


# Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies



CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT  
MARKET SURVEILLANCE  
RISK MANAGEMENT  
METROLOGY  
EDUCATION ON STANDARDIZATION  
GENDER-RESPONSIVE STANDARDS

**WP.6**



**UNECE**

# Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization – Why they matter

International trade can be a key enabler for sustainable economic development. For international trade to contribute best to sustainable development, it needs to be in line with public policy objectives, including those related to public health and safety or environmental protection.

On the one hand, if poorly designed, regulations and standards aimed at promoting policy objectives can create barriers to international trade. Moreover, if an exporter to multiple international markets needs to comply with numerous, very different regulatory requirements, this

increases costs. On the other hand, regulations and standards that are not carefully designed may allow unsafe products onto the market and cause risk.

The private sector often is unaware of the complex process of standardization and product regulation, and they are at times unknowingly non-compliant.



## RECOMMENDATION L ON THE INTERNATIONAL MODEL FOR TRANSNATIONAL REGULATORY COOPERATION BASED ON GOOD REGULATORY PRACTICE

— This recommendation first published in 2001 and reviewed in 2015 brings regulatory cooperation to a next level by assisting countries in adopting common regulatory arrangements (CRA). CRA are used as a basis for harmonization and for the application of international standards.

## THE UNECE WORKING PARTY ON REGULATORY COOPERATION AND STANDARDIZATION POLICIES (WP.6)

- Develops recommendations to guide policy makers and standards development organizations (SDOs)
- Provides a neutral forum to convene member States, SDOs, country agencies, private sector and non-governmental agencies to promote cooperation and sharing of experiences
- Raises awareness about new challenges of relevance to standardization and regulation, such as gender, the circular economy, digitalization, new technologies and other



## MISSION STATEMENT OF WP.6

— The UNECE WP.6 aims to promote regulatory cooperation, standardization policies and activities which contribute towards reducing technical barriers to trade, promoting sustainable development in all its dimensions including, for example, gender equality, climate and environmental protection, circular economy, and the adaptation to new technologies. WP.6 and its predecessors have over fifty years of history servicing Governments in the UNECE region.

## UNECE WP.6 at a glance

Through its sub-groups and different work streams, UNECE WP.6. covers a vast range of issues related to regulatory cooperation and standardization.



**MARS**

Market surveillance and the chain of control of products which enter the market is a pillar of quality infrastructure. The UNECE Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS), established in 2003, brings together the major players involved (public authorities, manufacturers, retailers, importers, consumers, etc.) to increase transparency and attract attention to the role and responsibility of public authorities in the chain of control.



**GRSI**

Aiming towards parity in the technical bodies that develop standards and ensure standards respect a certain gender lens is essential to achieve SDG 5 and empowerment of women. The UNECE Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI), established in 2016, supports standards bodies to introduce measures which recognise the value of diverse voices and balanced participation in standards development. The Declaration on this topic has over 70 signatories.



**GRM**

Risk management in regulatory systems is a key aspect of reducing non-tariff barriers to trade and ensuring that the products entered onto the market are safe for consumers and the economy. The UNECE Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM), established in 2011, aims at improved management of hazards that have the potential to affect the quality of products and services.



**START-ED**

Standards are a major part of our everyday life and influence how products are developed, yet these and the quality infrastructure environment they create are not well understood. The UNECE Education on Standardization Initiative (START-Ed), established in 2012, provides a series of model training modules that organizations and academic institutes can use to promote a better understanding of standards. These are being used to create the WP.6 e-learning platform: <https://learnqi.unece.org/>

## WP.6 collaboration with other organizations

WP.6 cooperates closely with numerous organizations and agencies: national ministries, regulatory authorities, market surveillance bodies, international standardization bodies (e.g., ISO, IEC), regional standardization organizations (e.g., CEN/CENELEC), other UN bodies (e.g., UNCTAD, UN-Women), intergovernmental and non-governmental organization (e.g., WTO, OECD), consumers, industry associations.

### **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION (ISO)**

WP.6 works closely with ISO and often encourages regulatory agencies to adopt the standards of ISO to ensure harmonization of technical regulations across borders.

—

### **WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)**

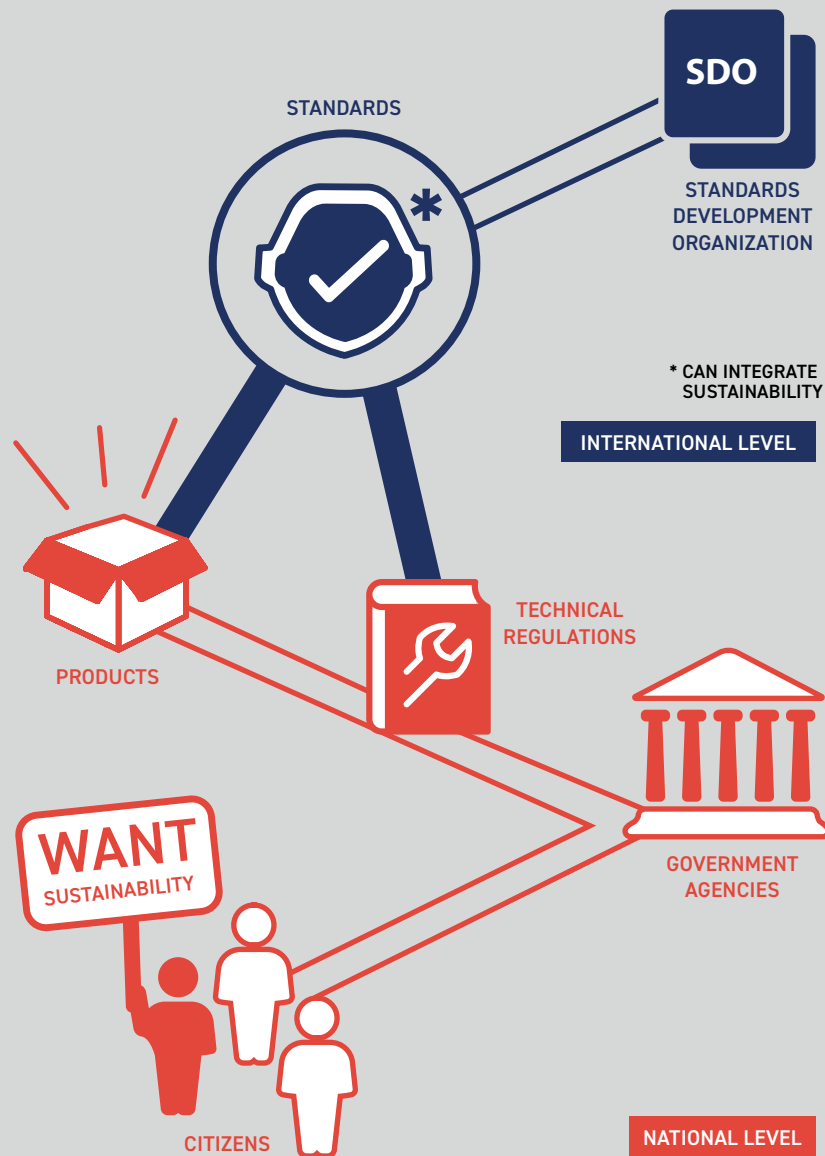
WP.6 aims to remove technical barriers to trade and as such has an official observer seat in the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.

—

### **ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)**

WP.6 participates in various networks of organizations such as the International Organization Partnership established by the OECD.

## UNECE WP.6 contributes to UNECE's cross-cutting priority themes



### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

WP.6 has initiated a mapping of standards to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which most major standards development organizations have picked up. The UNECE Standards for SDGs Portal has mapped over 20,000 standards of major organizations to the SDGs. See: <https://standards4sdgs.unece.org>

### CIRCULAR ECONOMY

WP.6 promotes circular economy by encouraging the integration of end-of-life cycle considerations into product design through technical regulations that apply when the good is placed on the market. Circular economy is also being addressed through testing, inspection, certification and verification of products through conformity assessment.

### DIGITAL AND GREEN TRANSFORMATIONS

Within the work of WP.6, digital technology is a critical enabler of progress. In this realm, standards help make innovation management visible, supporting greater professionalisation over time in project management, quality management and innovation management.

## WP.6 – hosted in UNECE's Economic Cooperation and Trade Division

UNECE WP.6 is within the Regulatory Cooperation Unit, hosted in UNECE's Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (ECTD). ECTD aims to support closer economic relations among UNECE's 56 member States in the pursuit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda.

### ONE VISION:

Harnessing economic cooperation and trade for the SDGs

### TWO SUB-PROGRAMMES:

- Sub-programme 4: Economic Cooperation and Integration
- **Sub-programme 6: Trade**

### TWO SECTORAL COMMITTEES:

- **Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS)**
- Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public Private Partnerships (CICPPP)

### FOUR WORKING PARTIES:

- **Working Party 6 on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)**
- Working Party 7 on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)
- Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)
- Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships (WP.PPP)

Join us – get engaged!

Global participation in the development of the recommendations and guidance material is open to all stakeholders from Governments, standards bodies, non-governmental organizations, academia, and private sector. You can share your expertise and experience. Simply send an email to the secretariat.

## Development of recommendations and guidance

The Working Party and its subgroups develop the content for recommendations and guidance under the supervision of the WP.6 Bureau; then these are presented to the WP.6 Annual Session in October/November of each year for endorsement and subsequent publication. Any UNECE member State may participate in the Annual Session to endorse the work and deliverables.



<https://unece.org/trade/wp6>

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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

Palais des Nations

CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Telephone: +41 (0)22 917 12 98

E-mail: [regulatory.cooperation@un.org](mailto:regulatory.cooperation@un.org) or [lance.thompson@un.org](mailto:lance.thompson@un.org)