

**Terms of reference of the
Education on Standardization (START-Ed) Focal Point Network**



Document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/7, Annex I, 24 August 2022

Endorsed by the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and
Standardization Policies at its 32nd session (decision 7)

Terms of Reference of the START-Ed Focal Point Network

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) promotes regulatory cooperation, standardization policies and activities which contribute towards reducing technical barriers to trade, while lowering risk and promoting sustainable development in all its dimensions.

2. Standards are a pervasive part of our daily life. Just reading this document on a computer implies hundreds of standards. International trade is influenced by such standards (for the accessibility of products onto a market, for the compliance to relevant regulations, for variations in duties and taxes, etc.), yet there is very little training for professionals on the topic. Engineers responsible for the conception of products may master the subject, but other departments such as transport, commercial, financial, or marketing often have no exposure to the topic. This is why it is so important to make sure that new generations are aware of what standards and regulations are and how they can be used to meet global goals and targets.

3. ECE WP.6 created the Initiative on Education on Standardization (START-Ed). The objective is to encourage universities, tertiary-level institutes, vocational training schools and other education and research institutions to integrate standardization and standards-related issues in their curricula. This initiative has proposed a fifteen-module plan to allow professors and trainers to integrate education on standardization into their programmes. These modules provide key insights into foundational aspects of international trade such as metrology, conformity assessment, market surveillance, risk management and other related areas.

4. In order to further promote education on standardization, ECE WP.6 proposes the establishment of a START-Ed Focal Point Network as detailed below.

II. Focal Point objectives and activities

5. The objective of the START-Ed Focal Points is to promote education on trade-related standardization.

6. The main activities of the START-Ed Focal Points are to:

- Implement the START-Ed modules for education on standardization within their teaching programmes
- Participate in START-Ed meeting calls to bring back best practices
- Assist in enhancing the START-Ed modules to improve the current material and to help develop new material on related topics
- Suggest other potential members for the Focal Point Network.

III. Meeting and working methods

7. ECE WP.6 serves as a forum for convening the Focal Points and enabling the cooperation between Focal Points. This will be part of the ECE WP.6 START-Ed Initiative. The network shall meet at least once annually and report on activities and plans to the ECE WP.6 annual session. Insofar as possible, meetings will be held virtually.

8. All new work items proposed by the Focal Point Network shall be under the framework of ECE WP.6 in terms of both substance and the procedural development. Any reports, guides, brochures, or other deliverables should be presented to the ECE WP.6 annual

session for final endorsement by member States and where appropriate to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards.

9. The Focal Point Network will be supported by the ECE WP.6 secretariat within the limit of its resources.

IV. Types of Focal Points and participation

10. Academic experts and academic institutions participate in the Focal Point Network on a voluntary basis and are responsible for their own funding to participate.

- Academic expert focal points are individuals such as the professors, educational experts and PhD researchers interested in implementing education on trade-related standardization within their individual curricula.
- Institutional focal points are universities, tertiary-level institutes, training schools, etc. interested in integrating education on trade-related standardization within their programmes.
- Standards development bodies may wish to participate as an institution to provide relevant input.

11. Focal points are self-nominated by expressing their intention to the ECE WP.6 secretariat by email.

- Academic expert focal points are asked to provide their name, country where they are teaching, the names of institutions where they are teaching, subjects that they are teaching and their contact details.
- Institutional focal points are asked to provide a letter from their executive office expressing their intention to participate, detailing the institution name, country, subject areas where the programme would be used and the nomination of an individual who would represent the institution at the meetings with their contact details. An institutional focal point could nominate multiple experts to join in their name.
- Standards development bodies interested in participating are asked to provide a letter from their executive office expressing their intention to participate, detailing the body name, country and the nomination of an individual who would represent the body at the meetings with their contact details. A standards development body could nominate multiple experts to join in their name.

12. During meetings, no distinction is made between academic expert focal points and institutional focal points. Unless an official endorsement has been received from a United Nations Member State, the Focal Points only represent their own expertise and do not represent any country.

13. In the event that a United Nations Member State would be interested to participate in the Focal Point network, they are welcome to express their intention to the ECE WP.6 secretariat by email through their Geneva-based Permanent Mission, detailing the country name, the eventual institutions that would participate under them and the relevant contact details. Multiple experts could be nominated under a Member State participation and in this case, they would represent an official position of their country.

14. Experts from any United Nations Member State are welcome to join the START-Ed Focal Point network.

15. To contact the ECE WP.6 secretariat, please write to regulatory.cooperation@un.org.

16. More on the ECE WP.6 education on standardization initiative: <https://unece.org/trade/wp6/thematic-areas/education>.