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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

164th session

Geneva, 10 and 13 (a.m.) October 2023

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**Activities of United Nations Economic Commission
for Europe bodies and other United Nations organizations
of interest to the Working Party:**

**Alignment of the work of the Working Party
with the Inland Transport Committee Strategy**

2023 review of ITC working parties' mandates

Note by the secretariat

Background

1. On 18 May 2023, the Chair of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and the Director of the Sustainable Transport Division wrote to the Chairs of ITC Working Parties to invite their support and contribution to key decisions of ITC on its subsidiary Working Parties, notably the alignment of Working Parties' Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures with those of the ITC, and the 2023 review of ITC Working Parties' mandates.
2. This informal document contains a copy of the letter and Annex I which provides a detailed overview of the recommended modalities of the review process. It also contains Annex II which is a template of recommended information.
3. To assist the Chair and WP.30, the secretariat has provided suggestions for Annex II (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2023/6 and Corr.1).



Ref.: UNECE / 2023 / TRANS / 52

18 May 2023

Dear Chairs of ITC Working Parties,

We are pleased to send this letter following the Inland Transport Committee's (ITC) 85th annual session, which took place on 21 – 24 February 2023 in Geneva. The purpose of our letter is to invite your support and contribution to key decisions of ITC on its subsidiary Working Parties, as detailed below.

1. Following the endorsement by ECOSOC of the revised ITC Terms of Reference (TOR) on 16 February 2022 (E/RES/2022/2), the ITC Rules of Procedure (ROP), as contained in ECE/TRANS/294, annex III, also entered into force. These landmark developments marked a new era for ITC and its subsidiary Working Parties and make it imperative for the successful implementation of the ITC Strategy until 2030 that the work of ITC and its Working Parties is aligned, inter alia, regarding their governance framework, including their TORs and ROPs. As part of this alignment process, several new or revised ROPs and revised TORs of Working Parties have already been adopted by ITC.
2. Taking note of the update of the status of the alignment of the ROP of its subsidiary bodies in line with its decision at its 82nd session, the Committee expressed its satisfaction at its 85th session about the progress made and thanked those Working Parties that had completed their assessment and reported back to the Committee. We invite all remaining Working Parties that have not yet assessed the alignment of their ROP with ITC's revised ROP, namely SC.1, WP.1, WP.5, WP.6, WP.11, WP.15, WP.15/AC.1 and WP.30, to do so.
3. The Committee also encouraged all Working Parties to review and align their TORs to those of the Committee, as appropriate, and requested those Working Parties that did not have the opportunity to do so yet to inform the Committee at latest at its 86th plenary session in 2024 about the status of their alignment. We would thus like to invite all Working Parties to follow the Committee's request as well as its invitation to take into consideration the document entitled "Draft Recommendations for Harmonized Elements in the Terms of Reference of ITC Working Parties" as contained in ECE/TRANS/2023/4/Rev.1, annex II.

4. The Committee further noted that the year 2023 marks the fourth cycle of reviews of Working Parties' mandates by their parent sectoral committees, in line with the outcomes of the 2005 reform of ECE and the ensuing guidelines for the establishment and functioning of Working Parties within ECE (ECE/EX/1). Taking into consideration the review and analysis of ITC Working Parties' TORs and ROPs contained in ECE/TRANS/2023/4/Rev.1, the Committee decided to proceed with the review process in the course of 2023 and noted that it takes place in the context of a broader transformation following the endorsement of the revised ITC Terms of Reference by ECOSOC (E/RES/2022/2). We invite all Working Parties to participate in this review process by submitting their inputs by either 29 September or 15 December 2023, depending on the schedule of their meetings, and take note of Annexes I and II to this letter, which provide a detailed overview of the recommended modalities of the review process and the required information.

The secretariat is at your disposal to assist in this work. In case you have questions or need clarification, you may contact Ms. Franziska Hirsch, Franziska.hirsch@un.org, and Ms. Christine Seifert, Christine.Seifert@un.org.

We look forward to your support in the accelerated evolution of ITC and its subsidiary bodies at a time of unique opportunities and critical needs regionally and globally for a robust role for ITC and its subsidiary Working Parties. We thank you for your continuous support in this important work.

Yours sincerely,



Hannie Meesters
Chair
Inland Transport Committee



Yuwei Li
Director
Sustainable Transport Division

Encl.

Annex I: Proposed modalities of the 2023 review of ITC Working Parties' mandates

Annex II: Recommended information for the review of ITC Working Parties

Annex I

Proposed modalities of the 2023 review of ITC Working Parties' mandates

Background

1. The year 2023 marks the fourth cycle of reviews of Working Parties' mandates by their parent sectoral committees, in line with the outcomes of the 2005 reform of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the ensuing guidelines for the establishment and functioning of working parties within ECE (ECE/EX/1).
2. Noting that, and taking into consideration the review and analysis contained in ECE/TRANS/2023/4, **the Committee decided to proceed** with the review process in the course of 2023, noting that it takes place in the context of a broader transformation following the endorsement of the revised Terms of Reference of ITC by ECOSOC (E/RES/2022/2).
3. This note on possible modalities for the above-mentioned review has been prepared in direct implementation of this decision and based on an equivalent review of ITC Working Parties during the 2013 review of the 2005 reform of ECE. It will be submitted for further consideration and approval by ITC through its Bureau.

Principles

4. The review process will be based on a number of good principles or practices including transparency, resource efficiency, clarity about why ITC Working Parties should engage in an activity, what UNECE's value added is, identification of duplication of work and of possible savings within ITC or other UN and international organisations etc, if relevant. The review process as well as its outcomes should be results-oriented.

Modalities of the review

Review of working parties' mandates

5. Bearing in mind the overall objective of an improved allocation of resources within the Committee (both within the Working Parties and between them) based on clearly defined and updated mandates, starting with the global mandates granted to ITC by ECOSOC through the approval of its revised Terms of Reference, the reduction of the current overstretch, and an increased emphasis on areas in which the Committee has clear demonstrable added value, the Committee would review the work and priorities within each of the 21 Working Parties that are subsidiary to ITC.
6. In a first step, a clear picture should be provided to cover the current mandates of the Committee's subsidiary bodies; the extent to which these mandates have been carried out over the past years in a resource efficient way; and their added value vis-à-vis activities currently undertaken by other UN bodies or international organisations, when relevant. For this a complete picture of the activities, the input (human and financial resources) and the output (list of results) per subsidiary body would be useful. The Chair may wish to request the secretaries of the Working Parties to help compile relevant information for the consideration of the Working Party.

7. The secretariat would solicit inputs from the Chairpersons of the ITC subsidiary bodies and, through them, their corresponding subsidiary bodies (e.g. Working Parties, Groups of Experts/Teams of Specialists, etc). The purpose would be to identify within each subsidiary body:

- Substantive and geographic priorities, needs and gaps, vis-à-vis the ongoing alignment of Working Parties to the regional and global mandates of ITC
- Priority areas of current work and results achieved
- Possible new and emerging issues and expected results
- Possibilities for streamlining and synergizing activities within each of the expected results
- Ways of improving efficiency and methods of work
- Expected results and related activities that may need to be reoriented/refocused to better reflect priority demands of member States/contracting parties
- Possible optimization of the structure of the programme of work
- Areas identified for enhancement or abolishment, if any
- Ways of improving communication and public outreach.

8. This should take into account the results of the evaluations undertaken for the subprogramme, when relevant. It should also take into account the results of regular priority-setting processes carried out within the Working Parties.

9. In a second step, the secretariat will prepare for consideration by the Committee, documents which will identify possible future work priorities and the desirable and projected outputs in each area (objectives should as much as possible be formulated in a way that allows results to be measured, and each activity could have a sunset clause when appropriate, linked in particular to the achievement of a previously defined objective).

10. The Chairpersons/Bureaux of Working Parties would be invited to participate in the restricted session of ITC when working parties' mandates will be reviewed.

Finalization of the review

11. In a third step, in 2024, after the conclusion of the review of ITC subsidiary bodies and their activities as outlined above, the secretariat would carry out a cross sectoral analysis and formulate recommendations on the future ITC work priorities to be submitted for consideration and possible adoption by the Committee through the Bureau and, subsequently, approval by the Commission in 2025. Key criteria for the cross sectoral review include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Work plans for any activities should clearly define the end objectives and provide for sunset clauses when appropriate.

Suggested timeline of the review

12. It is proposed that the review process unfolds in 5 phases spanning the 2023-2025 biennium, as per the below timeline:

Phase 1: invitation letters circulated by mid-May 2023

Phase 2: inputs from Chairs on behalf of their Working Parties to be submitted to the secretariat by 29 September 2023. Option for late submissions due to working party meetings schedule: Friday 15 December 2023.

Phase 3: relevant documentation consolidated and submitted to the November session of the ITC Bureau

Phase 4: relevant documentation submitted to the 86th ITC (2024) with possible annex for late submissions

Phase 5: relevant cross-sectoral review recommendations submitted for adoption by the 87th ITC session and, subsequently, approval by the Commission in 2025

Annex II

Recommended information for the review of ITC Working Parties

This document is prepared in implementation of decision 8 of the Inland Transport Committee at its 85th session ([ECE/TRANS/328](#), para 18). It covers the 5-year period 2018-2023¹.

[To be filled out by Chairs of ITC Working Parties on behalf of the respective bodies under their responsibility]

I. Subsidiary body mandates and governance framework

A. General Assembly/ECOSOC

B. UNECE

C. ITC

D. **Memo item: Alignment with ITC revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure**

- *Past and present, incl. renaming of Working Parties, changes geographical scope and membership structure*
- *Planned*
- *Identified needs and gaps (outline and provide documentation)*

II. Working Party objective

[Please also specify source, e.g. Terms of Reference, other strategic documents etc]

III. Work areas covered by the Working Party [*substance*]

A. **Transport facilitation (including border-crossing facilitation)** [*select one of the following*]

- Only work area
- Main work area
- Minor work area
- N/A

B. **Safety (including Road safety)** [*select one of the following*]

- Only work area
- Main work area
- Minor work area

¹ If a Working Party considers it relevant, it may submit information for the period **2013-2023**, i.e. since the previous full review of working parties.

- N/A

C. Environmental/climate performance [*select one of the following*]

- Only work area
- Main work area
- Minor work area
- N/A

D. Other (specify) [*select one of the following*]

- Only work area
- Main work area
- Minor work area
- N/A

IV. Work areas covered by the Working Party – efficiency and value added

A. Internal overlaps/duplication (other UNECE bodies performing similar/identical tasks) [*expand as necessary, if more than one areas of overlap*]

- Area of work 1:
 - Full overlap (explain)
 - Partial overlap (explain)
 - No overlap
- Area of work 2 (...)

B. External overlaps/duplication (other non-UNECE bodies performing similar/identical tasks) [*expand as necessary, if more than one areas overlap*]

- Area of work 1:
 - Full overlap (explain)
 - Partial overlap (explain)
 - No overlap
- Area of work 2 (...)

C. Internal synergies (with other UNECE bodies performing complementary tasks) [*expand as necessary, if more than one areas of synergies*]

- Area of work 1 (explain)
-

D. External synergies (with other non-UNECE bodies performing complementary tasks) [*expand as necessary, if more than one areas of synergies*]

- Area of work 1 (explain)
-

V. Work methods

[*please outline, e.g. numbers of meetings and official documents, other types of meetings, number of subsidiary Working Parties, supervision of informal groups or Groups of Experts, communication methods, etc.*]

VI. Main partners [*please outline*]

A. Government sector:

B. International/intergovernmental organizations:

C. Non-governmental sector:

D. Academia:

D. Other (please specify):

VII. Results achieved (*highlight major results since 2017*)

- Regulatory/Normative work and contracting parties (*e.g., amendments to legal instruments, number of contracting parties, etc.*)
- Policy recommendations
- Capacity development and technical assistance (*e.g., seminars, webinars, other activities*)
 - Major outputs
- Analytical work
 - Major publications

VII. Results and changes expected in near future

A. Possibilities for streamlining and synergizing activities within each of the expected results

.....

B. Ways of improving efficiency and methods of work

.....

C. Expected results and related activities that may need to be reoriented/refocused to better reflect priority demands of member States and contracting parties

.....

D. Possible optimization of the structure of the programme of work

.....

E. Areas identified for enhancement or abolishment, if any

.....

F. Ways of improving communication and public outreach

.....

G. Any other comments

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