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Programme of work – Trade subprogramme’s programme of work for 2024 and outline of key components of the programme of work for 2025

Outline of key components of the Trade subprogramme’s programme of work for 2025

Note by the secretariat

Introduction

1. This document presents an outline of key components (objective, strategy and deliverables) of the programme of work of the Trade Subprogramme (“the subprogramme”) for 2025. These components are based on the subprogramme-related section of the ECE proposed programme budget for 2024, with modified or new elements highlighted in track changes. The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (“the Committee”) is invited to consider this information and provide recommendations on these components, as necessary. Those modifications and/or member States’ recommendations agreed by the Committee and included in its decisions will be reflected in the proposed programme plan of the subprogramme for 2025. It will be prepared by the secretariat at the end of 2023 and included in the ECE proposed programme budget for 2025.

Outline of key components of the programme of work

I. Objective

2. The objective, to which the subprogramme contributes, is to strengthen trade facilitation and electronic business, regulatory cooperation and standardization policies, agricultural quality standards and trade-related economic cooperation in the ECE region and beyond.

II. Strategy

3. The responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of ECE.

4. The strategy of the subprogramme is to support international policy dialogue on reducing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, including those caused by cumbersome



trade procedures and paperwork, by differences in trade procedures, standards and documents, or by divergent regulatory approaches and product standards; to facilitate the development of standards and recommendations in the areas of trade facilitation and e-business, agricultural quality standards and regulatory cooperation; and to provide capacity-building and enable the sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

5. To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will:

(a) Promote simple, transparent and effective processes for global trade through its normative work to develop standards and recommendations in the areas of trade facilitation and electronic business;

(b) Facilitate international policy dialogue on establishing digital trading environments and on compliance with the multilateral trading system requirements, including the dissemination of standards, recommendations and guidelines;

(c) Promote the circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable and resilient value chains and the enhanced traceability of supply chains, e.g. minimizing waste and maximizing the use of natural resources towards circular economy through studies, policy dialogues and technology-based pilot initiatives such as blockchain-based traceability for textile value chains. This work will help member States make progress towards achieving Goals 8 and 12;

(d) Strengthen regulatory cooperation and promote standards and best practices in regulatory frameworks, risk management, conformity assessment and market surveillance to facilitate a predictable and harmonized regulatory environment;

(e) Provide practical ways forward for standards bodies wishing to mainstream a gender perspective in standards. The subprogramme will further support capacity-building and dissemination on the use of standards and regulatory cooperation, notably with its Standards for SDGs Portal (<https://standards4sdgs.unece.org/>) and its initiative on education on standards (<https://learnqi.unece.org>). This work will support member States in making progress towards achieving Goals 5 and 17;

(f) Promote up-to-date agricultural quality standards and explanatory guidelines through its normative work and promote awareness of food loss reduction through policy dialogues, partnerships with international organizations and technology-based initiatives to address food loss and waste to support the progress of member States towards achieving Goals 2 and 12;

(g) Identify regulatory and procedural barriers to trade and assist Governments in setting action-oriented recommendations for implementing the instruments developed by the subprogramme through analytical evidence-based studies, to support member States in making progress towards achieving Goals 12 and 17;

(h) Deepen its international policy dialogue, normative, technical assistance and capacity-building activities on the digitalization of trade processes in order to support a sustainable and resilient recovery to support member States in making progress towards achieving Goals 8 and 9.

6. The above-mentioned work is expected to result in:

(a) Increased implementation of simplified trade processes, and the digitalization of member States' trading environments, leading to greater productivity;

(b) Increased transparency and traceability of the value chains and reduction of waste, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns;

(c) Increased uptake of international standards by countries to enable the implementation of internationally harmonized regulatory processes;

(d) Improved gender equality in trade through the increased participation of women traders;

(e) Enhanced digitalization of trade procedures (e.g. progress towards adoption of trade-related digital services like Single Window) to support the public and private sectors' efforts in member States to facilitate trade.

III. Deliverables to be implemented in 2025

7. The below table provides an outline of deliverables that are expected to contribute to the attainment of the objective stated above.

| <i>Deliverables</i> | <i>2024 planned</i> | <i>2025 planned</i> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies | | |
| Parliamentary documentation (number of documents) | 107 | 107 |
| Documentation for: | | |
| 1. The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards | 13 | 13 |
| 2. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies | 14 | 14 |
| 3. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards | 60 | 60 |
| 4. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business | 20 | 20 |
| Substantive services for meetings (number of three-hour meetings) | 99 | 99 |
| Meetings of: | | |
| 5. The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and its Bureau | 7 | 7 |
| 6. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies, its Bureau and related expert bodies | 13 | 13 |
| 7. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its specialized sections | 26 | 26 |
| 8. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business | 53 | 40 |
| B. Generation and transfer of knowledge | | |
| Field and technical cooperation projects (number of projects) | 5 | 5 |
| 9. On enhancing usage and uptake of standards for sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls | 1 | 1 |
| 10. On food loss reduction in agriculture supply chains | 1 | 1 |
| 11. On trade facilitation | 3 | 3 |
| Seminars, workshops and training events (number of days) | 18 | 18 |
| 12. Workshops for policymakers and experts in low- and middle-income countries in the ECE region on trade procedures, supply chain management, conformity assessment and market surveillance, and women's entrepreneurship | 6 | 6 |
| 13. Seminars for standardization and inspection agencies and other stakeholders in transition economies and developing countries in the ECE region or beyond on ECE agricultural quality standards | 3 | 3 |
| 14. Seminars for policymakers and experts in countries with economies in transition and developing countries in the ECE region or beyond on support for the implementation of trade-related standards, recommendations and guidelines | 9 | 9 |
| Publications (number of publications) | 11 | 11 |
| 15. On regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in a country to be decided | 1 | 1 |
| 16. On trade standard guidance in the following areas: quality infrastructure, risk management, education, sustainable development | 2 | 2 |
| 17. On mainstream a gender perspective in standards | 2 | 2 |
| 18. On agricultural trade, supply chains and food loss and waste | 1 | 1 |

| <i>Deliverables</i> | <i>2024 planned</i> | <i>2025 planned</i> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 19. On trade facilitation recommendations, standards and strategies | 5 | 5 |
| Technical materials (number of materials) | 8 | 8 |
| 20. Guidelines on cross-border trade | 1 | 1 |
| 21. Training material and guidelines on trade standards and/or regulatory cooperation | 2 | 2 |
| 22. Standards and guidelines on agricultural quality | 4 | 4 |
| 23. Training material on trade facilitation and electronic business | 1 | 1 |
| Fact-finding, monitoring and investigating missions (number of missions) | 3 | 3 |
| 24. Fact-finding missions on trade facilitation and electronic business, agricultural quality standards, regulatory cooperation and standardization, and regulatory and procedural barriers to trade | 3 | 3 |
| C. Substantive deliverables | | |
| Consultation, advice and advocacy: advisory services to government officials and other stakeholders in at least 10 ECE member States on trade facilitation and electronic business, agricultural quality standards, regulatory cooperation and standardization, and regulatory and procedural barriers to trade. | | |
| Databases and substantive digital materials: databases for e-business standards and codes. | | |
| D. Communication deliverables | | |
| Outreach programmes, special events and information materials: booklets, promotional materials, fact sheets and information brochures reaching at least 17 ECE programme countries and for more than 1,000 public and private sector experts. | | |
| External and media relations: press releases, publication launch events and articles in external newsletters intended for government officials and experts working on trade. | | |
| Digital platforms and multimedia content: subprogramme's website. | | |