



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 March 2023

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Eighth session

Geneva, 26–27(am) June 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Salle XXII,
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday 26 June 2023*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of officers.

A. General segment

3. Matters arising.
4. Updates from the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6).
5. Updates from the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7).

B. High-level segment: Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Economic Commission for Europe region

6. Country studies: Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova.

* Delegates are invited to register online at <https://indico.un.org/e/trade/sctcs-2023>. The session documents will be made available progressively at <https://unece.org/info/Trade/events/sctcs-2023>. Please note that as part of its move to paperless meetings, the secretariat does not distribute paper copies of meeting documents.

Additional information for delegates, including a map of the Palais des Nations meeting rooms, is available at <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html>.



C. High-level segment: Lessons learned from the Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade and emerging areas for consideration

7. Lessons learned from the Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade and country follow-ups.
8. Integrating circular economy considerations into Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade.
9. Integrating digital economy considerations into Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade.

D. Continuation of the general segment

10. Capacity-building and technical assistance activities.
11. Cooperation with other organizations and Economic Commission for Europe bodies.
12. Recommendations from the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe: Subprogramme 4 and Subprogramme 6 by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight.
13. Programme of work:
 - (a) Status of implementation of the Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2023; and
 - (b) Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2024 and outline of key components of the programme of work for 2025.
14. Other business.
15. Adoption of the report.

II. Annotations

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda

1. Delegates are invited to adopt the provisional agenda.

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Annotated Provisional agenda	ECE/CTCS/2023/1	Decision

Item 2. Election of officers

2. The delegates will be invited to elect, for a two-year mandate 2023 - 2025, a Chair and Vice-Chairs.

A. General segment

Item 3. Matters arising

3. Under this item, the secretariat will report on matters arising from the meetings of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and its Executive Committee (EXCOM) since the last session.

Item 4. Updates from the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)

4. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) reports its activities and deliverables to the Steering Committee for endorsement. Delegates will have an opportunity to clarify questions and provide comments on the work of WP.6. The Steering Committee is requested to endorse the Report of the thirty-second session of the Working Party, as well as review and endorse the work plan of WP.6 and recommend it to the EXCOM for approval.

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For review/endorsement</i>
Report of Working Party on Regulation Cooperation and Standardization Policies on its thirty-second session	ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/2	Decision
Programme of work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies for 2023	ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/12	Decision
Revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies	ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11	Decision

5. In response to the ECE subprogramme level evaluation of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) of December 2019 (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2019/4), which had proposed that the Working Party review and update its terms of reference, the Bureau prepared updated terms of references as contained in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11, approved by the Working Party at its thirty-second annual session in 2022 (Decision 13). The updated terms of reference feature a clear mission statement and streamlined objectives of WP.6. They also feature an annex with an intellectual property rights policy for WP.6. These Revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies are presented to the Steering Committee for endorsement. The WP.6 Chair will also present current work to develop working procedures for the Working Party.

6. The thirty-second session of WP.6 launched a Focal Point Network of academic experts (i.e. individual professors, researchers, institutions, standards development bodies and member States). The objective is to encourage the inclusion of standardization in their training curricula and to share experiences and content. This corresponds to the second recommendation of the evaluation of WP.6 of December 2019 (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2019/4). The terms of reference of this Focal Point Network are available in the annex of the report on recent developments in the sectoral initiatives (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/7).

7. At its seventh session, the Steering Committee endorsed the establishment of a Team of Specialists (ToS) on Gender-Responsive Standards (GRS), which was subsequently approved by the EXCOM at its meeting on 30 September 2022. The ToS GRS held its first meeting in December 2022, building on the work of the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative. Guidelines on Developing Gender-Responsive Standards (ECE/TRADE/472) were published in December 2022, and further capacity-building tools are currently being developed.

Item 5. Updates from the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)

8. Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) reports its activities and deliverables to the Steering Committee for endorsement. Delegates will have an opportunity to clarify questions and provide comments on the work of WP.7. The Steering Committee is requested to endorse the Report of the seventy-seventh session of the Working Party, as well as review and endorse the programme of work of the Working Party for 2023 and recommend it to the ECE EXCOM for approval.

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For review/endorsement</i>
Report of the seventy-seventh session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards	ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/2	Decision
Programme of work of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards for 2023	ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/20	Decision

9. At its seventy-seventh session in 2022, the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) adopted three new standards and four revised standards, and a revised Standard Layout for ECE Standards on Dry and Dried Produce. It also adopted a new recommendation for Certain small fruits, covering 12 species and varieties of smaller fruits that grow primarily in tropical and subtropical regions.

10. The Working Party developed and launched an online course on agricultural quality standards and food loss reduction in fresh produce supply chains, available on the ECE website since the end of June 2022. The course is currently available only in English, the WP.7 aims at translating it also to other ECE languages in the future.

11. The Working Party continued its work on food loss and waste, sustainability and its link to standards, including through the organization of a roundtable on food loss and waste prevention and reduction (15 November 2022, hybrid format, in Geneva and online), a seminar on sustainable meat and livestock production (29 September 2022, hybrid format, in Geneva and online) and the development of four practical leaflets on good practices in harvest and post-harvest handling of four groups of vegetables.

B. High-level segment: Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Economic Commission for Europe region

Item 6. Country studies: Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Economic Commission for Europe Study on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in Kyrgyzstan: Outline and Initial Findings	ECE/CTCS/2023/3	Decision
Economic Commission for Europe Study on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in the Republic of Moldova: Findings and Recommendations	ECE/CTCS/2023/4	Decision

12. Delegates will be briefed about the initial findings and recommendations emerging from the ECE Study on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in Kyrgyzstan. The

Study responds to the capacity-building request that the delegation of Kyrgyzstan made at the seventh session of the Steering Committee in 2022.

13. The ECE Study takes the sectoral approach and analyses of current and potential export markets, business process analysis and needs assessment with regards to quality standard compliance for selected markets. It also highlights the implications of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade for achieving SDGs and provides action-oriented recommendations. It aims at enhancing export opportunities for selected agricultural products of Kyrgyzstan.

14. Delegates will be also briefed about the findings and recommendations emerging from the ECE Study on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in the Republic of Moldova, which builds on the ECE earlier Study, conducted in 2017 (ECE/TRADE/433). The Study responds to the capacity-building request of the Republic of Moldova made at the seventh session of the Steering Committee in 2022.

15. The Study provides an in-depth assessment of the trade facilitation framework in the Republic of Moldova and aims to enhance trade facilitation efforts in the country in light of this country's commitments to implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA), including on fostering digitalisation of customs borders procedures, which could result in efficiencies and spill-over effects in terms of jobs and poverty reduction.

C. High-level segment: Lessons learned from the Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade and emerging areas for consideration

Item 7. Lessons learned from the Studies on Regulatory Barriers to Trade and country follow-ups

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Lessons learned from the Studies on Regulatory Barriers to Trade and the Way Forward	ECE/CTCS/2023/5	Decision

16. The Steering Committee, at its seventh session in 2022, expressed appreciation of the secretariat's work on Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade conducted over the years and asked the secretariat to prepare a follow-up report on lessons learned from the studies and the way forward (ECE/CTCS/2022/2, Decision 2022-10).

17. The secretariat will present the results of the comprehensive review of the ECE studies that have been undertaken since 2012. The review will also propose for the consideration member States how to integrate new topics, including those related to a circular economy (sixty-ninth session of the Commission) and green and digital transformations (seventieth session of the Commission), into upcoming studies with the objective to ensure ECE transition economies have effective recourse to address emerging and ever-growing challenges of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

18. Delegates from countries where ECE Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade were undertaken will have an opportunity to inform the Steering Committee about ongoing and planned follow-up activities related to implementing the recommendations emerging from the ECE studies.

Item 8. Integrating circular economy considerations into Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
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Integrating circular economy considerations into Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade	ECE/CTCS/2023/6	Decision
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19. The Steering Committee, at its seventh session in 2022, expressed appreciation of the secretariat's work on circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources (ECE/CTCS/2022/2, Decision 2022-02) and requested to explore the possibility of integrating circular economy considerations into the ECE Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade (ECE/CTCS/2022/2, Decision 2022-11).

20. Responding to this request, the secretariat will present a proposal containing options on how to integrate circular economy considerations into demand-driven Studies. It offers a set of approaches that might help enhance policy coherence in regulatory cooperation and standardisation policies when fostering a circular economy transition.

Item 9. Integrating digital economy considerations into Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Integrating digital economy considerations into Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade	ECE/CTCS/2023/7	Decision

21. At the seventh session of the Steering Committee in 2022, several member States expressed their capacity-building needs regarding the issues related to digital trade in the context of the ECE Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade. Responding to these requests, and also in line with the topic of the seventieth session of the Commission on "Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region", the secretariat will present proposals on how digital economy considerations could be integrated into the work under the Studies.

22. Responding to digitalisation and automation developments, digital trade governance has become an essential part of trade policymaking. Based on the analysis of the recent developments, the secretariat's report suggests on how the ECE Studies can integrate these new emerging issues in the future.

D. Continuation of the general segment

Item 10. Capacity-building and technical assistance activities

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Report on capacity-building and technical assistance activities	ECE/CTCS/2023/8	Decision

23. Delegates will be invited to endorse the relevant sections of the Trade subprogramme's report on capacity-building and technical assistance activities implemented since the previous session. The activities reported by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) are for information only. Delegates will also be invited to present their capacity-building needs for the ECE technical assistance activities, including on conducting ECE Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade and follow-up activities to the existing Studies. The discussion will focus on member States' priorities and explore how the Trade subprogramme might assist in addressing these needs drawing on its experience and potential extrabudgetary funding.

Item 11. Cooperation with other organizations and Economic Commission for Europe bodies

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Report on cooperation with other organizations and Economic Commission for Europe bodies	ECE/CTCS/2023/9	Decision

24. The secretariat will report on the ongoing collaboration with other international organizations.

25. Representatives from other international organizations will be invited to highlight areas for potential cooperation with the Steering Committee as well as current and future activities of relevance to delegates.

26. A discussion will take place on potential areas for collaboration between the Steering Committee and other ECE bodies, and international organizations.

Item 12. Recommendations from the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe: Subprogramme 4 and Subprogramme 6 by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight

27. In 2022, the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluated the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability, and integration of cross-cutting issues in Subprogramme 4: Economic Cooperation and Integration, and Subprogramme 6: Trade of the United Nations Economic Cooperation for Europe for the period 2018 - 2021. The evaluation was part of the UN secretariat's regular program periodically evaluating selected aspects of its operations. Delegates will be briefed on the key findings and recommendations of the evaluation as they pertain to Subprogramme 6, the associated management response, and plans on how to implement relevant recommendations.

Item 13. Programme of work

(a) Status of implementation of the Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2023

28. The secretariat will report on the status of the implementation of the programme of work currently underway.

(b) Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2024 and outline of key components of the programme of work for 2025

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Trade subprogramme's draft programme of work for 2024	ECE/CTCS/2023/10	Decision
Outline of key components of the Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2025	ECE/CTCS/2023/INF.1	Decision

29. The secretariat will present the Trade subprogramme's draft programme of work for 2024. This document is based on the Trade subprogramme's proposed programme plan for 2024, reviewed by the ECE Executive Committee in January 2023 as part of the ECE proposed programme budget for 2024, and submitted for consideration by the seventy-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The draft programme of work document reflects the annual budget format approved by the General Assembly in resolution 77/267

adopted on 30 December 2022. Delegates will be invited to adopt the programme of work and recommend it to the EXCOM for approval. Sections on UN/CEFACT are for information only.

30. At its meeting on 5 March 2021, the EXCOM adopted a document entitled “Sequential review of the proposed programmes of work of ECE subprogrammes” (INF. doc. 2021/8). In line with the sequential review procedure, the Committee will be invited to also consider the “Outline of key components of the programme of work of the Trade subprogramme for 2025” (ECE/CTCS/2023/INF.1) and provide recommendations on these components, as necessary. Recommendations agreed by the Committee and included in its decisions will be reflected in the proposed programme plan of the Trade subprogramme for 2025.

Item 14. Other business

31. The Steering Committee will approve the preliminary dates for its next session.

Item 15. Adoption of the report

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Report of the session	ECE/CTCS/2023/2	Decision

32. Delegates will adopt the report of the eighth session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, containing the deliberated decisions.

III. Tentative timetable

<i>Time</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Description</i>
26 June 2023		
10 a.m.–10.05 a.m.	1	Adoption of the agenda
10.05 a.m.–10.15 a.m.	2	Election of officers
	A	General segment
10.15 a.m.–10.30 a.m.	3	Matters arising
10.30 a.m.–11 a.m.	4	Updates from the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)
11 a.m.–11.30 a.m.	5	Updates from the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)
	B	High-level segment: Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Economic Commission for Europe region
11.30 a.m.–1 p.m.	6	Country studies: Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova
	C	High-level segment: Lessons learned from the Studies on Regulatory Barriers to Trade and emerging areas for consideration
3 p.m.–4 p.m.	7	Lessons learned from the Studies on Regulatory Barriers to Trade and country follow-ups
4 p.m.–5 p.m.	8	Integrating circular economy considerations into Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade

5 p.m.– 6 p.m.	9	Integrating digital economy considerations into Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade
27 June 2023		
	D	Continuation of the general segment
10 a.m.–10.45 a.m.	10	Capacity-building and technical assistance activities
10.45 a.m.–11.15 a.m.	11	Cooperation with other organizations and Economic Commission for Europe bodies
11.15 a.m.–11.45 a.m.	12	Recommendations from the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe: Subprogramme 4 and Subprogramme 6 by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight
11.45 a.m. –12.15 p.m.	13	Programme of work
	(a)	Status of implementation of the Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2023
	(b)	Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2024 and outline of key components of the programme of work for 2025
12.15 p.m.–12.30 p.m.	14	Other business
12.30 p.m.–1 p.m.	15	Adoption of the report
