



LEVERAGING STANDARDS AND TRADE FACILITATION FOR MSMEs' DEVELOPMENT

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP

30 NOVEMBER 2021



Purpose	Share experiences and practical tools for making standards and trade facilitation work for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)
Participants	MSMEs and enterprise support organizations from Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus as well as standard setting bodies
Venue	Online
Time	9.00–11.00 am (CET)

1. BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for making international standards and trade facilitation work for MSMEs. This is one of the key findings emerging from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) COVID-19 impact assessments, which showed enterprises with a successful track record in standards implementation withstand dwindling demand and supply shortages through production repurposing. These enterprises were also able to earn the trust of new international buyers, so that they were able to mitigate the impact of cancelled orders and the loss of traditional buyers.

However, in many countries, standards implementing MSMEs constitute a minority. Despite the immediate benefits, these enterprises exhibit a low demand for standards. Furthermore, in many countries, MSMEs' export and import activities are undermined by gaps in trade facilitation measures or/and their limited capacity to benefit from such measures.

The above, not only undermines the MSMEs' resilience, but also impedes their ability to scale up and improve the efficiency of their supply chain operations. What lessons can we draw from the experiences of MSMEs? What constitutes a successful experience? Given their critical role in assisting MSMEs, what can be done to enable enterprise support organizations to assume a lead role in promoting standards implementation and trade facilitation amongst MSMEs? These are the issues that will form the focus of this consultative workshop. The aim is to explore practical avenues for helping MSMEs implement standards and best practices in trade facilitation.

2. OBJECTIVES

- Highlight the interplay between standards and implementation and trade facilitation in determining MSMEs' resilience and business development opportunities.
- Familiarize MSMEs and enterprise support organizations with UNECE online self-paced programme of study on standards implementation; UNECE's United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) trade facilitation tools, and avenues for accessing the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards.
- Gain insights into successful experiences in helping MSMEs implement international standards and reap benefits from trade facilitation measures.

3. FORMAT AND PROCEEDINGS

The workshop will take the form of an interactive discussion. UNECE will also solicit feedback throughout the workshop and stakeholders can provide comments and suggestions using the chat box.

4. LANGUAGE

English with simultaneous translation into Russian.

AGENDA

- 9:00–9:05 Opening**
- Mr. Mika Vepsäläinen, Chief, Market Access Section (MAS), UNECE
- 9:05–9:15 Making trade facilitation and standards implementation work for MSMEs: What lessons to draw from the COVID-19 crisis?**
- Ms. Hana Daoudi, Economic Affairs Officer, MAS, UNECE
- 9:15–9:25 UNECE-UN/CEFACT trade facilitation tools for MSMEs**
- Ms. Sue Probert, Chair, UN/CEFACT
- 9:25–9:35 Bringing trade facilitation closer to MSMEs**
- Ms. Irina Sigua, Advisor, Revenue Service, Georgia
 - Mr. Samson Uridia, Head of International Relations Department LEPL Revenue Service, Ministry of Finance of Georgia
- 9:35–9:45 UNECE self-paced online programme of study: “Building Stronger Economies after COVID-19: Standards Implementation for Boosting MSMEs’ Resilience”**
- Ms. Sandra Feliciano, Lecturer – Porto Polytechnic| Research and Innovation Associate-Knowledge Innovation Centre
- 9:45–9:55 Avenues for promoting standards implementation among MSMEs**
- Mr. Dušan Stokić, Head, of Center for Environment, Technical Regulations, Quality and Social Responsibility, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia – Member of Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum (WB6 CIF);
Member of National Technical Committees, Institute for Standardization of Serbia
- 9:55–10:05 Most widely implemented ISO standards by SMEs**
- Ms. Noelia Garcia Nebra, Programme Manager, Capacity Building, ISO
- 10:05–10:15 Engaging SMEs in standard-setting processes**
- Ms. Joanna Gajdek, Head of Consulting, Austrian Standards Institute
- 10:15–10:45 Views from enterprise support organizations**
- Ms. Maitane Olabarria, Director, Small Business Standards (SBS) – The European association representing SMEs in standardisation
 - Ms. Natalia Otel Belan, Regional Director for Europe and Eurasia, Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)
 - Ms. Aline Masrelian, Director-General, buyarmenian.com
- 10:45–11:00 Wrap up**
- Ms. Hana Daoudi, Economic Affairs Officer, MAS, UNECE