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**Report on partnerships of the Economic Commission for Europe
(for information)**



UNECE

Partnerships Report 2021-2022

UNECE Partnerships Report

2021-2022

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Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 recognizes building global partnerships, including through multi-stakeholder networks that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, as being critical to efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *“If opportunities are judiciously identified and attendant risks are carefully assessed and managed, all while taking into consideration their specificities, partners can serve as a useful instrument in helping United Nations entities deliver on their mandate and in supporting Member States in their efforts to achieve the Goals.”*

Strong partnerships are a critical component for the successful delivery of UNECE mandate, as well as a longstanding driving force of UNECE’s work.

As stated in UNECE’s Proposed [programme budget for 2022 \(A/76/6\(Sect.20\) approved in General Assembly resolution 76/245\)](#), the strategy of the programme is achieved through *“an integrated approach to sustainable development, which builds on synergies and the results-oriented work of its eight subprogrammes [...] The work of the ECE subprogrammes is aligned with specific Sustainable Development Goals. Identifying and exploiting cross-sectoral synergies of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and **engaging multiple actors for joint action will be critical to accelerating progress in achieving the Goals and will remain a key strategic focus in the future work of ECE.** To that end, the Commission will continue to leverage its integrated approach by providing multisectoral policy advice and capacity-building through cross-sectoral collaboration among its eight subprogrammes in four nexus areas at which multiple Goals converge, namely: (a) the sustainable use of natural resources; (b) sustainable and smart cities for all ages; (c) sustainable mobility and smart connectivity; and (d) measuring and monitoring progress towards achieving the Goals”*.

In 2019, the Executive Secretary initiated an internal review of formal partnership agreements in place between the UNECE secretariat and other entities. The review took stock of the status quo and was intended to serve as a foundation to deepen the strategic focus of these partnerships, where needed, to achieve greater value-added and impact. In April 2020, the secretariat reported to EXCOM some of the review’s findings in three areas, namely: a) cooperation and partnership agreements¹; b) Centres of Excellence (CoE) in subprogrammes 4, 5 and 8²; and c) cooperation with other Regional Commissions³. In parallel, the internal workflow for the development and approval process of formal MoU partnership agreements was revised and simplified.

UNECE’s overall coordination on Partnerships and Resource Mobilization are assigned to the Deputy Executive Secretary. The actual engagement with partners, including the private sector, is decentralized at the division-level.

Following the internal review, UNECE is taking a more strategic and results-oriented partnership approach and is implementing recommendations emanating from it.

The partnership review is an ongoing process. At the EXCOM meeting of April 2020 the secretariat committed to report to EXCOM annually and provide an update on its partnership activities, highlighting key developments and major achievements during the reporting period⁴. The secretariat further committed to deliver a first partnership report in 2022 in the management response to the programme-level evaluation of UNECE engagement with the private sector⁵. This is the first UNECE Partnership Report.

The objectives of this Partnership Report are:

- Provide an overview of the breadth of UNECE partners, with highlights per subprogramme, as well as capturing key examples of programmes-wide partnerships;
- Provide an overview of the current partnership management practices in UNECE;
- Set the grounds for a UNECE partnership strategy to deepen the strategic focus of UNECE partnerships.

For the purpose of this report, a partner is considered any stakeholder with whom UNECE has *an ongoing collaborative relationship aligning interests around a common vision, combining complementary resources and competencies and sharing risks to maximize value creation and deliver (organizational) benefit to each other*⁶.

¹ [Informal document 2020/13](#)

² [Informal document 2020/14](#)

³ [Informal document 2020/15](#)

⁴ [Informal document 2020/13](#)

⁵ [Management response to the programme-level evaluation of UNECE engagement with the private sector](#), recommendations 4,6 and 8.

⁶ definition adapted from the [SDG Partnership Guidebook](#)

There are over 360 active partnerships – both formal and informal – across the eight UNECE subprogrammes. Below is a summary of the state of partnerships per subprogramme, with several highlights that illustrate the purpose, the impact and the opportunities of such partnerships.

Subprogramme 1: Environment



The Environment subprogramme enjoys several long-term, stable partnerships resulting from joint programmes and joint secretariats. For example, WHO/Europe services jointly with ECE the Protocol on Water and Health and the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme, and services a task force on health under the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution. The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs has established long-term partnerships with several organizations, including UNEP with its treaty secretariats, the European Environment Agency (EEA), OSCE, the Convention on Biological Diversity, OECD, OHCHR and UNITAR, to support implementation of the programme of work of the Convention and its Protocol. There are also partnerships within multi-year projects, for example, with UNEP, UNIDO and OECD under the umbrella of the EU4Environment programme.

Apart from formal engagements with various partners listed above through joint project implementation and treaty workplans, mostly related to targeted legislative reforms, capacity-building, enhancing intersectoral and subregional collaboration, development of guiding documents and policy advice, the only formal agreements are a few MoUs (UNEP, EIB, OSCE). The strongest and longest-lasting partnerships are those that link ECE with other organizations across several themes. Among these, the partnerships with UNEP, UNDP, WHO/Europe and OECD are the broadest. Nonetheless, some narrow partnerships are extremely strong, where there is a common objective, such as transboundary water cooperation or enhancement of environmental assessment systems. The technical and scientific work on air pollution and industrial safety also strongly builds on partnerships with other international organizations and international financial institutions.

Partnerships are further strengthened by common membership of coordination bodies, including UN-Water and the regional Issue-based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change. ECE Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) are, in their essence, multistakeholder partnerships involving various actors, including UN entities (UNEP, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO), UNCTs, IGOs (OECD, EEA), IFIs (EIB), donors, NGOs, academia and business.

Partnerships support the delivery of more coherent and complete solutions to development needs; for the same reasons, they are also effective in achieving the subprogramme's strategic objectives and in enhancing the visibility of ECE. Certain partnerships increase ECE visibility, for example with OECD on economic issues, WHO on the links between environment and health and UNEP on emerging environmental challenges. UNDP and OSCE, with their country presence and access to additional donor funding, often support the ECE capacity-building activities and legal reforms in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	
Purpose of partnership	The aim of the partnership is to better support the Member States in reaching and monitoring the achievement of SDGs; to help address the triple planetary crisis; to implement the various regional and global multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) hosted by ECE and UNEP; and to establish a regular environmental assessment process and to support national, regional and global reporting on the state of the environment.
Impact, added value	Member States leverage synergies stemming from the complimentary mandates of ECE and UNEP and accordingly receive more efficient and effective support in multiple areas of environmental governance, such as coordinated implementation of MEAs serviced by ECE or UNEP, promotion of circular and green economy and sustainable infrastructure, and reporting on SDGs. This is done through common activities included in workplans of ECE MEAs and other ECE thematic programmes and through joint projects and initiatives such as EU4Environment. In addition, the partnership helps to promote MEAs serviced by ECE beyond the ECE region.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue jointly enabling science-policy dialogue to improve countries' environmental performance and their implementation of and compliance with MEAs. ▪ Continue joint support of countries in their efforts in environmental monitoring and assessment. ▪ Jointly explore opportunities for following up on EPR recommendations and implementing practical actions identified under reporting on the SDGs. ▪ Develop joint standards and guidelines and facilitate their inclusion in the UNSDCF and Global Environmental Facility portfolios, as well as leverage support from other organizations with matching capacities and resources, or joint fundraising for priority areas.

Partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO)	
Purpose of partnership	ECE and WHO/Europe carry out joint secretariat functions, service bodies and coordinate implementation of the programmes of work under the Protocol on Water and Health and Transport Health and Environment Pan-European programme (THE PEP). In addition, WHO supports implementation of health-related activities in workplans of several ECE MEAs, such as the Air Convention ⁷ (2002) Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA, and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.
Impact, added value	ECE Member States benefit from complementary substantive knowledge, competences and resources of ECE and WHO that, following their well-defined mandates, ensure efficient and coordinated support of the above mentioned intersectoral and multi-stakeholder processes. The partners enable mobilization of health, environment, water and sectoral authorities for development of more integrated and higher quality policies on air pollution, transport and environment, environmental assessment, industrial safety and water and health. They also jointly successfully fundraise and implement projects in the environment-health nexus. In addition to improving the visibility of the ECE instruments in the pan-European region and globally, the multi-level structure of WHO (headquarters, regional offices and country offices) assists in broadening and strengthening the reach of ECE activities in promoting accession to the instruments and in implementing capacity-building activities, as feasible.
Opportunities	There are opportunities to enhance the cooperation between ECE and WHO with a view to addressing existing financial and staff resources constraints. Greater availability of such resources would lead to tangible results in improved access to safely managed water and sanitation services, better air quality and improved access to infrastructure for more sustainable transport. In addition, the partnership with WHO will further support implementation of relevant provisions of ECE MEAs.

⁷ The Air Convention's Joint Task Force on Health Aspects of Air Pollution.

Subprogramme 2: Transport



In carrying out its activities and work programme, the Sustainable Transport Division cooperates and coordinates work with all the key international organizations of inland transport, dangerous goods and vehicle regulations.

The first area of priority for the implementation of the ITC Strategy is capacity building: to develop or revise training manuals, guidelines, and training courses. The next is research and analysis on challenges and solutions in inland transport in the context of the 2030 development agenda, development and application of tools and indicators. Extrabudgetary funding is needed in these two areas to supplement the regular budget and deploy technical assistance to developing and least developed countries, including landlocked developing countries.

Enhancing partnerships is one of the key ways for the Division and the subprogramme to help bridge the gap/imbalance between internal capacity on the one hand and, on the other hand, the demands from inside and outside the region and mandates stemming from the revised ITC ToR currently in force and the ITC Strategy. Successful strategic partnerships go beyond the convening and regulatory assets of the subprogramme and include, inter alia, (a) participating in strategic projects that help align the regulatory environment and priorities nationally, regionally and inter-regionally with the core mandates and harmonized regulatory system promoted by the GA resolutions; examples include COVID-19 and other related UNDA projects and road-safety projects with the United Nations Road Safety Fund; (b) the joint development of tools, training materials and outreach deliverables with long-lasting and wide-reaching impacts on those developing countries that are most in need of the support of the subprogramme; example is the sustainable inland transport connectivity indicators jointly developed by UNECE, ECLAC and ESCWA; (c) ground-breaking initiatives that enhance the agility of UNECE to respond to long-term and emergency situations in support of its member States and Contracting Parties; see for example below the in-depth highlight on the “Observatory on Border Crossing Status due to COVID-19”.

In the discharge of its functions as a governing body, the Inland Transport Committee engages with the private sector through their participation as observers in ITC meetings and activities⁸. An important recent milestone in the development of a strategic outlook vis-à-vis transport stakeholders was the adoption in 2019 of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) Strategy until 2030 (“ITC Strategy”) and the endorsement in February 2022 by ECOSOC of the revised terms of reference of ITC recognizing ITC as a United Nations centre providing a comprehensive platform for consideration of all aspects of inland transport development and cooperation. That is, a reference for other stakeholders in the sector.

Servicing and updating of the existing legal instruments under the purview of the ITC and developing new ones is and will continue to be the top priority for the subprogramme, which, as decided by member States, is to rely on regular budget resources. The operations of ITC legal instruments are based on a PPP model—the TIR Convention PPP. The International Road Transport Union (IRU), a non-profit NGO, operates the TIR system under the UN Convention on International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), as authorized by the contracting parties. The TIR Convention is administered by its contracting parties with support of the Working Party 30 and the secretariat. IRU issues TIR Carnets and provides guarantee for the transit operations with applications of the TIR Convention. IRU participates the sessions of WP.30 and Administrative Committee as an observer. IRU is not eligible for candidacy of chair or vice-chair of the WP.30 and Administrative Committee.

⁸ In the case of ITC, the Rules of Procedure currently in force (ECE/TRANS/294, Annex III), stipulate that only (UNECE) member States can be elected as Bureau members or officials (chair/vice-chairs). Furthermore, it is governments that are elected (i.e. if the incumbent loses the confidence of their government, they may be replaced). Private sector representatives do not serve in the Bureau of ITC subsidiary bodies.

Partnership with Regional Commissions, ICAO, WCO, ITF, IRU, FIA, ECO and UIC for “Observatory on Border Crossing Status due to COVID-19”	
Purpose of partnership	Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat, with the support of the other regional commissions and the private sector, maintains the Observatory on Border Crossing Status due to COVID-19, with information from almost all United Nations Member States, providing daily updates on the status of inland transport border crossings.
Impact, added value	<p>In February 2020, UNECE together with other UN Regional Commissions and partner organizations established an Observatory on border crossing status due to COVID 19. This was a UNECE initiative, and UNECE developed the tool. This tool collects and illustrates, on a regular basis, information about the status of inland transport border crossings, including policies and good practices during the covid 19 pandemic. The UNECE Sustainable Transport Division informed Customs authorities in almost all UN member States about the tool and began gathering their inputs as well as any official, publicly available information of relevance. The Observatory became the only source worldwide, inside or outside the UN system, providing daily updates on the status of inland transport border crossing. During the period 18 March – 15 September 2020 only, the Observatory webpage had 106,624 unique page views from 208 States / regions, with a peak of more than 2,000 unique page views per day in April and May 2020. Updated information was collected and provided for 174 UN Member States. The Observatory is officially supported by the other regional commissions, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International Transport Forum (ITF), the International Road Transport Union (IRU), the Federation International de l'automobile (FIA), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the International Union of Railways (UIC).</p> <p>The policies, measures and good practices implemented by the Governments during the Pandemic and that were reported in the observatory, were further analysed and presented in a publication prepared by the Sustainable Transport Division on Intermodal Transport in the Age of COVID-19: Practices, Initiatives and Responses.</p>
Opportunities	The potential of the current partnership is to deepen and expand our cooperation with the other Regional Commissions, ICAO, WCO, ITF, IRU, FIA, ECO and UIC beyond regular institutional partnerships into areas directly linked to emergencies and emergency responses with practical tangible results that support the implementation of our Conventions and provide valuable information to Member States, thus reaffirming the role of UNECE as a platform of international cooperation, complementing its convening and regulatory more “traditional” assets.

Partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)	
Purpose of partnership	<p>IsDB and UNECE have formed a longstanding partnership which was formalized with the tripartite MoU signed between the two organizations and ECO secretariat in 2011. Via this MoU, the three organizations wished to strengthen their cooperation in the transport sector.</p> <p>UNECE benefits from IsDB resources (funds and staff) in order to perform several activities mandated by the governments, as well as to promote the international inland transport conventions and agreements. So far, more than 500,000\$ has been allocated by the bank to finance a series of activities of the Division such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development of the international transport infrastructure observatory (itio-gis.org). ITIO operates as a virtual marketplace for financing transport infrastructure by providing an electronic interface between Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and Governments. It also hosts data on a large variety of transport infrastructure networks and nodes across different modes; ▪ The organization of workshops in ECO region on eTIR and eCMR and the financing of a consultant for the preparation of the eCMR functional specifications; ▪ The organization of training workshop for all 20 sub-Saharan countries in order to promote their accession to the TIR and CMR conventions; ▪ The undertaken of a project that evaluates the efficiency of main border-crossing points of Uzbekistan to prepare concrete recommendations for their modernization by using mainly the eTIR international system.
Impact, added value	The value that those projects brought to UN member States is very concrete and measurable. For instance, the development of ITIO provides to the Governments an innovative and unique tool to finance their transport infrastructure (new projects) by filling in all relevant data in the observatory (pre-feasibility analysis) and then through the platform to disseminate this information to all MDBs and funds connected with the platform for their evaluation and possible consideration. Furthermore, the organization of a two days intensive and in person training workshop for the sub-Saharan countries gave the opportunities for these countries to familiarize themselves for first time with the TIR and CMR conventions paving the road for possible accessions.
Opportunities	The potential that the current projects bring to further expand our cooperation with IsDB and even include other multilateral developments banks and national funds / aids is great. The Conventions (TIR and CMR) that the bank supports are quite practical and the results of the implementation to border crossing operations are immediate and concretely measurable. The MDBs in general wish to connect their hardcore infrastructure projects with soft components that fully increase infrastructure capacity and border crossing / transport facilitation.

Subprogramme 3: Statistics



The UNECE subprogramme on statistics has long-standing partnerships with many other UN agencies and international organizations⁹. The Conference and its Bureau maintain very good cooperation and close working contacts with the other international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region. Eurostat, OECD, CIS-STAT, IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations Statistics Division of DESA are permanent observers in the CES Bureau. Most activities and methodological work are undertaken jointly with Eurostat and OECD allowing efficient use of resources, avoiding duplication of effort, and ensuring that all countries of the region benefit from the ongoing international statistical work in emerging areas. The UNECE subprogramme on statistics collaborates with the IMF and the World Bank in specific areas (e.g. financial accounts, statistics for SDGs).

Due to the nature of work on official statistics, the UNECE Statistical Division does not have partnerships with the private sector. Representatives of private sector may sometimes participate in the work (expert meetings, teams of specialists) on an ad hoc basis. The same goes for NGOs, there may be ad-hoc collaboration (e.g., attending or presenting at specific meetings), but there are no sustained partnerships.

The cooperation and partnerships with other international organizations take the form of joint meetings, joint capacity development projects or activities, partnership in developing recommendations and guidelines, and contribution to the work of the CES task forces and task teams. As a good example, the partnership with EFTA can be highlighted – see more detail in the table below.

Highlights

Partnership with EFTA	
Purpose of partnership	<p>EFTA and UNECE have a longstanding partnership in statistical capacity development activities across the UNECE region. This partnership includes the joint organisation of expert meetings and workshops in areas including national accounts, price statistics, statistical business registers, environmental statistics, population and housing censuses, and modernising statistical legislation.</p> <p>EFTA often provides funding to support participants from programme countries to attend these joint events, and, during the COVID-19 pandemic, has provided web-conferencing platforms and interpretation to support the move to on-line events.</p> <p>More recently, EFTA has funded the hiring of editors to help finalise several methodological guideline publications in the area of economic statistics. EFTA was also a key partner in developing the Generic Law for Official Statistics, a UNECE standard that has recently become global in nature.</p> <p>The EFTA Statistical Office and UNECE Statistical Division also work together on assessments and reviews of official statistics in UNECE programme countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, including Global Assessments of National Statistical Systems (also often in partnership with Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union), as well as sector reviews of specific statistical areas.</p>
Impact, added value	<p>Through EFTA support, UNECE activities in official statistics have been more accessible to countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, contributing to making the ethos of Agenda 2030 “leave no-one behind”, a reality.</p> <p>Both organisations benefit from the joint activities, as together we can achieve much more than either organisation could on its own.</p>
Opportunities	<p>Increased joint activities in key areas of official statistics, particularly economic statistics.</p> <p>Increased joint activities relating to assessments, reviews and associated training for national statistical offices in UNECE programme countries.</p>

⁹ For more detail, please see the reports of the Chair of the Conference of European Statisticians to the UNECE Executive Committee meetings. The most recent one is from January 2022 (see Section VIII), available at: https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Item%203a_ECE_EX_2022_1_CES_Chair%27s%20report.pdf

Subprogramme 4: Economic Cooperation and Integration



In carrying out its activities and work programme, the Economic cooperation and integration subprogramme cooperates and coordinates with all stakeholder groups relevant to its two areas of work, i.e. innovation and competitiveness policies, and public-private partnerships. These stakeholders include other UN entities, non-UN international and regional organizations, national ministries and agencies, the business sector, financial, and the academic communities, as well as non-governmental organizations. Several formal partnerships, in the sense of joint work on reciprocal contributions to each other's work, have been established to advance the subprogramme's strategic objectives, including through extrabudgetary funding.

On innovation policy analysis, the subprogramme cooperates, for instance with the OECD, WIPO and IMO, by contributing content and peer reviewing each other's studies. On both innovation policy analysis and capacity building for the implementation of policy reforms, close partnerships are in place with national focal points from relevant Government ministries and agencies. The subprogramme has also partnered with selected Government agencies and institutions in advanced countries to organize study tours for policy makers from programme countries. UNECE is also a member of the Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development, which brings together almost 50 UN agencies

The work on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) involves frequent interaction with partners from the private sector, academia, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs, whose contributions to the PPP programme enrich the UNECE support to its member States, as well as the policy debates in intergovernmental sessions and policy advisory missions. Another important set of partnerships is with the IFIs on project identification in countries: typically, UNECE works upstream with governments on initial project identification before the IFIs prepare feasibility studies and the necessary financing of projects. Cooperation with IFIs also covers the legal and regulatory frameworks needed to implement PPPs for the SDGs.

The subprogramme's innovation policy analysis, policy recommendations and capacity building have helped to strengthen the institutional frameworks for industry science linkages and the momentum for innovative entrepreneurship in programme countries. These positive developments create additional opportunities for partnerships with incipient networks of accelerators and incubators in these countries, including with UNDP Accelerator Labs, in order to drive sustainable development at the grassroots level. Another opportunity for deepening existing and developing new partnerships is the heightened interest among member States, including advanced countries, in transformative innovation, i.e. innovations with the potential to accelerate sustainability transitions at a systemic level (see box).

In the area of PPPs, cooperation with the private sector and the lenders has been identified by the member States as key to ensure a continuous dialogue among the three core parties to a PPP: governments, private companies and the lenders (private lenders and IFIs). This aspect is reflected in the work of the Working Party on PPPs where representatives from the private sector (along with those from civil society and academia) participate as observers and have observer status in the Bureau.

Partnering with the private sector allows access to technical and practical information adopted by industry in PPPs and infrastructure. A case in point are the circular economy practices that are used by industry which would be beneficial for the member States to be acquainted with and incentivise further in their projects. However, partnerships with the private sector, even if informal in nature, might carry a moderate risk of a conflict of interest of UN officials related to potential corruption. This can however be managed with a robust checks and balances governance structure.

The partnerships with the lenders and debt providers – IFIs and private investors – is also paramount for the PPP programme to succeed. After all, the success of project pipelines in countries depend on their ability to attract public funding and private financing into their PPP and infrastructure projects. As a neutral platform, the UNECE PPP programme provides a platform for dialogue to ensure that partnerships with the lenders focus on the promotion of PPPs for the SDGs for the benefit of the member States.

UN ECE Transformative Innovation Network	
Purpose of partnership	<p>With funding from the German Government and the German Innovation Agency SPRIN-D as the main partner UNECE has launched a new partnership platform – UN ECE Transformative Innovation Network (UNETIN). UN ETIN will build the capacities of the UNECE Member States to play a productive role in building innovation ecosystems that can harness innovation and digital technologies for sustainable development, in particular for the circular economy transition.</p> <p>Leading members of the network, such as the Swedish Innovation Agency VINNOVA, NESTA of the UK, or the German innovation agency SPRIN-D, will partner with UNECE to co-organize and co-host a series of policy workshops and develop a flagship publication.</p>
Impact, added value	<p>The partnerships that will be created as part of it will expand the evidence base for policy making in a new important field (transformative innovation), will expand the pool of expertise available to UNECE, and will thereby enhance the policy analysis and policy advisory capacity of the secretariat. It will also strengthen the relevance of UNECE’s innovation policy work for advanced member States. It is expected that the network will become self-sustaining and will continue its work once the initial funding runs out.</p>
Opportunities	<p>Transformative innovation has the potential of becoming a cross-cutting theme in UNECE’s work as the policy knowledge, expertise, and connections established through the project complement other efforts.</p> <p>Responding to the clear demand from member states, future research, and capacity-building efforts (including such publications as I4SDR and IPO) could integrate elements aimed at promoting transformative innovation. Recommendations from the project’s flagship publication on policy responses to promote transformative innovation for sustainable development and the circular economy transition could further inform UNECE’s work on environment and sustainability. Finally, the digital tools and trainings developed for state agencies working on transformative innovation could translate into future capacity building projects for public and private sector stakeholders.</p>

Subprogramme 5: Sustainable Energy



In order to carry out its activities and implement the programme of work of the Sustainable energy subprogramme, the Sustainable Energy Division cooperates and coordinates with a wide-ranging network of partners both internal and external to the UN. Each of the six subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy relies on partners (from governments, other UN entities and specialized agencies, international organizations, the private sector, academia, NGOs/CSOs, foundations, professional societies and associations, and individual experts) in performing its mandated functions, including for the development and dissemination of outputs and tools and for training and capacity-building thereon to ensure widespread and enduring impact. Engagement with this set of partners has resulted in high-quality tangible outputs that are applicable by governments and the private sector alike in the UNECE region and beyond and that facilitate attainment of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. The subprogramme develops the needed public-private partnerships whereby the member States set the framework conditions that allow industry to deploy its best capabilities to attain the goals in ways that the capital markets can finance. Examples of outputs developed through public-private partnerships are the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC), the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS), and a set of best practice guidances to manage methane emissions from the extractive industries.

The array of partners is extensive and multiple forms of cooperation are utilized to set and maintain the different relationships. The partnerships range from formal to informal. The formal partnerships are defined and structured through a case specific memorandum of understanding (MoU). MoUs are rare and largely signed with entities representing NGOs, academia, and professional networks. The most common types of cooperation are informal and can take the form of joint projects, joint events and/or joint publications and reports, contribution to development of norms, recommendations, guidelines and case studies and contribution to the work of the Committee and its six subsidiary bodies.

To enhance and further the impact and visibility of the subprogramme's outputs, a new form of partnerships has been established, namely collaborative networks of International Centres of Excellence (CoEs) on Coal Mine Methane and on High-Performance Buildings. A network of International CoEs on Sustainable Resource Management is planned. These networks serve to build policy support and provide technical advice and consultation, education, training and dissemination of mandated outputs. CoEs are non-profit, self-financed entities subject to the national laws of the host Member State. They support capacity-building activities in Member States and serve as a platform for exchange of knowledge and experience. Apart from hosting visits of experts, organizing professional trainings, and contributing to development of norms, recommendations, guidelines and case studies, the CoEs also cooperate with governments, NGOs/CSOs, industry and academia on a range of research activities. They actively engage in gathering and compiling relevant information helping the Division to obtain the data necessary for its work, to get an insight into national and local level priorities and needs and capabilities, strengthen cooperation between the Division and the key national actors operating in a given sector, as well as raise the profile, visibility and credibility of the Division among the local stakeholders, and thus also ensure effective dissemination of UNECE best practices, norms, and guidelines in the Centres' home states or regions (depending on the scope of their activity). Each CoE operates under the auspices of the relevant subsidiary body of the Committee, to which it reports annually on its past activities and submits its work plan for the coming year for approval.

Partnership with the Global Methane Initiative	
Purpose of partnership	In the early 2000s, the focus of climate change mitigation efforts was predominantly on carbon, even though methane (CH ₄) is more than 25 times as potent as carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere. UNECE recognized the environmental, economic and safety benefits of recovering and reducing CH ₄ emissions and, in 2004, began collaborating with the newly established public-private partnership, Methane to Markets, a precursor to today's Global Methane Initiative (GMI), to raise awareness, reduce CH ₄ emissions from the energy-related extractive industries worldwide and support achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the 1.5°C target set by the Paris Agreement.
Impact, added value	The longstanding partnership between UNECE and GMI (hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) has led to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creation and dissemination of numerous novel best practice guidance, trainings and other resources that have built the capacity of many UN Member States and other stakeholders on quantifying, managing and reducing CH₄ emissions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Best practices on (i) Coal Mine Methane (CMM); (ii) Abandoned Mine Methane (AMM) capture and use; (iii) Monitoring, Reporting, Verification (MRV) and Mitigation of CH₄ emissions from active and abandoned coal mines, and online training for conducting prefeasibility studies, completed jointly by UNECE's Group of Experts on CMM and Just Transition and GMI, and best practices in the oil and gas sector completed jointly by UNECE's Group of Experts on Gas and GMI. ▪ Joint sponsorship of many events and annual meetings that have created networks of common stakeholders and technical experts around the world, enhanced dialogue between policymakers and industry, supported the capture and use of CH₄ as a clean energy source, contributed to mining safety improvements in numerous UN member States, and achieved significant CH₄ emission reductions globally.
Opportunities	In order to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the 1.5°C target set by the Paris Agreement, and to support the more than 30 ECE member States that have committed to the Global Methane Pledge, deepening this partnership as a matter of priority would help to increase capacity on CH ₄ management in areas with the greatest lack of knowledge, particularly related to monitoring, reporting, verification, and mitigation of CH ₄ emissions in the extractives sector.

Partnership with the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21 st Century (REN21)	
Purpose of partnership	Attainment of the 2030 Agenda, SDG7 and the Paris Agreement will require substantially increasing the share of renewable energy (RE) in the global energy mix and the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency (EE). Since 2014, UNECE and REN21 have partnered to support these increases, as well as to provide access to energy to all by closing the information gap on RE, raising awareness, promoting technology development, and encouraging RE uptake across the region.
Impact, added value	The cooperation has resulted in the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, know-how, lessons learned and best practices in RE deployment and where possible on EE. There has been a significant focus on education, capacity-building, training, and policy and regulatory reforms for RE market formation in the region, including strategic advice to decision-making bodies and expert groups. The flagship product of the cooperation is the periodically-issued Renewable Energy Status Report for the UNECE Region which serves as a baseline and monitoring tool on RE uptake in the region and covers 17 countries, including from 4 sub-regions (South-East Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia), that lag in global RE developments both technically and financially, despite significant untapped RE resources. The partnership has helped them identify, analyze and overcome the common challenges and barriers in their energy sectors (e.g. net energy importers; presence of fossil fuel subsidies, high energy intensity, issues with reliability, affordability and sustainability, lack of uptake and investment in RE) to accelerate attainment of the SDGs, particularly SDG 7. Further, having insights into the status of RE uptake in the 17 countries gives investors and decision-makers a solid base on which to direct policy and commercial decisions and provides important lessons on RE for other countries in the UNECE region.
Opportunities	The UNECE-REN21 collaborative report has identified a wide range of opportunities UNECE can promote to help the countries overcome the technical and financial obstacles to increasing RE uptake, including: increased use of solar water heaters and biomass in SE and Eastern Europe; introduction of market reforms to provide incentives to investors; increased government support and policies; increased development of offshore RE; and development of utility-scale power generation projects, based on government support combined with financing from development banks (e.g. EBRD and ADB).

Subprogramme 6: Trade



The Trade subprogramme cooperates and coordinates with a number of other organizations to support the implementation of its programme of work; these are outlined annually to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (most recent, ECE/CTCS/2022/7). The subprogramme is complementary to many other organizations, developing standards and guidelines to support their work and ensure a harmonized approach to trade issues. The studies on technical barriers to trade directly supports the work of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and assists member States to prepare for accession; the subprogramme also holds an official observer seat within the Technical Barriers to Trade Committee of the WTO.

The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), hosted in UNECE's Trade Subprogramme, serves as a major convergence point for the development of standards in the field of trade facilitation, including for the dematerialization of trade processes and messages. UN/CEFACT takes a whole-of-supply-chain point of view which enables all parts of the trade process to be interoperable and avoid any breaks in the flow of goods or flow of information. Most other organizations concentrate on only one part of the supply chain operation (financing, invoicing, etc.); UN/CEFACT provides a neutral forum to help other standards organizations harmonize their processes and messages.

Partnerships are an essential tool in the development of trade facilitation standards and exist among others with the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Commission (EC). Some partnerships bring the insights from different modes of trade e.g. partnerships with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), or actors, e.g. the partnership with the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA). To this are added partnerships that bring a regional or sub-regional level perspective, e.g. the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM), the Middle Corridor (Trans-Caspian International Transport Route), which can help the roll-out and implementation of UN/CEFACT standards in the (sub-)region in question.

Harmonization is beneficial for standards across many different fields, whether they are agricultural, product or electronic data exchange, in order to ensure smooth exchange of goods and to not constitute a technical barrier to trade. UNECE provides a unique, neutral platform where member State ministries of agricultural or market surveillance administrations can exchange and develop harmonized processes and standards. Harmonization of information exchange standards also spans novel topics such as the transparency and traceability of supply chains, and their sustainability dimensions (see focus example "Sustainability Pledge").

The active participation of the private sector in this process is key as trade is ultimately between two private-sector partners. Much of the work of the subprogramme is set up to enable the private sector to bring their experience and help to form the standards and guidelines; this ensures that the resulting solutions will be workable from the business perspective and that our outputs have the greatest possible impact.

Servicing and updating of the existing guidance and standards under the subprogramme and developing new ones is and will continue to be the top priority.

Cultivating existing partnerships and establishing new ones remains a key goal of the Subprogramme. It allows to pool resources and avoid overlaps, bringing forward high-quality standards and guidance for the benefit of the trading community and regulatory authorities. It also helps to reach stakeholders who do not necessarily know our work directly. Furthermore, it can bring points of view which had not necessarily been considered previously.

Partnership with UNCTAD	
Purpose of partnership	There is no formal partnership agreement between UNECE and UNCTAD, but the two organizations have been successfully cooperating across many different substance areas, ranging from trade (e.g. trade policy-related areas, including different aspects related to World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements), over trade facilitation (e.g. trade facilitation, logistics, connectivity) to investment and enterprise (e.g. infrastructure financing/investment including through PPPs, but also MSMEs-related issues). In terms of cooperative activities, UNCTAD contributes into the standards development work of UNECE Trade Subprogramme, providing considerations from developing and transition countries outside of the UNECE region. The partnership also helps to disseminate the deliverables of UNECE to UNCTAD stakeholders. Joint work has been established for a number of publications, like a three-way partnership with the International Trade Centre for a guide to the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement. Joint work has also progressed for capacity building in developing national non-tariff measure databases and integration into the UNCTAD TRAINS database, for example. The two entities have participated in development account projects together, most recently on MSMEs and Trade and Connectivity.
Impact, added value	UNECE deliverables are more robust with UNCTAD, bringing input from member States not normally present in the development work, and bringing the organization's analytical approach that enriches UNECE advisory work for governments. UNECE deliverables benefit from increased visibility to UNCTAD stakeholders. Coordination on key issues ensures that both entities are speaking with a single (or harmonized) voice on key topics.
Opportunities	Further joint work at field level in projects could enhance reach and quality of the work. Coordinating meeting dates can help capitalize on stakeholder's travel to attend meetings of both organizations could also be positive.

Partnership with the private sector under "The Sustainability Pledge"	
Purpose of partnership	UNECE has formed strong collaborations and partnerships with the private sector to enhance traceability and transparency for sustainable value chains. In particular, under its global framework initiative "The Sustainability Pledge" , jointly implemented with the ITC, and support of the EU, UNECE has extensively consulted business actors to produce a toolbox with policy recommendations, e-standards, and implementation guidelines to help the fashion industry take a positive step towards improving its environmental and ethical credentials, and to foster responsible production and consumption patterns. To further strengthen collaboration, UNECE launched the "Call to Action" inviting industry stakeholders to pledge and apply the UNECE toolbox. As of now, about 80 pledges were submitted, from 70 industry actors, with more than 300 partners, from 22 countries. Out of these, more than 60% represent SMEs, and 10% business associations. As part of its work, UNECE has explored the role of advanced technologies and operated blockchain pilots for end-to-end traceability, for textile and leather products. Until now, over 60 partners are involved in the pilots, covering the full spectrum of value chains, across 21 countries with 20 use cases, involving brands, suppliers and manufacturers. While so far, the focus has been on the fashion industry, the initiative will soon expand to other sectors, such as Agri-food, Extractives and CRMs.
Impact, added value	By mobilizing multi-sectoral partnerships and harnessing the potential of the green and circular transition, UNECE is leading an international effort for sustainable and circular production and consumption practices that support verified information, which consumers, investors and regulators can trust. The strong engagement and commitment from private actors enable collaborative business models to address the root causes of negative impacts in the areas of human rights, the environment, and socioeconomic aspects in both textile and leather value chains. Particular focus is devoted to approaches and measures to foster visibility and connectivity for small-scale actors that embrace sustainable practices, for better access to market and investment opportunities.
Opportunities	Advance multi-actor partnerships for technical assistance and capacity building at field level, particularly in support of MSMEs, farmers and producers operating in emerging and developing countries. For instance, UNECE's recent Multi-Stakeholder Policy Dialogues (e.g., Italy , Uzbekistan , Chile , and Egypt) provide opportunities to identify and implement accompanying measures for MSMEs as well as to bridge the knowledge and digital gap for small-scale actors. Further opportunities arise in the upstream part of the value chain, by giving a voice to family farmers and vulnerable groups.

Subprogramme 7: Forests and the Forest Industry



The work of the subprogramme is implemented through the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI). Under the Committee and within the existing mandates, the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section supports developing evidence-based policies for sustainable forest management and contributes to collect, validate and disseminate information and results of research and analysis related to sustainable forest management and the sustainable production and consumption of wood products.

The Joint Section carries out intersectoral cooperation with other UNECE and FAO units as well as external organizations and processes. Together with COFFI, the Joint Section provides important opportunities for collaboration between member States, international organizations, formal or informal working groups, private sector firms, academia, and scientists throughout the UNECE region. Some partnership highlights in the context of the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work include:

- **Data collection, reporting, monitoring and publications on forests, sustainable forest management and forest product trade markets and trade** at pan-European and UNECE country wide levels with other international and regional organizations and processes (FAO, Forest Europe, European Commission, Eurostat, European Environment Agency International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) ; NGOs (e.g. European Forest Institute, Confederation of European Paper Industries, European Confederation of Woodworking Industries) and, private sector (e.g. Confederation of European Forest Owners), academia (e.g. TU Graz, University of Vienna, University of British Columbia, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Belgrade University, University of Michigan).
- **Policy dialogues:** carried out in close cooperation with FAO, UN country teams and local public and private sector partners
- **Capacity-building and technical assistance:** carried out in close cooperation with FAO, UN country teams, UNDP, UNEP, and local public and private sector partners.
- **Sectoral cooperation and partnerships:**
 - **Sustainable Fashion and forest fibres:** active membership in the Steering Committee of the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion (UNEP, the World Bank, International Trade Centre, FAO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNOP, ILO and Global Compact)
 - **Forestry, labour and health:** work in partnership with ILO and FAO
 - **Urban forestry:** in partnership with FAO, World Bank, World Resources Institute, European Forest Institute, national governments (The White House, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment), the private sector (e.g. Nature Based Solutions Institute, Arbor Aegi), Foundations (e.g. Arbor Day Foundation, Trees for Cities, Fondazione Capellino), networks (European Forum on Urban Forestry, ArboCityNet, Geneva Cities Hub), community organizations (Birmingham Tree People), over 60 cities, and academia (e.g. Bern University of Applied Sciences, University of Florence, Geneva University of Landscape, Engineering and Architecture).
- **Circular economy and forests:** Following the 2021 session of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, in cooperation with other international organizations (FAO, ILO, UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion), non-governmental organizations (e.g. PEFC), academia (e.g. TU Graz, University of British Columbia) and the private sector (WBCSD and private companies), worked on several products relevant to a circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, covering practically the whole material and production chains.

Partnership with FAO	
Purpose of partnership	<p>FAO and UNECE have formed a longstanding partnership, formalised at present via the partnership agreement signed in 2012 and operational via the Joint UNECE-FAO Forestry and Timber Section and working via joint programmes of work. It addresses work items such as sustainable forest management, wood and non-wood sustainable forest products, boreal forests, urban forestry, circular economy, as well as ecosystem restoration, sustainable food systems and the forest sector, forest biodiversity and trees outside the forest.</p> <p>UNECE benefits from FAO resources (staff and non-staff that they manage and allocate) – three FTEs and around 100k for publications, translations, events, etc.</p> <p>Working with FAO amplifies and deepens the outreach of UNECE's work. It allows to avoid overlap, pools expertise and knowledge and improves coordination at all levels. FAO enhances access to high-level meetings. FAO's presence at global and, more importantly, at local level, gives UNECE access to field work.</p>
Impact, added value	<p>Increased engagement of the region and impact on reforestation and landscape restoration efforts: For example, in a Ministerial meeting organized by ECE and FAO in October 2021, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries announced commitments to restore more than 4 million ha of land by 2030 under the Global Bonn Challenge.</p> <p>Increased outreach of publications and training material: all publications are joint ECE/FAO publications and distributed for greater impact through both channels.</p>
Opportunities	<p>Increased joint work also at field level in in projects. FAO's wide reach represents a potential source of further cooperation and funding for different work streams and initiatives.</p> <p>The new joint work programme agreed in late 2021 is an opportunity to redesign and rebalance the workload and the tasks and responsibilities of FAO and UNECE.</p>

Subprogramme 8: Housing, Land Management and Population



Housing, land management Component of Subprogramme 8

The Housing and Land Management Unit (HLMU) at the Forests, Land and Housing Division (FLHD), which acts as a secretariat to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM), develops partnerships to support national and local governments in the UNECE region, to achieve urban related SDGs, implement global and regional intergovernmental agreements, including the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter for Sustainable Housing, and “Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030”.

To promote the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, a network of eight Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities have been established. The Centres provide capacity-building and training activities; conduct research and analysis on housing and urban development policies; and undertake outreach activities to promote the Charter.

The centres also organize joint events with the UNECE secretariat. For instance, the UNFCCC COP26 “Climate Breakfast with Mayors: A dialogue with Norman Foster and John Kerry” was convened by UNECE jointly with the Norman Foster Foundation, the C40 cities’ network and the City Government of Glasgow in the United Kingdom.

UNECE convenes the UN Forums of Mayors (the First Forum of Mayors was held on 6 October 2020 and the Second – on 4 and 5 April 2022). Multiple UN agencies and programmes as well as cities networks provided expert inputs into the development of the content of the Forums through the preparatory meetings. The Second Forum of Mayors also featured side events, which were jointly organized with UN-Habitat, the UN Road Safety Fund, the UEFA, the UN DRR, the WHO, others.

HLMU and the Geneva Cities Hub also organize together annual roundtables “In focus: SDG 11” as part of the annual sessions of the Committee. This roundtable provides a platform for a dialogue between the UN, city networks and other stakeholders on addressing the challenges to achieving SDG 11 and other urban-related SDGs.

Further, to support the implementation of the Geneva Charter, UNECE and Housing Europe in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) developed a study “#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region” which include a set of policy and technical tools and over 70 best practices. Following publication of the study in 2021, the #Housing2030 partners established a joint online portal¹⁰ with a database of best practices and training materials. They also regularly organize joint workshops and capacity-building activities.

Under the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA), HLMU regularly works together on joint studies, events and technical cooperation activities with other United Nations agencies and international organizations involved in land administration in the ECE region, including the FAO, UN-Habitat, United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the European Union Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (EU INSPIRE) Directive, International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), the European Land Information Service, EuroGeographics and others.

¹⁰ www.housing2030.org

UNECE HLMU cooperates with the regional economic commissions of the United Nations, UN-Habitat and other UN agencies to support achieving the urban related SDGs. The five Regional Commissions regularly organize policy dialogues to bring to the global UN level the regional challenges and solutions to support sustainable urban development and to thus promote achieving the SDG11 and the New Urban Agenda. Through joint UNDA supported projects, the five Regional Economic Commissions develop together new innovative tools and approaches.

UNECE HLM is also a member of the following global networks which support joint knowledge creation and exchange of information and best practices:

- The United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative - a global platform which includes 14 United Nations organizations and programmes dedicated to helping cities harness information communication technologies for achieving the SDGs. The HLMU in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UN-Habitat, also form the initiative secretariat.
- The Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) - a cross-stakeholder initiative for improving local resilience in UNECE region countries at city level. The Local2030 network supports the localization of the SDGs and brings together UN agencies, associations of local and regional governments, businesses and community-based organizations. The Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance which brings together UN organizations and international financial institutions; and which supports promoting investments for achieving the SDGs at city level.
- The Global Alliance for Building and Construction (Global ABC) where UNECE is engaged under the MoU between UNECE and the UNEP which host the Global ABC secretariat. The National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP), a global network of international agencies who work together to support the development and implementation of NUPs globally.

Population Component of Subprogramme 8

The Population Component of Subprogramme 8 focuses on population ageing and the UNECE Population Unit is formally and informally collaborating with a range of stakeholders in this field.

Across the UN System, UNECE collaborates with several UN entities, including the regional commissions, through the Inter-Agency Group on Ageing (IAGA). The joint objective is to advance ageing issues across the UN System and implement and promote the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030).

Through the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA) of which the Population Unit is the Secretariat, regional dialogue and cooperation on ageing is fostered between member States, the research community, civil society organizations, as well as UN entities and regional organisations active in this field. Examples of collaboration include the participation of the International Longevity Centre Canada, Ardager Kazakhstan, and Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini, Ukraine in the task force that led the work on the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing (2021) and the organisation of a joint workshop between BAGSO, AGE Platform, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and UNECE on “Making participation meaningful: bringing governments and civil society together”.

The UNECE Population Unit also has a long-standing collaboration with research and academia in the field of demography and ageing. This includes close collaboration with leading demographic research institutions in the Generations and Gender Programme and international doctoral training networks. Examples include the EU-funded EuroAgeism and HOMeAGE networks. Furthermore, the scientific research community has a seat in the Bureau of the Standing Working Group on Ageing (currently represented by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research).

Partnership with UNFPA	
Purpose of partnership	UNECE has a longstanding partnership with the UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This partnership includes the joint organisation of meetings and workshops, and collaboration in the reviews and follow-up to international frameworks on population and development, such as the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). Since 2020, UNFPA and UNECE have further strengthened their collaboration through a Joint Programme on Ageing (together with WHO, OHCHR and HelpAge International) on “Building forward better in light of COVID-19: Upholding the rights and dignity of older persons through health, social care and enabling environments in Europe and Central Asia”, focused on UNFPA programme countries in the region.
Impact, added value	Through UNFPA support, UNECE activities have been more accessible to countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. UNFPA often provides funding to support participants from programme countries to attend events, sponsors interpretation and document translations into Russian. UNFPA country offices in programme countries, provide valuable support at the country level for the organisation of missions and meetings, and advance joint objectives on ageing through country-level projects and collaboration with governments, for example by providing tailored support with the periodic national MIPAA reviews.
Opportunities	In the field of ageing, UNECE and UNFPA have common objectives and are complementary in their respective strengths. By joining forces each organisation can achieve more.

Partnership with the Norman Foster Foundation (Centre of Excellence)	
Purpose of partnership	The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing Norman Foster Foundation (NFF) in Spain provides best practices, research, support and training around sustainable cities, sustainable housing and the organization of the Forum of Mayors. The partnership combines the work of UNECE in addressing housing and urban development challenges with the vision and expertise in infrastructure and urbanism of the Norman Foster Foundation.
Impact, added value	The Centre provides with a comprehensive methodological contribution to the work of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management on housing and urban development policies. Architect Norman Foster, the NFF President, was actively engaged in the organization of the UN Forums of Mayors to which he acts as an informal patron. He also created sketches for the very important policy document, the regional action plan for the UNECE region “Place and Life in the ECE - A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes”, which was launched by the Ministers responsible for urban development in the UNECE region in 2021. The sketches helped to explain and disseminate the regional action plan to a much wider audience of the stakeholders, than just member States. The Norman Foster Foundation workshops, including “Sustainability’ workshop (18-21 October 2021), “Re-materializing Housing” (15-19 November 2021), “Energy” (6-10 June 2022); reports “Future of Cities”, “On Cities: Lessons for the Future Conversation Series”, “Future of Cities: In Conversation with Norman Foster” provide an important intellectual contribution to the deliberations on best practices related to access for affordable and decent housing. From April 2022, on request of the Mayor of Kharkiv, Ukraine, the Norman Foster Foundation is leading the development of the masterplan for the city of Kharkiv. The project will serve as a blueprint for the reconstruction of other Ukrainian cities and towns.
Opportunities	This cooperation offers wide opportunities for capacity building of national and local government representatives as well as stakeholders on topics of affordable and decent housing, urban planning and management, urban related SDGs.

Partnership with Regional Commissions on promoting urban economic resilience	
Purpose of partnership	The five UN Regional Commissions support national governments and cities to achieve sustainable development, increased policy coherence among member States across their regions, promote improved capacity of institutions, and implement the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). The Regional Commissions collaborate to share their work on research, best practice experience and capacity building and on facilitating direct engagement with local and national governments, UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators.
Impact, added value	Through the effective implementation of the NUA, the five Regional Commissions advance their work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building a governance structure and establishing a supportive framework aligned with region-specific priorities ▪ Planning and managing urban and territorial spatial development ▪ Promoting green, climate resilient and healthy cities, including through COVID-19 recovery efforts ▪ Addressing housing and related deficits through financing ▪ Strengthening capacities to promote sustainable urbanization ▪ The use of technology to support sustainable urban development ▪ Facilitating engagement and participation of development partners Thanks to key instruments like the Forum of Mayors the joint work of all regional commissions is promoted as a new form of multilateralism.
Opportunities	The 2030 Agenda and support to its implementation at city level provide opportunities for acceleration of achieving the SDGs. It accelerates achievement of global development agendas.

Examples of programme-level partnerships

Below a non-exhaustive list of examples of partnerships that span across several UNECE sub-programmes.

▪ THE PEP

The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)¹¹ is a partnership in its core sense, since it brings together the transport, health and environment sectors (and more) of member States to define and experiment with joint approaches to sustainable mobility and transport strategies. It is also a partnership from the perspective of its secretariat, which is jointly provided by the UNECE Environment and Sustainable Transport Divisions and by the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe.

Since 2002, studies have been published¹² - notably on the potential for green job creation associated with the development of cycling, electric mobility and the expansion of public transport - experiences have been shared, good practices gathered, and partnerships formed. “Relay race” workshops¹³ have also allowed country representatives at national and local levels and a wide range of civil society, academic and other stakeholders to come together and cooperate in devising solutions.

THE PEP Partnerships¹⁴ bring together partners from member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations who are interested to collaborate on a specific project, providing technical capacity and supporting member States in implementing THE PEP at the national level.

The specific thematic PEP Partnerships include:

- Partnership on Health Economic Assessment Tools
- Partnership on Active Mobility (previously, Partnership on Cycling Promotion)
- Partnership on Eco-Driving
- Partnership on Jobs in Green and Healthy Transport
- Partnership on the Integration of Transport, Health and Environmental Objectives into Urban and Spatial Planning
- Partnership on Sustainable Tourism Mobility (previously, TRANSDANUBE Partnership)
- Partnership on Child- and Youth-friendly Mobility

▪ European Investment Bank (EIB)

The EIB and UNECE signed a MoU in July 2021 to support their shared objectives across a broad range of thematic and sectorial areas, both on strategic and operational levels. Both EIB and UNECE are committed to implementing the SDGs and the goals set in the Paris Climate Agreement and to leveraging all sources of expertise and finance for that. In the framework of the Agenda 2030, which sets the overall policy objectives of the partnership, both organisations agreed to collaborate in key policy areas such as environment, transport, with particular attention to gender issues and the climate agenda. Further areas of cooperation, ad-hoc undertakings and changing priorities are discussed through continuous dialogue. Examples of past successful collaboration include UNECE’s expert contribution to the revision of EIB’s Transport Lending Policy. Future commitments include further cooperation on water and adaptation projects i, on which UNECE and EIB are engaged in continuous discussions around inter-sectoral (nexus) solutions, particularly in the area of water-energy-food nexus. The Indicative Joint Action Plan remains a “living” document against which the focal points organize regular calls to review progress and report to respective organisations, including for emerging priorities and in the context of the multiple crises in the region.

▪ Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

UNECE was a founding member of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The role of the RCC is crucial in developing regional cooperation and solidarity to maximize the economic and social potential of the Southeast Europe sub-region. TUNECE’s supports the Western Balkans across the areas of trade, investment, innovation and SMEs, and more recently in the transition to circular economy and the digital and green transformations. Partners for the different areas include DG TAXUD and the World Bank on trade facilitation, the Single Window and data sharing, or UNEP and UNESCO on environment and climate change, for example.

¹¹ <https://thepep.unece.org/index.php/pep>

¹² <https://thepep.unece.org/index.php/publications>

¹³ <https://thepep.unece.org/index.php/relay-race-workshops>

¹⁴ <https://thepep.unece.org/partnerships>

■ The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)

The Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and UNECE signed an MOU in 2013, covering a wide range of topics including trade, transport, connectivity, etc. The most recent plan of cooperation for 2021-23 covers such topics as trade facilitation, customs and border crossings operation, public-private partnerships, promotion of SDGs and others. As one example of practical cooperation with EEC is the work on trade-related issues, including on the Single Window approaches, and more recently on fostering resilient, diversified and sustainable value chains in the Eurasian Region after COVID-19.

■ Other examples

In addition to the above examples, the below boxes also present two partnerships related to the work of several UNECE sub-programmes:

- The UN Road Safety Fund – hosted by UNECE – and pursuing an active partnership approach aimed at scaling up financing for road safety and catalysing action as a contribution to the new Global Action Plan for Road Safety;
- The newly launched Circular STEP platform, which is an example of the steps taken to enhance the partnerships for circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources – UNECE's current cross-cutting theme.



The United Nations Road Safety Fund Overview of Partnerships

UNECE hosts the global UN Road Safety Fund (UNRSF). The Fund pursues two types of partnership. On the one hand, UN agencies can become PUNOs to participate in the yearly call for proposals and apply for project funding. PUNOs, in this sense, are main beneficiaries and/or project implementing partners. On the other hand, UN member states, International Organizations, Development Banks, and the private sector contribute financially to the Fund. Beneficiary countries, road safety advocates, academia, and civil society representatives are also partners of the Fund and participate actively in the carrying out of its operations.

Currently UNRSF has 30 beneficiary partner countries; 21 private sector and government funders; and works 11 UN specialized agencies and regional commissions; five celebrity champions; two multilateral development bank representatives; two research and academia bodies; and the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety (comprising some 300 members globally).

In 2022, with the first-ever UN High-level Meeting on Global Road Safety, the Fund hosted its first pledging event on 30 June 2022 at the UN Headquarters in New York. Sixteen partners from the public and private sectors pledged over **US\$ 15 million** to fund vital road safety projects in low- and middle-income countries during the [first replenishment cycle 2022-2025](#). The pledges highlight the critical value that the Fund's growing multi-stakeholder partnership places on investing in safe, resilient and sustainable road safety systems for those countries and regions most in need. Several participating governments advocated for increased financing or have committed to new pledges to the Fund. At the Fund's event, pledges were made by private sector donors Autoliv, Bridgestone, FIA Foundation, Keep Fighting Foundation, La Nuez, Michelin Corporate Foundation, Pirelli, Revel and TotalEnergies Foundation.



UNECE Circular STEP

Multistakeholder knowledge sharing platform on circular economy

Circular STEP was launched by UNECE secretariat [in April 2022](#) to “step-up” the circular economy transition, filling gaps and creating synergies among the many practical and value-creating initiatives in the sphere of the circular economy. Its objective is to develop and disseminate evidence-based international good policy practices and unite experts from national, regional, and local governments, business and academic community, and civil society from the UNECE region. The circular economy is a very wide topic, Circular STEP has started by zooming into eight areas: Trade, Innovation-Enhancing Procurement, Waste Management, Small and Medium Enterprises, Traceability of Value Chains, Financing, Digital Solutions, Institutional Arrangements. The activities of the network are demand driven, to address the priorities and needs of UNECE member States. The network is maintained within a [project “Accelerating the transition towards a more circular economy in the UNECE region”](#) (multi-agency UNDA project, 2021-2024).

The mission of Circular STEP is to foster circular developments in the region and support countries in achieving their respective goals, targets, and commitments. Circular STEP plans to create a database of successful circular economy policies and practices in the region, thereby forming a solid evidence base for the future, encourage stakeholder coordination and communication across the region, disseminate knowledge and form a clear understanding of the definition and principles of circularity. Currently Circular STEP regularly sends out newsletters, updating members about ongoing activities.

As of today, Circular STEP carries out partnership activities with UNEP, GACERE, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Chatham House, Lund University, Circular Economy Centre of the University of Cambridge, the European Commission, and others. Circular STEP unites 24 officially nominated focal points of UNECE Member States and intends to increase the number of participating members in future. The mission of Circular STEP is to foster circular developments in the region and support countries in achieving their respective goals, targets, and commitments. Circular STEP plans to create a database of successful circular economy policies and practices in the region, thereby forming a solid evidence base for the future, encourage stakeholder coordination and communication across the region, disseminate knowledge and form a clear understanding of the definition and principles of circularity. Currently Circular STEP regularly sends out newsletters, updating members about ongoing activities.

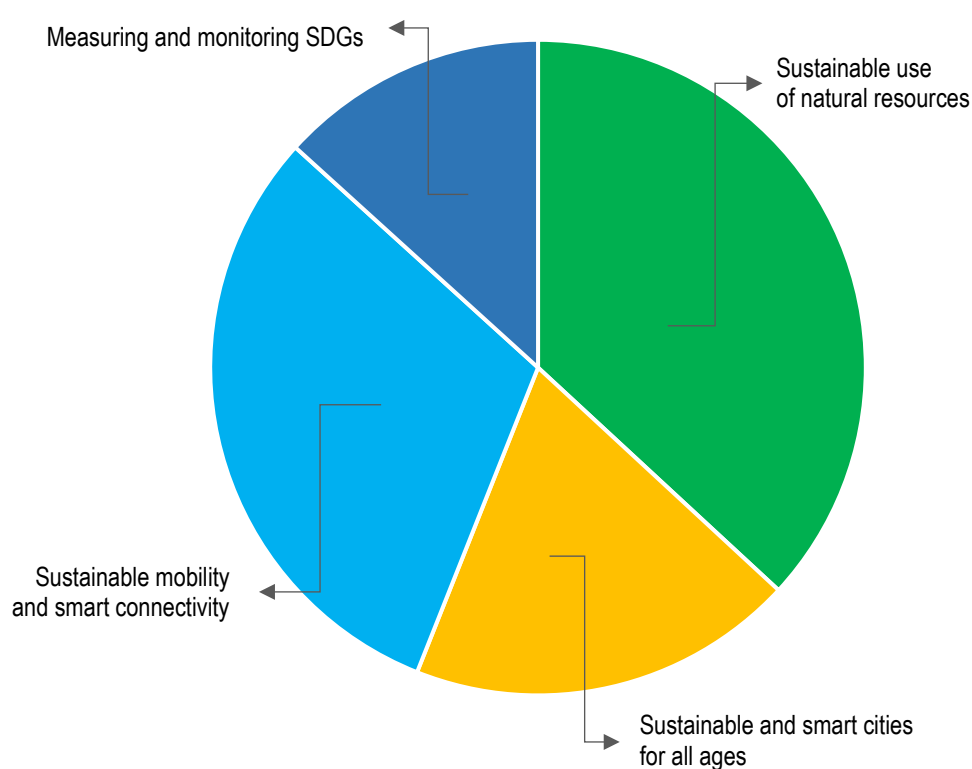
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Partnering for the SDGs

This section graphically illustrates the approximate distribution of existing UNECE partnership across the four nexus areas at which multiple SDGs converge:

- the sustainable use of natural resources
- sustainable and smart cities for all ages
- sustainable mobility and smart connectivity
- measuring and monitoring progress towards achieving the Goals.

Partnerships by Nexus Area



Partnerships management at UNECE

Partnerships with key development actors are essential for the achievement of the SDGs. Businesses, financial institutions, international organizations, civil society and academia, among others, all play an essential role in UNECE's successful contribution to advancing the 2030 Agenda. UNECE engages with them in different cooperation formats taking into account the following principles:

- (i) to build on the results of the work carried out by other relevant actors operating in the UNECE region;
- (ii) to minimize ineffective allocation of resources;
- (iii) to promote, whenever appropriate, a more rational division of responsibilities; and
- (iv) to promote the involvement of those actors who would like to bring their expertise or complementary approach in support of UNECE's activities in the area of technical assistance.

In view of this, the revised UNECE Resource Mobilization Strategy approved in 2020 aimed at expanding UNECE cooperation with its network (over 18,000 experts), fostering greater internal synergies and building closer partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders across the region to produce practical global public goods. In particular, the second principle of the Strategy recognizes that strengthened cooperation is required to mobilize action and resources across the public and private sectors. Notably, the private sector constitutes a source of technical expertise that is essential for the achievement of the SDGs.

Managing risks and ensuring accountability

Cooperation that produces high-quality outcomes works best when it is transparent and balanced. UNECE aims to effectively partner with actors of different nature by taking a reflective approach across the partnering cycle. This means setting due diligence standards before engaging, working to maintain a level playing field in terms of opportunities and obligations and periodically reviewing the terms of reference that govern partnerships.

Partnerships encompass the risk of personal and organizational conflicts of interest. In its 2017 Review of mechanisms and policies addressing conflicts of interest in the UN System (JIU/REP/2017/9), the JIU indicated that while the topic of personal conflicts of interest is well covered, organizational conflicts of interest remain an unexplored territory in the UN System. While UNECE carefully follows the regulatory framework governing personal conflicts of interest across the UN system as summarized in the above-mentioned JIU report, organizational conflicts of interest are primarily reflected in the UNECE risk register and related risk treatment plans¹⁵. In addition, upon EXCOM request to strengthen the management of reputational risks, the UNECE Framework for the Engagement with the business sector¹⁶ was presented and approved in September 2017. Following this, in September 2021, UNECE completed a review of the UNECE engagement with the private sector¹⁷. Both documents give an account of the rules set by UNECE bodies to mitigate the risk of organizational conflicts of interest.

Engagement with private sector partners differs across subprogrammes but is governed by a standardized set of rules. Examples of the measures and tools in place to address partnerships in a strategic and risk-informed way are:

- According to the Guidelines on procedures and practices of UNECE bodies¹⁸ of April 2013, "It should be ensured, at all administrative levels of the secretariat and for all bodies of the Commission, that the work is carried out in a way that is member driven, participatory, consensus-oriented, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, results-oriented and accountable."
- Participation of the business sector representatives in meetings of UNECE bodies should be in accordance with their respective Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference, while also considering the aforementioned Guidelines.
- At the Committee level, representatives are appointed by the Head of Delegation and do not represent any private sector entity but a participating member State¹⁹. Furthermore, these private sector delegates are often consultants serving governments, so they operate under the government's oversight and authority.

¹⁵ Annually updated and available at: <https://unece.org/governance-framework>

¹⁶ Informal document 2017/40

¹⁷ Review of UNECE engagement with the private sector

¹⁸ (E/ECE/1464, Appendix III) [E ECE 1464 English \(unece.org\)](https://unece.org/E-ECE-1464-English)

¹⁹ Pursuant to paragraph 7 of the Guidelines on procedures and practices of UNECE bodies (E/ECE/1464, Appendix III) the representatives of business sector may serve on the Bureaux of UNECE's sectoral committees and other subsidiary bodies only if they are officially nominated by member States and are elected by the respective body.

- In some other cases the representation and bureau membership are limited to government officials. This is the case, for instance, of ITC and its subsidiary bodies whose representatives and officers are nominated by governments from government officials and elected by country representatives²⁰. Another example is the Conference of European Statisticians. By definition, the members of the CES and its Bureau are Heads of National Statistical Offices, who are government officials.
- The Due Diligence Review of Private Sector Entities Engaging with UNECE (2017) provides the framework for the formal risk assessment and approval process.
- Where applicable, guidelines are applied on the use of official titles in emails, on business cards and other mediums. For example, those applicable to the International PPP Centre of Excellence²¹.
- In some cases, private sector participation is highly encouraged to provide an industry perspective, share knowledge, expertise, experience and capacity, and to foster a dialogue between the public and the private sector. Participation of the private sector in teams of specialists with the appropriate control and accountability mechanisms in place is essential for the achievement of SDG 17. For example, private sector representatives participate in the development of international PPP standards and their participation is governed by the applicable rules²². The private sector also contributes to the mandated PPP activities thanks to its observer status in the Bureau of the Working Party.

Finally, as a separate but related mechanism, in line with General Assembly resolution 64/259 on accountability, UNECE secretariat prepares annually a report on Technical Cooperation activities, which is presented to UNECE EXCOM for information. The report, structured by the core SDGs where UNECE has the strongest impact, informs member States about the implementation of the technical cooperation strategy, last revised in 2021. Further to the adoption of the Resource Mobilization Strategy by the Executive Committee in 2020, biennial Resource Mobilization Plans are also annexed in the report on Technical Cooperation activities: these plans inform on the extrabudgetary expenditures of the previous year and provide a forecast for the next two years by subprogramme and cross sectoral initiatives.

Ensuring inclusive partnerships

UNECE partners with stakeholders in line with the General Assembly resolution 76/224 *Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners*²³. Before engaging, UNECE seeks reliable and consistent partners, taking into account not only the economic and financial but also the developmental, social, human rights, gender and environmental implications of their undertakings, and, in general, towards implementing corporate social and environmental responsibility, that is, bringing such values and responsibilities to bear on their conduct and policies premised on profit incentives, in conformity with national laws and regulations.²⁴

As one key element, UNECE strives to ensure its partnerships contribute to promoting gender equality. The Programme Level Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming of 2019²⁵ already acknowledged that “UNECE has used partnerships effectively to promote gender equality at country, regional and global levels” in the context of the implementation of its Policy for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women of 2016²⁶. At present, the UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2021-2025 shows UNECE’s commitment to “continue to advocate for gender equality and the empowerment of women in its work within the UN system, as well as with its member States and partners at national, regional and international levels.”

Furthermore, as of 2022, programme and project managers at UNECE are required to consider for their work the guidance contained in *Operationalising Leaving No One Behind*²⁷ and the *Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator*²⁸. The documents include recommendations and considerations when dealing with partners, for example, when developing a project, “were partners made aware of the importance of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the project?”

²⁰ According to the Rules of Procedure of the Inland Transport Committee ([ECE/TRANS/294, annex III](#))

²¹ [UNECE PPP Guidelines for the use of formal titles ICoE.pdf](#)

²² Annex I, paragraph 3(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships) [ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2021/5/Rev.1 \(unece.org\)](#)

²³ [Resolution 76/224](#)

²⁴ [Resolution 73/254](#), para. 12

²⁵ [Microsoft Word - FINAL UNECE GENDER EVALUATION.docx](#)

²⁶ [ECE_INF_2021_2_ECE Policy on GEEW_1.pdf \(unece.org\)](#)

²⁷ [Operationalizing Leaving No one Behind](#)

²⁸ <http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/3050>

Managing formal partnership agreements

In 2019 an *Internal Review of Cooperation and Partnership Agreements in UNECE* was done to take stock of the existing partnerships and practices underpinning collaboration and to explore ways to strengthen its effectiveness. In 2020-21, UNECE signed 11 new MoUs and extended 2 MoUs, adding to the 88 agreements already in place at the time of the review. 84 have the form of MoU and 6 are enshrined in exchanges of letters or statements of intent, 1 is an Interface procedure. All MoUs at UNECE are linked to the work of UNECE sub-programmes or to a Convention Programme of Work, and to stay relevant over time need to be linked to concrete objectives or deliverables.

As a result of the review, a number of best practices to implement a more strategic and integrated approach to partnerships were identified and form the basis of the updated MoU process in force since 2021, namely:

- A strategic assessment needs to be carried out prior to formalising the engagement
- An action plan with timeframe and KPIs needs to be developed and accompany the MoU
- Periodic reporting to governing bodies should be established
- The workflow for internal review and approval was revised
- Focal points should be accountable for the management of the partnership and compliance with due diligence and reporting obligations

This UNECE-wide approach to partnerships is also meant to inform the collaboration with outside partners that are not governed by a formal agreement.

Centres of Excellence at UNECE

UNECE divisions have established a number of CoE networks to advance the implementation of UNECE mandates under subprogrammes 4 (economic cooperation and trade), 5 (sustainable energy) and 8 (housing). The CoEs were born in specific circumstances to fulfil the decisions of different sectoral committees and are therefore different in nature.

- The **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Specialist Centres of Excellence** are overseen by the Working Party on PPPs and are organised in the form of a 'hubs and spokes' arrangement. The UNECE secretariat acts as the coordinating hub for the Specialist Centres of Excellence hosted by public institutions or entities and endorsed by the hosting government. The CoEs are responsible for identifying and articulating best practice in specific sectors, such as in water and sanitation, health, food security, and roads, providing this information under the auspices of UNECE and its intergovernmental structure to governments as a public good.
- The **Geneva UN Charter Centres on Sustainable Housing** were established as a network under the coordination of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management. The Centres support the implementation of the Charter through exchange of experiences, knowledge sharing, training and research, advisory services, cooperation and dissemination of its principles among the UNECE member States and beyond. To establish the Centres, UNECE partners with the governments of the participating States where they are to be located, as well as with international, national and non-government organizations and academic institutions. Cooperation with the Centres is governed by a MoU between UNECE and the partner organization in the respective country.
- The **International Centres of Excellence on High Performance Buildings (ICE-HPB)** comprise a collaborative network of organisations focused on supporting their local industry in the rapid development of next generation of buildings consistent with the UN Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings. The Guidelines called for their own dissemination and deployment, and the Centres are a vehicle for achieving that. The centres provide education, training, and other critical resources to regional building industry practitioners, while sharing these resources globally through collaboration with other network participants. ICE-HPB network partners must meet a pre-defined set of criteria.
- **International Centres of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane (ICE-CMM)**. The Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane is mandated by the Committee on Sustainable Energy to carry out concrete, result-oriented activities that promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from coal mines through recovery and use of methane, to reduce the risks of explosions in coal mines. The principal area of work of the Group of Experts is best practice guidance for effective drainage, recovery and usage of CMM, which is achieved including through collaboration with key stakeholders such as the existing Centres of Excellence. The Centres report on their achievements and planned activities at the meetings of the Group of Experts on CMM.
- The **International Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management (ICE-SRM)** are a collaborative network of organisations focused on supporting sustainable investment in resources. The Centres are conceived to provide policy support, technical advice and consultation, education, training, dissemination, and other critical activities for stakeholders involved in sustainable development of national resource endowments. ICE-SRM network partners must meet a pre-defined set of criteria.

While different in their respective approaches and governance arrangements, all UNECE CoEs work under a common set of principles as defined in Informal document No. 2020/14²⁹. The principles aim mainly at defining the scope of the activities of the CoEs and the eligibility criteria, and establishing the mechanisms for due diligence checks, performance management, reporting and accountability.

Notably, partners wishing to host a CoE affiliated with UNECE must meet qualifying criteria and agree to the delivery of outputs as set forth in standard terms of reference established and agreed by the relevant oversight body within UNECE. CoEs are subject to the due diligence mechanisms established by UNECE, including the UNECE Framework for the Engagement with the Business Sector³⁰ and the Due Diligence Review of Private Sector entities engaging with UNECE³¹, as appropriate.

Apart from the governance and controlling mechanisms in place, trust-based engagement with the CoEs has proven to be key for fruitful cooperation.

Overall, UNECE CoEs contribute substantially to knowledge exchange, advice and the development of best practices in their respective areas of work with the ultimate aim to achieving the most beneficial impact on the SDGs.

²⁹ Economic Commission for Europe and partnerships: Centres of Excellence [United Nations \(unece.org\)](https://www.unece.org)

³⁰ Contained in informal document 2017/40

³¹ Contained in informal document 2017/41

Main takeaways

The following key conclusions are emerging from the stocktaking of UNECE's partnerships:

1. **In supporting the efforts of its member States to achieve the 2030 Agenda, UNECE broadly relies on knowledge, funding and capacity building partners** to deliver results.
2. **The wide range of partnerships with public and private stakeholders creates strong impact**, by ensuring that UNECE's normative and technical assistance mandates are amplified through partnerships. The highlights of such partnerships provided in the report illustrate this. Importantly:
 - **UNECE's key strengths when engaging in partnerships** include the normative dimension of its mandate, the long-term orientation of its work, the inclusive inter-governmental architecture and the ability to cover a wide range of topics – making UNECE often a unique partner.
 - **The key limitations for UNECE's partnership potential** include the ability of the UNECE secretariat to link its normative work to implementation and development finance; adequately resourcing to engage with partners consistently; limited visibility of some of the partnerships; procedural constraints.
3. **When it comes to engagement with key partner types:**
 - **UNECE has a strong track record of strategically partnering with other parts of the UN system**, as illustrated by the report, which ensures strong synergies and coordination, as well as results in enhanced programmatic results and significant extra-budgetary funding.
 - **A key area of potential are the partnerships with academia, including universities, think-tanks and related networks.** UNECE's subprogrammes benefit from such partnerships to a varying degree, as evident from the report, and the ability of UNECE secretariat to ensure future-proof thought leadership will to a great degree depend on diversifying and scaling up such partnerships.
 - **Private sector partners contribute substantially with technical expertise and industry perspective, as exemplified in the report.** According to the Review of the UNECE Engagement with the Private Sector, the findings of which this report took into account, most country representatives considered that engaging with the business sector highly or significantly contributed to (i) knowledge-sharing, including in connection with norms, standards and regulations being or to be developed by UNECE, and (ii) looking for and sharing lessons learned, good practices and innovative solutions.
 - **As elicited from the report, partnerships with IFIs and key regional organizations remain an area where there is a strong potential for growth**, with focus on building alliances that would amplify the added value of UNECE's normative and technical assistance work as well as in complex regional cooperation settings.
4. **Partnerships can play a key role in advancing the capacity of UNECE secretariat to address complex, cross-sectoral (nexus) and emerging issues.** This is illustrated by the evolving experience of the UNECE secretariat with the four nexus themes and more recently – with the theme of Circular Economy and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (where a number of new partnerships are evolving). Beyond these, such cross-cutting themes as digitalization, climate change and gender equality create opportunities for new partnerships spanning several subprogrammes.
5. **The reliance on partners underscores the importance of strengthened oversight and accountability**, as well as intensified financial scrutiny and enhanced management of legal constraints, credibility and reputational risks, especially in the case of partnering with the private sector. At the same time, according to the Review of UNECE engagement with the private sector³² "it is broadly recognized that, whilst needed, due diligence and associated processes should not be viewed as a deterrence to partnerships, but as an enabling function that helps an organization to identify the most strategic opportunities, while at the same time better calculating risk."

³² [Review of UNECE engagement with the private sector](#)

Below are the report's main takeaways:

1. **UNECE partnerships need to be strategic – with a clear set of expectations and alignment with UNECE's core mandates.** They should support and amplify cooperation through the UNECE intergovernmental architecture and technical cooperation projects.
2. **Building on UNECE's comparative advantages and taking the existing limitations into account, UNECE secretariat's approach to partnerships will need to ensure:**
 - **Linkages to major policy making processes** of UNECE member States, key regional bodies and global processes – including by partnering with major external networks of partners in respective thematic areas – which should also help improve the overall coordination.
 - **Linkages to the “on-the-ground” implementation, including in key industries** that put UNECE norms and standards into practice, to ensure feedback loops and future proofing, including in a crucial area of digitalization.
 - **Linkages to the world of development finance** (with a view to scale up the impact of UNECE's normative work), both public and private, to the extent it is relevant to UNECE's mandate, including by systematically engaging with the IFIs.
 - **Higher visibility of UNECE partnerships**, including cross-sectoral, positioning the work of the organization in key relevant fora, following up on results of key technical cooperation activities and building alliances with partners that have high visibility.
3. **The cooperation agreements should be periodically reviewed** to ensure that they are fulfilling their purpose and are in line with the above (regardless of whether they are formally reflected in a document or an informal arrangement). To this end, it is recommended to:
 - Enforce the existing (since 2021) procedure for MoU management;
 - Continuously review existing MoUs with regard to their expiration dates and possible renewals as well as continued relevance to the programme of work.
4. **An organization-wide Partnerships strategy needs to be defined and formalized**, in line with the recommendations outlined in the Review of UNECE engagement with the private sector and the Informal document No. 2020/13 on Cooperation and partnership agreements. The strategy should:
 - Serve as the instrument to provide a strategic edge to UNECE's approach to partnerships, considering the findings of this report, as well as feedback and guidance of the UNECE member States.
 - Help frame the partnerships at UNECE in the spirit of SDG17 and complement it with guidance responsive to current issues in the specific context of UNECE's mandate and activities.
 - Consider the conclusions and learnings from the Review of UNECE engagement with the private sector of September 2021, including to avoid creating “an atmosphere of mistrust” with potential partners, which was identified in the review as an issue.
 - Offer a set of common principles and good practices that UNECE Divisions are encouraged to follow to enhance transparency, accountability and strengthen coherence and harmonization as and when appropriate, including when it comes to managing partnerships with key partner types and the establishment and functioning of the Centres of Excellence.
5. **Ensure full implementation, via the respective internal focal points, of the relevant due diligence measures and adherence to relevant and applicable partnership agreement-related policies and rules to prevent conflicts of interest.** In compliance with OIOS audit recommendation³³, the UNECE secretariat needs to perform due diligence checks, as well as a strategic assessment, prior to engaging with prospective partners.

³³ See [recommendation 2 of the audit of the management of Trust Funds at the ECE](#), implemented in July 2019

Annex I: List of Acronyms

Organizations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
BAGSO	Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen
CCNR	Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine
CDDSC	Conference of Directors of Danube Shipping Companies/participants of the Bratislava Agreements
CER	Association of European Railways
CIS-STAT	Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States
CIT	International Rail Transport Committee
CITA	International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee
CLEPA	European Association of Automotive Suppliers
DC	The Danube Commission
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EBU	European Barge Union
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFIP	European Federation of Inland Ports
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIT	European Institute of Innovation & Technology
ERSTU	European River-Sea-Transport Union
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU INSPIRE	European Union Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe
EU	European Union
Eurostat	European Statistical Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIA	Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile
GlobalABC	Global Alliance for Building and Construction
IAB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability
IEA	International Energy Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMMA	International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IRF	The International Road Federation
IRU	International Road Transport Union
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
ITF	International Transport Forum

ITIO	International Transport Infrastructure Observatory
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Organization
IVR	International Association for the representation of the mutual interests of the inland shipping and the insurance and for keeping the register of inland vessels in Europe
JAPIA	Japan Auto Parts Industries Association
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MC	The Mosel Commission
MEMA	Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association
NDB	New Development Bank
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OICA	International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSJD	Organization for Cooperation of Railways
OTIF	Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail
PIANC	World Association of Waterborne Transport Infrastructure
PIARC	World Road Association
U.S. EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
UIC	International Union of Railways
UIRR	International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-GGIM	United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOP	United Nations Office for Project Services
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WCO	World Customs Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

Other

AMM	Abandoned Mine Methane
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CES	Conference of European Statisticians
CMM	Coal Mine Methane
CMR	Convention relative au contrat de transport international de marchandises par route

CoE	Centre of Excellence
COFFI	Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry
CRM	Critical Raw Materials
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DG GROW	EC Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
EGRM	Expert Group on Resource Management
EPR	Environmental Performance Review
ERMA	European Raw Materials Partnership
ETIN	ECE Transformation Innovation Network
EXCOM	Executive Committee
FPMR	Forest Products Market Review
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GA	General Assembly
GMI	Global Methane Initiative
IAGA	Inter-Agency Group on Ageing
ICCM	International Conference on Chemicals Management
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
IGO	International Governmental Organization
ITC	Inland Transport Committee
ITIO	International Transport Infrastructure Observatory
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting, Verification
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUPP	National Urban Policy Programme
PEP	Pan-European programme
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PRI	Principles for Responsible Investment
PRTR	Pollutant Release and Transfer Register
RCs	Regional Commissions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SWGA	Standing Working Group on Ageing
TIR	Transports Internationaux Routiers
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNFC	United Nations Framework Classification for Resources
UNRMS	United Nations Resource Management System
XB	Extra-budgetary



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