The document covers activities under the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7), including meetings and technical assistance projects. It also covers activities associated with the demand-driven studies (financed by extra budgetary resources), which identify regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in countries with economies in transition.

Delegates are invited to consider the document for approval.

## I. Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP. 6)

1. The secretariat of WP.6 will be organizing its twenty-fifth annual meeting on 2-3 December 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. It will be also organizing the WP.6 annual bureau meeting in May 2016 and the annual meeting of the ad hoc team of specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START) during the second half of 2016 in Prague.

2. The START team meeting will bring together participants from the four sectoral initiatives (Telecom, Earth-Moving Machinery, Equipment for Explosive Environments and Pipeline Security) for revising the "International Model for Technical Harmonization Based on Good Regulatory Practice" adopted in 2001 as Recommendation L.

3. In addition, the secretariat will organize webinars to advance the work of the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) team, the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS) and the Group of Experts on Risk Management (GRM). Planned webinars for the period between the Steering Committee's 2015 and 2016 annual meetings are provided below.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Participants</i>
<b>DRR</b>		
2 webinars (February and March 2016)	To be organized in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), in order to promote the integration of international standards on disaster risk assessment into national regulations. <sup>1</sup>	UNISDR, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee on Societal Security (ISO/TC 223) and members of the GRM team.
<b>MARS</b>		
2 webinars (March and April 2016)	To promote an integrated coherent approach to market surveillance based on best practices and international standards, with a special emphasis on best practices for countering sub-standard and counterfeit goods.	Market Surveillance authorities from UNECE member States.
<b>GRM</b>		
3 webinars (February, May and June 2016)	To develop guidance and best practices on establishing regulatory frameworks for addressing the risks that confront consumers, citizens and communities. <sup>2</sup>	Experts list as of May 2014: <a href="http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/wp6/AreasOfWork/RiskManagement/ListOfMembers_May2014.pdf">http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/wp6/AreasOfWork/RiskManagement/ListOfMembers_May2014.pdf</a>

4. The secretariat of WP.6 will organize a joint conference with International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and ISO on "Using and Referencing ISO and IEC

<sup>1</sup> Recent activities in this area have involved the organisation of the "Standards for DRR" session at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan (<http://www.wcdr.org/conference/events/885>) and the publication "Resilience to disasters for sustainable development" gathering the work of UNECE different divisions on DRR into a consolidated toolkit for policy makers and regulators.

<sup>2</sup> The group adopted 2 recommendations: "Managing Risk in Regulatory Frameworks" (Recommendation "R") and "Crisis Management within a Regulatory Framework" (Recommendation "P"). In 2012, the GRM published a book "Risk Management in Regulatory Frameworks".

Standards to Support Public Policy" on 2-3 November 2015. The conference will feature a training workshop on referencing standards in regulations and the use of standards for supporting the successful implementation of commitments at the global level (e.g. sustainability, resilience and development goals).

5. Moreover, in its capacity as a permanent observer at the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), the secretariat of WP.6 will participate in all the meetings of the WTO TBT to update the Committee on activities by the Working Party and the emerging needs of UNECE member States with transition and developing economies.

6. The secretariat will also participate at the World Standards Cooperation (WSC) workshop, which will be held on 1-2 December 2015 to address topical issues in the area of conformity assessment (CA) such as product safety, performance, energy efficiency, fake and counterfeit products. It will also participate at the fifteenth annual meeting of the Network on Metrology, Accreditation and Standardization for Developing Countries (DCMAS), which will feature training on topical issues for relevant agencies from least developed countries.

7. In addition, the secretariat will participate at the 48th annual meeting of Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification (EASC), scheduled to be held during the second half of 2016. These meetings consider a range of issues in the following areas: development work on technical regulation, standardization, metrology assurance, conformity assessment and accreditation taking into account International and European experience, application of modern information technology during regional standardization work, exchange of information and normative documents between international organizations and national bodies of EASC members, interaction with international and regional organizations in the field of technical regulation, standardization, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation.

## II. Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP. 7)

8. The secretariat of WP.7 will be organizing its seventy first session on 2-4 November 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. The session will feature a conference on "Traceability of Agricultural Produce/Food", which will be held on 3 November 2015.

9. The secretariat will be also organizing 5 meetings between the Steering Committee's 2015 and 2016 annual meetings, in order to support the development of agricultural quality standards. The list of meetings is provided below.

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Specialized Section on Meat with 28 September Seminar on "public meets/meats private - private food safety certification and public international standards"	28-30 September 2015
Specialized Section on Seed Potatoes	29 Feb to 2 March 2016
Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables	18 - 21 April 2016
Specialized Section on Dry and Dried Produce	23 - 26 May 2016
Specialized Section on Meat	27-29 June 2016

10. In addition, the secretariat is working with experts to finalize an Explanatory Brochure on persimmons. The brochure will be published in English, French and Russian by the end of 2015.

11. Planned technical assistance activities will be undertaken within the context of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) funded project “Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains”, which was launched in September 2014 and is being implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

12. The project, which ends in December 2016, targets countries with economies in transition and developing countries from Western Balkan, Central Asia, South Asia and South East Asia, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the selected target countries to improve the planning, management and regulation of cross border agricultural food supply chains as a prerequisite for enhancing competitiveness and improving food security conditions.

13. The project involves strengthening national capacities in the target countries to use international best practices, tools and instruments in developing integrated strategies for enhanced cross-border agri-food trade. In so doing, it puts decision makers and practitioners in an advantageous position to increase exports through better governance, increased business opportunities, and regulatory compliance, including through the use of electronic information exchange, enhanced and simplified processes and improved quality of agricultural produce.

14. The targeted countries were selected following a demand-driven approach, with a priority for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in these sub-regions. Listed by sub-region, the selected countries include:

- Western Balkan countries<sup>3</sup>: Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as well as Kosovo<sup>4</sup>.
- Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.
- South Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
- South East Asia: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (the), Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines (the), Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam with a priority for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in these sub-regions.

15. Activities target line ministries, government agencies (food inspectorates, customs authorities) as well as private agri-food trade associations grouping rural producers and intermediaries of agricultural products, logistics operators, single window and paperless trade service entities. They combine the development of training and guidance materials with capacity-building events (learning and practical training on gap-and business process analysis; implementation and use of tools). New material will focus on helping countries assess the shortcomings of their agricultural supply chains as well as on recent advancements in regulatory best practice to manage risk in agricultural trade. Currently, there is no dedicated training material in the areas of agricultural quality standards, risk management in agri-trade and conformity certificates for countries looking into simplifying

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<sup>3</sup> Collaboration with neighbouring countries, Bulgaria and Croatia, is envisaged during the sub-regional workshops.

<sup>4</sup> Reference to Kosovo is to be understood in the context of the UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

processes and improving the quality and volume of their agricultural exports. Case studies, business process analyses and implementation action plans will be developed for one pilot country per sub-region. The workshops will be held on sub-regional levels to foster the peer-to-peer approach for the exchange of best practice and learning among policy-makers and sub-regions.

16. In implementing these activities, UNECE will also collaborate with other relevant organizations, including the United Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNDP, World Trade Organization (WTO), International Trade Center (ITC), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), OECD, APEC as well as bilateral donor and technical assistance agencies. In addition, UNECE will connect and establish sub-regional, regional and international networks of experts (with among others, the support of the United Nations Network for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT) platform) to ensure continuity beyond the project's life-cycle. Planned activities for the period between the Steering Committee's 2015 and 2016 annual meetings are provided below.

#### 2015

- Sub-regional workshop for Central Asian countries on “Agri-Food Supply Chains in Cross-Border Trade of Nuts and Dried Fruit Quality, Food Safety, Business Processes and Markets”, Izmir, Turkey, 1-3 July 2015.

#### 2016

- 1 sub-regional for the Western Balkan countries on Agri-food supply chains in cross-border trade of fresh fruit and vegetables (venue and date to be decided)
- 1 sub-workshop organized by UNESCAP for targeted countries from Central Asia (venue and date to be decided)
- 1 Regional workshop on agri-food supply chains (target countries, venue and date to be decided)

### III. Studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade

17. The secretariat is preparing for undertaking two national studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade on Albania and the Republic of Moldova, using the UNECE Evaluation Methodology.<sup>5</sup> The first study is being carried out using regular budget resources, while the second will be financed by the Swiss Government.

18. The studies will provide a systemic analysis of regulatory and administrative barriers to trade in the country, along with an in-depth analysis of trade in agricultural products with high export potential. They will also highlight the consequences of these barriers for the two countries' export competitiveness and regional integration.

19. Follow-up on completed studies will involve assisting the Governments of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan implement the recommendations emerging from the national studies, within the context of a technical assistance project titled “Removing Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan”.

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<sup>5</sup> The studies were launched pursuant to the Albanian Government's request to the secretariat dated 15 July 2014 and the Government of the Republic of Moldova's request dated September 2014.

20. The Russian Federation has expressed interest in supporting this project. Subject to the approval of the UNECE Executive Committee will be implemented over the period 1 August 2015 – 31 July 2017 in cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UNNExT, and will involve:

- Development of technical specifications for further simplification and harmonization of trade data and documentary requirements in Belarus (English and Russian).
- Development of national quality control and quality assurance policy and implementation plan with corresponding legislation to support Tajikistan's trade development efforts (English and Russian).
- Development of National Trade Facilitation Road Map for supporting Kazakhstan's trade development efforts (English and Russian).
- Development of National Trade Facilitation Road Map for supporting Kyrgyzstan trade development efforts (English and Russian).
- Organization of validation workshops of the policy papers in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan
- Organization of roundtables on removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in Geneva, Switzerland as part of the annual session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards.

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