



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRADE/2002/3
6 March 2002

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT
Sixth session 28-31 May 2002
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

REPORT ON “MULTIPLIER POINTS”

**Establishment and management of the network of
“multiplier points”/national focal points**

This document is issued for the information of participants.

1. Description

1. At its third session in 1999, the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development decided to take concrete steps to facilitate the dissemination of information on its recommendations, norms and guidelines at the national and regional levels (ECE/TRADE/231, para. 69). The establishment of a network of “multiplier points”, covering governmental and non-governmental organizations and trade associations, which would receive regular updates on the Committee’s work and publicize and distribute them, was one of the actions approved.

2. The multiplier points (national focal points) promote, distribute and translate the Committee’s recommendations, norms, guidelines, documents and other sources of information on its work for the benefit of many potential beneficiaries in member States, especially in those with economies in transition. The preferred clients are the local, regional and national governmental organizations responsible for developing a climate that encourages trade, industry and enterprise development, the business world, including start-ups, and non-governmental organizations.

3. There is special emphasis on the recommendations, documents, publications and norms that might help States members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The programme is aimed particularly at countries with economies in transition and tries to establish and improve a legal and political framework that would facilitate trade development and help those economies to become integrated in the global economy.

4. As part of this programme, multiplier points are regularly provided with information on the Committee's work, including copies of documents and publications. However, the amount and type of documentation distributed will depend on the Committee's programme of work and the resources available for it to function.

5. The aim of setting up the regional network is to facilitate the dissemination of information in order to increase awareness on the part of the State authorities and the business world in member States, especially in countries in transition. Setting up and running the network of multiplier points to disseminate ECE documents (in the form of reports, recommendations, norms, publications, guidelines, manuals, etc.) helps promote practices and methods to facilitate, expand and diversify trade and investments and to develop industry and enterprise.

6. The work carried out under the auspices of the Committee, including publications, norms and recommendations, are clearly of interest to a number of national, regional and local governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as to various kinds of company in the private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, it is unfortunate that the vast majority of potential clients who could benefit from the Committee's work are unaware of either its existence or the nature of its work. One very useful way to remedy this situation, within the limits of available resources, is to disseminate information on the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies by identifying the national organizations prepared to run a national information campaign, using translations of documents into their own language where necessary.

7. The aim of setting up and managing the multiplier points network is to develop the best methods of dissemination in countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The documents forwarded and distributed under this initiative deal, in particular, with the promotion and facilitation of trade and investment and enterprise development. They are available, as far as possible, in hard copy and electronic form in the three official working languages of ECE, namely, English, French and Russian. These reports, recommendations, norms, publications, guidelines, manuals and so on present the results of the work of the various working groups, special expert groups, expert meetings, etc.

2. Work carried out

8. The establishment of the multiplier points network ensures there will be an institutional framework in place for the exchange of views on best practice between governmental and non-governmental organizations and private bodies engaged in promoting trade and investment in countries in transition. The smooth operation of the network encourages organizations working at the national and regional levels to promote the use of the guiding principles, norms, standards and recommendations produced by ECE among enterprises in the private sector, particularly SMEs, and governmental trade institutions.

9. The main tasks accomplished in pursuit of this objective have been:
- Identification of the national and regional organizations best equipped to help publicize the documents and other work in the countries in transition;
 - Identification of material to be sent to the national focal points;
 - The drafting of agreements on the division of responsibilities with the organizations accredited as multiplier points;
 - The maintenance of mailing lists to facilitate the exchange of information between national focal points and ECE experts.
10. The selection of the various organizations, associations and institutions in the countries in transition with a view to setting up the multiplier points network was based on their ability to reach potential users of ECE documentation. The search for and identification of the institutions that are best placed to perform the duties and tasks of multiplier points was based on studies and research in the official directories of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the countries with economies in transition. The aim was to have at least one focal point in each ECE member State with an economy in transition. In the big countries, the aim was to have at least one focal point in each major city and, where appropriate, in each region (for example, the oblasts in the Russian Federation and Ukraine).
11. The identification of possible national and regional contacts led to the establishment and updating of a database of national focal points responsible for distributing and making use of ECE documents. This database includes postal and electronic addresses, telephone and fax numbers and other necessary information, such as the names and titles of those in charge of the distribution of the documents and publications in the countries and regions concerned. In the period up to 7 February 2002, 119 governmental and non-governmental organizations and trade associations from 27 countries in transition were contacted under the multiplier points programme.
12. The publications, reports, recommendations, norms and other documents selected for forwarding to the multiplier points were those that would make an optimal contribution to the facilitation, expansion and diversification of regional and international trade, promote deeper integration of the transition economies into the global economy and create a well-defined and predictable framework for sustainable industrial and enterprise development.
13. The selection covered the entire United Nations Office at Geneva so as to provide the multiplier points network with a very wide range of documents from different parts of ECE and United Nations specialized agencies. The process of identifying the documents and publications to be forwarded to the multiplier points for distribution, promotion and possibly translation led to the construction and maintenance of a database collating titles, authors and languages of documents and publications and year of publication, with the documents grouped by key subjects.

14. Once contact has been established with the various national and regional organizations in ECE member States, an agreement needs to be reached on the terms of reference of the multiplier points. The key rights and responsibilities of the organizations accredited within the network are listed in this agreement. The organizations selected promote and encourage the distribution of ECE recommendations, norms, documents and publications, as well as their translation into the national languages of ECE member States.

15. They are entitled to translate the documents they receive provided that there is no official translation available in the national language. The cover of the translation must carry an explicit acknowledgement of copyright and indicate ECE as the source of the material. Text that might be added locally, such as introductions, information about local contacts, etc., is clearly differentiated from the copy provided by ECE. After obtaining permission to translate documents and translating them, the accredited network organizations lodge a copy of the translation with the secretariat. The status of national focal point is not exclusive and may be withdrawn at the request of the Committee or at the discretion of the secretariat. The organization concerned may not appeal against the withdrawal of its status.

16. National focal points must report annually on the number of copies of documents and publications distributed or sold. At the same time, the focal points undertake to publicize ECE seminars, working groups and other activities that are of particular interest to their members or clients. Information on organizations that have concluded an agreement on participating in the multiplier points network is held in a database that gives their postal and electronic addresses, telephone and fax numbers and the names and titles of the contact persons responsible for relations within the multiplier points network. In the period up to 7 February 2002, 38 organizations from 22 countries in transition signed agreements on terms of reference and were accredited as multiplier points (see the list of multiplier points in TRADE/2002/3/Add.1).

17. The successful operation of the multiplier points network depends largely on a frequent supply of documents and publications prepared by ECE bodies to the accredited organizations and on a constant flow of information within the network. In order to facilitate the exchange of information between national centres and ECE experts, e-mail circulation lists and other databases have been set up and kept up to date. They cover the documents, publications, recommendations and norms sent to the national focal points and distributed via the network. In the period up to 7 February 2002, over 1,300 recommendations, norms, publications and documents were distributed to multiplier points.

18. Titles, authors, dates and publication symbols, the specific indexes used in the network and other practical information are recorded in the database. Having such a database, which covers the documents and publications distributed in ECE member States, is proving to be very useful for setting targets and monitoring progress towards them. It is also proving very useful in the regular evaluation of the results achieved by the multiplier points network.

3. Special activities to be undertaken

19. The preparation of a web site in the three working languages of ECE (English, French and Russian) devoted to the multiplier points network will encourage and develop the distribution and reproduction of recommendations, norms, guidelines, documents and other

sources of information for the benefit of all Internet users in ECE member States. The site's key clients will be trade associations, the business world, including start-ups, and the regional and national authorities responsible for creating a climate that encourages trade, industry and enterprise development.

20. The way in which the multiplier points network operates has shown the potential for publicizing the documentation on trade, investment and enterprise development. Extending the network to the countries of western Europe and North America could be the next step in its expansion. This would bring in new countries and organizations involved in promoting the recommendations, norms and guidelines prepared by the Committee and would consolidate network operations.

21. Lastly, it is necessary to continue strengthening cooperation and coordination between experts from the organizations accredited as multiplier points with a view to sharing information, ideas, expertise and know-how. To do this, it will be necessary to identify and apply means which are appropriate to the exchange of information with organizations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and those of the Commonwealth of Independent States.
