

REFLECTIONS and INVITATION to DISCUSSIONS
on possible future START-ED activities
(for consideration at the 26 May 2023 webinar)

Introduction/history of the START-ED Group

(including reference information, to facilitate experts' orientation at the WP6 webpage)

The “StaRT-ED” Group was established as the result of the discussions held during the international workshop on introducing standards-related issues in educational curricula (and on the revision of Recommendation “I” addressed to the Governments). This workshop was organized in November 2012 in the framework of the annual (22-nd) session of the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6).

The work of the Group is concentrated not on specialized vocational training (for specialists) but on education about standardization (building awareness and understanding of standards and of their role in global economy and trade). The contacts with business revealed the growing demand from companies in standards-related competences. At the same time the exchange of information between educational institutions showed that very few non-technical universities included standards in their curricula. Thus, most graduates in the areas of economics, business management or law have no understanding of how standards and regulations (technical barriers to trade) could hamper a company’s ability to compete on international markets.

Achievements of the Group

Some of the key deliverables of the WP6 project on education are reproduced below (for more details see the WP.6 webpage <https://unece.org/trade/wp6/education-standardization>) :

- Recommendation “I” on education (in English, French, Russian)
- model educational programme on standardization (E/F/R); consists of 15 modules/subject areas
- additional (16-th) module (for the model programme) on standards related environmental issues (E/F/R)
- examples of teaching modules on trade, on benefits of standardization to the society, on management system standards)
- overview/summarizing teaching experiences (UNECE publication “bringing standardization in university curricula: making the case “
- repository of teaching programmes
- library of books, of teaching materials

One of the practical results of WP6 awareness and capacity building efforts within the region has been the introduction of new courses on standards and wider attention to related issues in existing curricula. For example, the Moscow State Regional University introduced in a new course entitled “fundamentals of standardization” broken down to fifteen thematic areas which mirror those suggested by the ECE model programme on standardization.

Another positive example is the Matej Bel University (Slovakia) that offers a course “standardization and international standards”, the content of which is close to ECE model programme (out of 13 areas

eleven are similar).

Certain elements from the ECE model programme and suggested teaching tools were used in courses taught in other universities. Examples, of teaching standards practical experiences were presented at the 1 March 2023 START-ED webinar. Professors also noted the usefulness of repository of teaching programmes which allowed to compare content of courses and see emphasis of specific programmes.

The START-ED Group also provides a permanent forum for an exchange of teaching experiences and problems during its regular meetings. The latest international gathering/debate on this subject took place in November 2019 during WP6 29-th annual session in the form of panel discussions on education (and, inter-alia, it was decided to elaborate a course on environmental issues).

The Group works on education on standardization issues with national standards setting bodies and with international (ISO, IEC) and regional organizations in Europe and beyond (CEN, CIS, ARSO, APEC, etc.).

Current activities and deliverables

The latest (2022-2023) deliverables of the Group are a new module on standards related environmental issues and launching a network of focal points on education.

Few figures on experts' interest and involvement into the education project. The current mailing list of the START-ED Group includes about 260 experts. As of today, 119 experts have enrolled as focal points. The latest START-ED meeting on 1 March 2023 was followed by around 35 participants.

It clearly shows the demand for information on education on standards and highlights the necessity to indicate further directions of the START-ED work.

Further activities (brainstorming)

Some of the issues we suggest experts for discussion on 26 May 2023 and at the consecutive meetings are provided below (certain of these suggestions were already voiced by Professor Marta Orviska at the 1 March 2023 webinar).

Main directions of the activities

It shall be noted that Members of the START-ED Group fall into three major categories:

a) professors who teach standards; b) professors who wish to start teaching standards; c) experts from government agencies/bodies and from business who are responsible for awareness and capacity building on standards. Ideally, activities of the Group should take into consideration above mentioned experts' concerns.

Questions to the Participants/experts

For example, shall we keep two main general directions of the activities (either one or both approaches at the same time): awareness building (including market demand) on standards-related competences and skills and providing assistance in elaborating/starting new courses on standards?

Format of teaching

The elaboration of teaching modules should be linked to the format of teaching which in its turn depends on the main goal of the course.

For example, teaching standards can be an awareness or capacity building exercise.

A) **Awareness**: could it be one lecture/seminar of 90 minutes? Is it sufficient (as a start-up)?

- Standardization as a self standing event (course) or a part of a course/programme on another subject?
- Standardization as a self standing event with a link to e-courses as a follow-up? (see examples of such courses on standardization issues at the UNECE website; <https://learnQ1.unece.org>). Is it possible to organize a course based on the available e-modules?

B) Capacity building

-New course- could be 15 modules (as suggested in UNECE programme or more/or less) and respectively at least or more than 25 hours of teaching. Plus new environmental module?

Methodological approaches

What is your opinion (experience) on initiating teaching standards in an educational institution. Should it be started with an “awareness event “ or with a full scale new course?

Teaching tools

If we go for new educational tools, what it shall be?

To elaborate new educational modules (based on the UNECE model programme)?

To create a new repository of courses/ programmes?

Library of teaching materials?

To create new common courses?

To do research on selected topics?

To create some study material?

To create/summarize/document basic knowledge, that can be used by the others?

To write some policy papers on the topics?

Seeking a feedback from experts (your opinion is important for us)

- What activity/output (from mentioned above) will be useful for you (please clarify if you already teach standards)?
- What WP6 shall do to facilitate creating standards-receptive courses?
- How you can contribute to the work of the Group?

Certain suggestions for potential future activities (to be discussed on May26)

- 1) to elaborate new teaching modules
- 2) to create a new repository of programmes on teaching standards
- 3) to initiate an exchange of information on whether/how standards on environmental issues are mentioned /taught in existing programmes on sustainability and ecological matters (and to see how environmental module No. 16 could be used in this context).
- 4) to create a repository of educational programmes on sustainability and environmental issues (with a view to analyze how standards are referenced in such programmes)

Suggested wording on START-ED for the WP6 Programme of Work for 2023-24:

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To invite the members of the Network and other experts:

- ***to continue promoting importance of knowledge on standards for university graduates and elaborating necessary teaching tools***
- ***to use the WP6 e-learning modules to teach standards (and share relevant experiences)***
- ***to share information on existing teaching programmes including on how environmental standards are incorporated into them***