

## Subprogramme-level evaluation of

**UNECE's support to the advancement of Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies in member States (Working Party 6)" (December 2019)**

The evaluation team found strong relevance in the work of the ECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization (WP.6) which is being carried out consistently with the agreed mandates that are highly relevant for a broad variety of member States and partners. WP.6 systematically achieves positive outcomes in all areas of intervention and adds value in respect of an impartial platform for engagement for member States.

**Progress report as at 31 August 2021**

#	Recommendation	Management response	Responsibility	Target date/deadline	Date of implementation/comments
1	<b>Update and reflect the work of Working Party 6 in line with the 2030 Agenda, which was adopted by ECE member States in 2015. Review and update the Terms of Reference of Working Party 6 in line with the Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Working Parties within ECE (ECE/EX/1 paragraph 3(d) – see Annex) to assess and propose necessary adjustments to the mandate and status of Working Party 6 and submit to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards.</b>	UNECE accepts the recommendation.  The secretariat notes the need to update the Terms of Reference of WP. 6, which date back to 2003, in order to reflect the priorities of the 2030 Agenda, as appropriate. Recent activities by the WP.6 on “Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” and on “Gender Responsive Standards” helped raise awareness on SDG-related issues among member States. The revision of the Terms of Reference will build upon current activities of WP.6 that have already been aligned with the 2030 Agenda as reflected in the Programme of Work of WP.6 for 2020. Approved by WP.6 at its 29th Annual Session in 2019 (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2019/5), the Programme of Work was geared towards	Secretary of W.P.6	December 2021	<b>In progress.</b>  The Virtual Informal Consultations of WP.6 that took place on 2 and 3 November 2020 (replacing the formal WP.6 session due to the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic) endorsed the programme of work where the 2030 Agenda is fully reflected for the parts concerning regulatory cooperation and standardization policies. In view of the informal nature of the session, the 2020 session could not discuss the revision of the Terms of Reference which were not available in E, F and R and was not considered “business-critical decisions”. Consequently, the session assigned the review of the Terms to the Bureau that will complete the revision for the 2021 session.  <b>On 31 August 2021,</b> the topic was added to the <a href="#">Agenda of the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of WP.6</a> (agenda item 8d) scheduled on 24-26 November 2021, which will task the newly elected Bureau to draft a proposition for a Revised ToR at the 2022 Plenary. The 31 <sup>st</sup> session will also propose an in-depth discussion on

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		<p>supporting members States' efforts for the delivery of the SDGs.</p> <p>The secretariat of WP.6 will work with the Bureau to draft an update of the Terms of Reference for discussion and – if consensus is found – for adoption at the WP.6 session scheduled for 2-3 November 2020. The updated Terms of Reference will be submitted for review by the Steering Committee for Trade Capacity and Standards at its 7th Session in 2021, for subsequent submission for approval by the EXCOM.</p>			<p>the topic of circular economy (closely related to SDG 12) which will allow the Working Party to consider how to integrate this theme into the ToR.</p>
2	<p><b>Take steps to formally establish START-Ed and the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative, in line with the agreed guidance and procedures in Annex F.</b></p>	<p>UNECE partially accepts the recommendation</p> <p>The secretariat notes the recommendation to formally establish these groups of experts in line with agreed rules and procedures. These initiatives have so far operated informally, as foreseen by the WP.6 Terms of Reference which stipulate that, when necessary, ad hoc groups of experts can be established to address specific problems and concerns identified by the Working Party.</p> <p>The secretariat is currently facing budgetary and personnel constraints that may result in a need to streamline activities. Resources permitting, the secretariat will prepare Terms of</p>	<p>Secretary of W.P.6</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<p><b>In progress.</b></p> <p>The 2020 Virtual Informal Consultations approved the report of the START-Ed group and requested the group to prepare a programme of work for approval in 2021. In view of the resource constraints (including a recruitment freeze) and because of the informal session, WP.6 postponed the formal establishment of the START-Ed group till the 2021 session.</p> <p><b>As of August 2021</b>, the GRSI is continuing under the XB funding and will deliver early in 2022; based on the final products, the Working Party will likely request this to become an official subgroup of WP.6. Concerning the START-Ed, the current work comes in support of a single recommendation (Recommendation I) and though vital it would require additional funding to justify an official subgroup. The topic is taken under consideration and will be presented to the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Working Party for discussion and eventual action during (request expected during the 32<sup>nd</sup> session, to be confirmed).</p>

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		Reference for the START-Ed Group and for the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative and submit these through the Steering Committee to EXCOM for formal establishment, in 2021. Additional XB resources will need to be secured for supporting any additional activities in these Groups.			
3	<p><b>Find ways to address inclusion and participation in Working Party 6 groups of experts: Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS), Group on Education and Standardisation (START-Ed), Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM), Standardisation and Regulatory Techniques (START).</b></p> <p><b>This could include:</b></p> <p><b>(i) increasing representation of women in all Working Party 6 advisory groups to increase input of women in the standards development process, to improve gender balance in these bodies, and to enhance expertise to create and deliver gender inclusivity;</b></p> <p><b>(ii) setting up a system of</b></p>	<p>UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>As foreseen by the ECE Gender Action Plan, the secretariat has mainstreamed gender in its decisions and activities e.g. by leading ground-breaking work on the inclusion of women in standards development processes, at national, regional and international levels (i.e. the Gender Responsive Standards Declaration).</p> <p>As additionally foreseen by the Programme level evaluation on gender mainstreaming, the secretariat monitors the level of participation of women in the meetings of the Working Party and its advisory groups. While the participation of female delegates in WP.6 activities remains below parity, it is higher than in the standards community more generally.</p> <p>The secretariat will strive to further increase women's participation by raising</p>	Secretary of W.P.6	October 2021	<p><b>In progress.</b></p> <p>This work is firmly anchored in the current continuous activities of the secretariat in support of WP.6.</p> <p>The secretariat searches continuously new approaches to supporting member States' efforts in the mentioned areas that allow increase the participation of women in WP.6 related work. The Gender-Responsive Standards initiative is bringing in positive reactions from UNECE member States and beyond.</p> <p>The secretariat is fully aware of the fact that the level or gender of delegates from member States is not in the hands of the secretariat and the ultimate decisions regarding the composition of national delegations is beyond the reach of the secretariat.</p> <p>The secretariat continues to identify and negotiate additional XB funding to support further efforts as an ongoing activity and part of the secretariat's regular work. Negotiations have been held e.g. with the German Government and the Russian Voluntary Fund.</p> <p>As regards the experiences from external partners and other ECE bodies, the secretariat continues maintaining informal liaison with colleagues in the</p>

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	<p><b>regional hubs or rotating the timing of advisory group virtual meetings so that participants in time zones different to Europe may be more easily included.</b></p>	<p>the attention of member States to the importance of reaching parity in the numbers of male and female participants. However, the secretariat cannot guarantee a more balanced participation as the final decisions on members of delegations are not under the secretariat's control. The secretariat will also collect experiences of other ECE bodies and external partners aimed at improving the representation of women in their respective activities. The secretariat will draw lessons from these experiences for replication within WP.6 during the first half of 2020. The secretariat will prepare a presentation or a report for discussion at the WP.6 session 2-3 November 2020 on the experiences of other ECE bodies as well external partners that have successfully increased the participation of women and how these experiences could be replicated by the WP.6 itself.</p> <p>The timing of the meetings of WP.6 groups is currently set by consulting through "Doodle" polls. The secretariat will strive to rotate the timing of meetings of the groups, to the extent this is acceptable to participants.</p> <p>It will be difficult for the secretariat to support a system of regional hubs without XB funds. For the time being, the</p>			<p>ECE, through the Gender Focal point, and with delegations participating in WP.6 related work in order to further identify and share best practice. The lessons learned include a need for active encouragement of national delegations to promote women's participation, e.g. through the promotion of the Gender-Responsive Standards Declaration. Several delegations have reported on the results of their efforts in the meetings of the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative that were further reported to the WP.6 session on 3 November 2020.</p>

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		<p>secretariat will continue to work with other Regional Commissions and partners to respond to the needs of countries beyond the ECE region provided that XB funds can be made available. The secretariat will strive to mobilize further resources for this purpose.</p> <p>Responsibility: Ms. Lorenza Jachia, Secretary of WP.6</p>			
4	<p><b>Explore ways to address resource constraints, for example, by making full use of the resources assigned to Working Party 6, considering redistribution of resources within the Section, interns from Masters' programmes on standardization, and extra-budgetary projects with project funded project managers.</b></p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The secretariat is evaluating several possibilities to address resource constraints. The possibility to redistribute RB resources within the Section will be reviewed as part of the overall review of programmes in view of the envisaged review of the Division's support to activities. As regards internships, the secretariat has established contacts with several universities that offer courses and Undergraduate or Graduate programmes in standardization in view of welcoming students as interns. The secretariat will explore the possibility of establishing a scheme with interested universities, in line with general rules for UN internships.</p> <p>Given the restrictions on the number of interns per Division and further future restrictions in the ECE's swing space from late 2020 onwards, the secretariat will work</p>	Secretary of W.P.6	December 2021	<p><b>In progress.</b></p> <p>In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat has worked most of 2020 remotely and the possibility of using external resources such as interns and relevant programmes has been significantly reduced. The XB personnel is fully in use in support of the programme of work of WP.6 and the secretariat will continue looking for additional XB resources and will also increase the use of interns and other similar resources.</p> <p>Each team, project and initiative reports annually to the WP.6 session on their outreach and work on attracting additional resources.</p> <p>The secretariat is negotiating an XB project on the role of standards for the development of the Circular Economy with the Government of Germany.</p> <p><b>As of August 2021</b>, vacancies and recruitment freezes have made the redistribution of resources within the Section challenging. As part of a Division wide effort to ensure delivery of essential work streams, the Secretary of UN/CEFACT is envisaged to support WP.6 on a part-time basis. This should facilitate the smooth execution of the 31<sup>st</sup> session</p>

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		<p>with the ECE internship programme to explore new ways of internship programmes, such as remote work based within the interns' respective universities with online supervision from ECE which could make better use of the secretariat's resources.</p> <p>The secretariat is currently implementing a project financed by the Government of Germany through the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) on "Enhancing usage and uptake of standards for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with special emphasis on gender equality" (December 2019 – December 2021). Additionally, the secretariat will continue its efforts for raising further XB funds including project funded staff.</p> <p>The secretariat will report at the next session of the WP. 6 in November 2020 on its continued efforts in securing additional XB resources for the programme of work.</p>			<p>and the regular meetings of the subgroups. The subgroups are reporting to the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Working Party on their efforts to secure XB resources (both volunteer experts to progress the work and financial funding).</p>
5	<p><b>Seek partnerships with a broad range of women's organisations, including those representing vulnerable groups of women, in each thematic area and advisory group to seek their perspectives, address their</b></p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The secretariat has been working with a number of NGOs representing the needs of women, including L'Association Réseau Normalisation et Francophonie (RNF), Women at the Table, the International Gender Champions, ISEAL Alliance</p>	<p>Secretary of W.P.6</p>	<p><b>Implemented as at December 2020</b></p>	<p>This activity is fully anchored in the continuous activity of the secretariat in support of the Chair and Bureau of WP.6 and can thus be considered as completed.</p> <p>An increasing number of Member States beyond the ECE region and numerous international and national standardization bodies are supporting the initiative and bringing in their contribution towards the work. Information on work in 2020 can be found in the report to the</p>

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	needs, and to reach those furthest behind.	<p>“Gender Working Group”, HERProject and others in order to seek their perspectives and address their needs.</p> <p>The secretariat will continue to work with the above-mentioned organizations and identify other partners and seek ways of addressing their needs and perspectives in WP.6 activities, and more broadly in forums related to standards and quality infrastructure as described in the WP.6 programme of work for 2020.</p>		annual session “Report on GRSI activities <a href="#">ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2020/4</a> ”.	
6	<b>In order to present the findings of the two most recent Working Party 6 initiatives, consider developing a publication on Gender Responsive Standards and the Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on SDG 5 as a standalone and cross cutting goal to showcase how standards contribute to achievement of gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and achievement of the SDGs in the UNECE region.</b>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation</p> <p>The secretariat is conscious of the need to present the findings of its initiatives to a broader audience. A publication on Gender Responsive Standards was issued in November 2019 and is accessible here. A publication on Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/TRADE/444) was issued as early as in October 2018. Four follow-up publications focussing on how standards support the achievement of each of the SDGs that were covered by the XB project on “Standards for the SDGs” (namely SDG 6, 7, 11 and 13) will be issued in 2020.</p> <p>The secretariat will finalize the follow up publications on “Standards for the SDGs” in 2020, and subject to the availability of XB funds, publish and print it (or its</p>	Secretary of W.P.6	December 2021	<p><b>In progress.</b></p> <p>The publication on Gender-Responsive Standards has been completed and is available as online publication on the Initiative’s public site at <a href="https://trello.com/b/BYZTGSOI/wp6-gender-responsive-standards-initiative">https://trello.com/b/BYZTGSOI/wp6-gender-responsive-standards-initiative</a> and as soon as SDG 5 is included in the WP.6 Portal on Standards for SDGs, it will also be available at the portal at <a href="https://standards4sdgs.unece.org">https://standards4sdgs.unece.org</a>.</p> <p>In view of the current resources and the availability of publication slots for WP.6 in ECE’s publication programme, the four separate follow-up publications will be combined into one, streamlined publication with case studies, expert commentary and introductory texts to each of the 4 Goals 6, 7, 11 and 13. The texts are ready for publication since end November 2020 and will be issued in early 2021.</p> <p><b>As of August 2021:</b>  <b>In progress:</b> As the publication has been developed and delivered (ECE/TRADE/445), this recommendation appears completed.  The second publication is in progress. d</p>

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		summary) as a visually attractive and user-friendly document.			