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Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)

Thirty-third session

Geneva, 23–24 November 2023

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Programme of work

Summary of working practices for the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies

Submitted by the WP.6 chair*

Summary

This document summarizes the working practices for the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6). It covers the meetings, elections of WP.6 subgroups and project development resulting in deliverables for WP.6.

Mandate

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards 2023 decision 2023-06: “Recognizing the efforts of the Bureau of WP.6 to streamline and clarify internal procedures, the Steering Committee requested that WP.6 present an internal Draft working procedures document to the 2024 session.”

Proposed decision

“The Working Party takes note of the *Summary of working practices for the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/12) and the *Summary of practices for representation of and the use of titles within the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/13).”

* This document is submitted under the responsibility of the subgroup Chair and has not been subject to a formal clearance procedure through the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division Director. This document has not been edited by a professional editor.



I. Introduction

1. This document provides an informal summary of the working practices of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6). This document is a supplementary informal compilation that adds details on working practices and does not supersede existing framework documents which include:

- *Revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11)
- *Intellectual property rights policy governing the development and use of Economic Commission for Europe Working Party 6 deliverables* (ECE/CTCS/2022/11 annex)
- *Terms of reference of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance* (MARS Group) (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2021/10 annex I or most recent)
- *Terms of reference of the Ad Hoc team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques* (START Team) (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2021/10 annex II or most recent)
- *Terms of reference of the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems* (GRM) (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2021/10 annex III or most recent)
- *Terms of Reference of the Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards* (ToS-GRS) (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2021/2/Add.1 or most recent)
- *Terms of Reference of the START-Ed Focal Point Network* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/7 annex I or most recent)

II. Meetings

2. According to its *Revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11) and unless otherwise decided, WP.6 holds annual sessions. Each WP.6 subgroup shall hold an annual meeting.

3. The WP.6 annual session and subgroups' annual meetings can assign tasks to their respective bureaux and to project team coordinators.

4. The WP.6 bureau (chair and vice chairs) meets at least once in between annual sessions. The main task of the WP.6 bureau meeting is to oversee the implementation of the respective decisions made at previous sessions and to prepare the following session(s). The chair, vice chairs and secretariat attend these meetings. Other interested parties may be invited at the request of the chair.

5. Each WP.6 subgroup bureau (chair and vice chair(s)) meet at least once in between annual meetings. The main task of these meetings is to oversee the implementation of the programme of work related to their respective area of work. The chair and vice chair(s) of the respective subgroup and the secretariat attend these meetings. WP.6 bureau members may attend these meetings. Other interested parties may be invited by the bureau to attend specific bureau meetings, at the request of the relevant subgroup chair.

6. WP.6 leadership (composed of both WP.6 bureau and subgroup bureaux) meets at least once in between annual sessions. The main task of this meeting is to check the progression of the programme of work, discuss cross-cutting themes and confirm activities for future programme of work.

7. Project teams are formed to achieve specific tasks by agreed deadlines assigned to them by the parent body. These tasks must be within the framework of the *Programme of work*.

8. Only meetings where the secretariat is present are considered official.

III. Membership

9. Experts are welcome to participate in WP.6 activities as observers, as defined in the WP.6 *Revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11, section III).

10. Membership of a subgroup is comprised of government experts and may also include eminent specialists in the relevant field, as per the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) *Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE* (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1). Non-government experts may become members of a WP.6 subgroup following the verification of their expertise in the relevant field (based on education, work experience, publications or other considerations). This verification is done by recommendation of the WP.6 bureau, the subgroup bureau, the member State Mission in Geneva to the United Nations or – on an ad-hoc temporary (annual) basis – the ECE secretariat.

(a) A subgroup must have at least ten active members in order to be considered active. The group must be active at the time of renewal of mandate.

(b) A member must participate in at least 50 per cent of the official meetings over the past twelve-month period in order to be considered active.

11. Members and observers participating in WP.6 activities are volunteers in their own right and do not represent any specific interests of their countries or institutions. Members and observers are expected to participate in the work of WP.6 in a spirit of cooperation to effectively promote the work of the Working Party according to its mandate; the leadership should take up the matter of constructive participation if the need arises.

IV. Officers

12. The Working Party elects its officers as per the WP.6 *Revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11, section III). The current organizational diagram of WP.6 is presented in annex I.

13. The subgroups of WP.6 appoint their officers (chair and an agreed number of vice chair(s)) at the end of an annual meeting. The term of office is one year.

(a) Nominations for a subgroup officer position must be received at least one month prior to the annual meeting of the subgroup. The nominated individual must be a member of the subgroup and the nominations must be received from another member, from this or another subgroup of WP.6 (self-nominations are not accepted). A member can only submit one nomination. The nominations will be scrutinised by the WP.6 chair who may refer it through the secretariat to the member State Mission in Geneva to the United Nations. Following such examination, the nomination may be excluded from further consideration at the discretion of the WP.6 chair and/or the member State Mission in Geneva to the United Nations (based on the individual's expertise, potential reputational risks to WP.6 or other considerations). The candidates' profiles are then circulated by the secretariat at least one week prior to the meeting (either published on the website or sent by email to the subgroup's members). If voting is necessary to appoint an officer of the subgroup, the secretariat will publish the procedure to be applied at least one week prior to the meeting.

(b) Subgroup chairs are responsible for the meetings of the subgroup and presenting subgroup reports to the WP.6 annual session. This can be delegated by the chair to a vice chair or another member of the respective subgroup. The subgroup chair ensures the meetings are held in a professional, open and inclusive manner promoting transparency both internally and externally. The subgroup chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, ensures that all topics discussed within the subgroup are in line with the *Programme of work* and that deliberations are properly recorded.

(c) One of the subgroup vice chairs may act as chair in case of absence of the latter. Subgroup vice chairs attend subgroup annual meetings, bureau meetings and relevant meetings. They carry out tasks assigned to them by the chair.

14. Subgroup bureau members should make every effort to attend their respective subgroup's meetings, as well as the WP.6 annual session, preferably in person. All officers should give advance notice to the WP.6 chair and/or secretariat if they are unable to attend meetings. All officers are expected to participate in the work of WP.6 in a spirit of cooperation to effectively promote the work of the Working Party according to its mandate. The subgroup chair or the WP.6 chair should take up the matter of attendance at meetings or constructive participation if the need arises.

V. Project development

15. WP.6 develops various types of deliverables which include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Recommendations
- (b) Guidelines
- (c) Proposals for future policies
- (d) Glossaries

16. All deliverables and work within WP.6 and its subgroups should be covered by the annual *Programme of work* and indicate to which section of the *Programme of work* it is being developed against.

17. The WP.6 bureau or a subgroup bureau may establish a project team in order to develop a specific deliverable.¹ This should be done in the following three steps:

(a) Project inception, during which a member (the proposer) presents the idea of the proposal within the working meetings of the relevant WP.6 subgroup in order to build consensus among the WP.6 members. Then, a proposal (using the template in annex II) is put together and shared (through the secretariat) with the leadership of WP.6 for comments and expressions of interest within a timeline of at least two weeks. The WP.6 chair or relevant subgroup chair may request modifications to the project proposal. If the WP.6 bureau considers that the proposal is mature enough to move forward, it should confirm a proposed project leader or nominate another project leader from among the members of a subgroup in consultation with the relevant subgroup chair. The project leader, once confirmed, should seek at least six additional members to work on the project from at least three different United Nations Member States, two of which must be ECE member States. This step ends with a "call for participation" circulated by the secretariat either directly to WP.6 experts or published on the WP.6 website.

(b) Project development, during which the deliverable is developed. Experts in the team are reminded of the intellectual property ownership and waiver in the WP.6 *Revised terms of reference of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies*, annex, paragraph 3 (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11). The project team should make best efforts to respect the original project proposal timeline. The project team should have at least one dedicated meeting virtually per semester and report on progress during the annual meeting of the relevant sub-group(s) and prepare text for inclusion in the sub-group annual report.

(c) Project finalization, during which the deliverable is reviewed and approved. When the project team considers that the deliverable has been completed, it should be submitted to the chair of the relevant subgroup and then to the WP.6 leadership for any initial comments via the secretariat; they will have a maximum of two weeks to comment on the

¹ The following steps are inspired by the Open Development Process ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2016/17) of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). It has been simplified to correspond to the needs of WP.6 while maintaining a similar level of transparency and openness.

deliverable. If the deliverable is a recommendation, a guideline or a proposal for future policies, it should be circulated to the WP.6 expert community (through the secretariat) for a comment period of at least one month; this will either be sent directly to WP.6 experts or published on the WP.6 website (other deliverables may be circulated in the same way at the request of the project leader, subgroup chair or WP.6 chair). Any comments which are received should be and taken into account by the project team; if comments are not considered relevant, a brief justification should be provided. External comments should use the template (annex III) and the dispositions taken by the project team should be recorded in the same document and kept on file by the secretariat in case there are any questions. Once all comments are addressed, the final deliverable is submitted to the WP.6 chair (for recommendations) or the relevant subgroup chair (for all other deliverables) in order to be presented to the WP.6 annual session. The project team is disbanded once all the deliverables of the project are finalized for the annual session.

18. Finalized deliverables are submitted to the secretariat before they are presented at the WP.6 annual session. All deliverables of the United Nations must comply with the *United Nations Editorial Manual*.² The deliverables will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, to conform with this. Finalized deliverables will also be examined, insofar as possible, for factual accuracy and conformity with ECE guidance and regulations (of WP.6 and of other working areas of the ECE). Minor modifications may result; any substantial modifications will be brought to the attention of the WP.6 bureau, the sub-group chair and/or project leader.

19. The finalized deliverables are presented to the annual session of WP.6. All documents planned for discussion at an annual session must be made known to the WP.6 bureau nine months prior to the session date (which corresponds with the establishment of the forecast of ECE documents) and must be completely finalized at least three months prior to the session date. The deliverables are only official once they have been presented for information or for decision to the ECE member States present at the annual session.

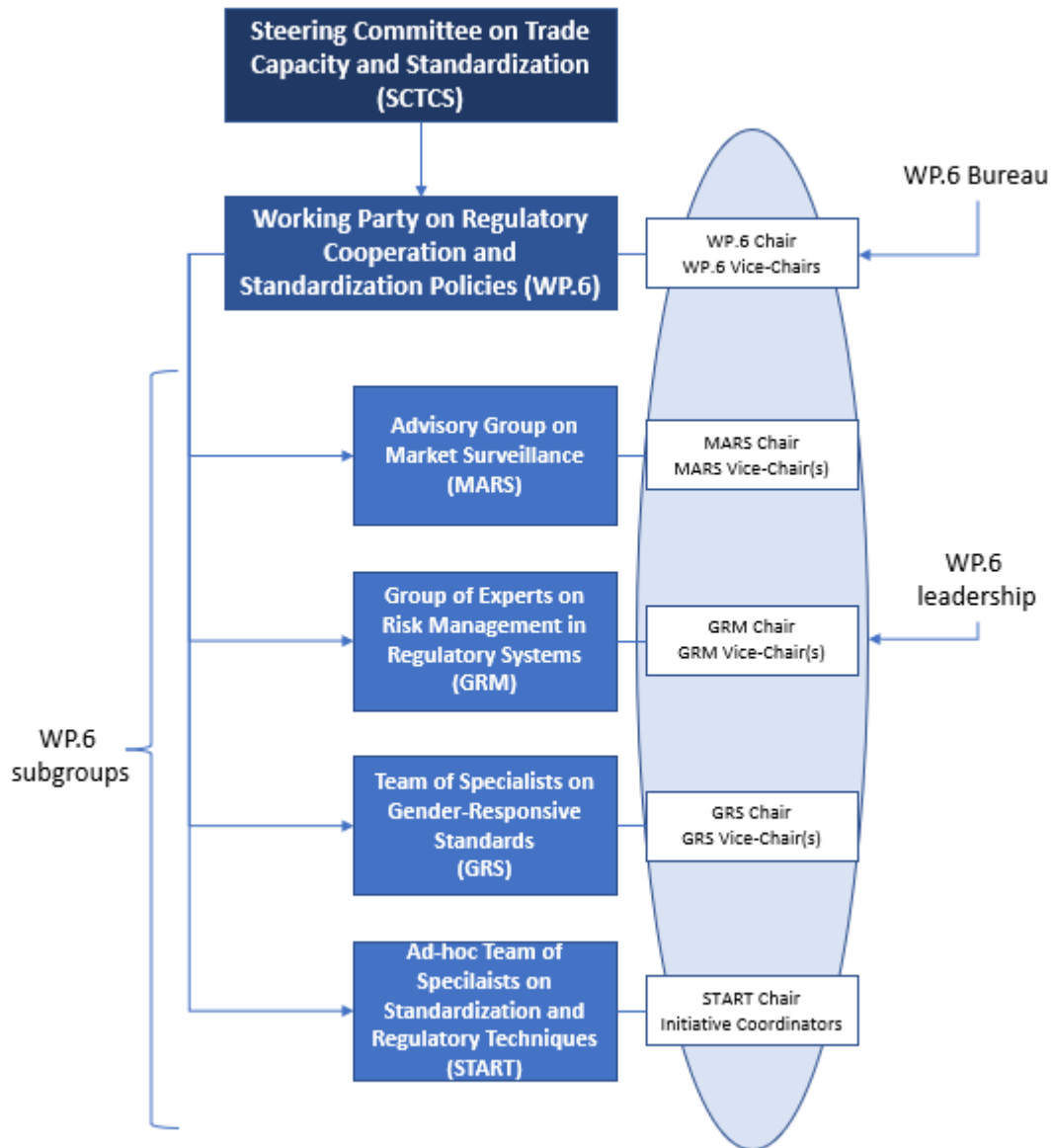
20. The WP.6 bureau and subgroup bureaux should continually verify deliverables related to their area of activity to ensure that they are kept up to date and relevant. Revisions and updates should constitute projects and follow the same three-step process above.

21. Support material (presentations, training material, explanatory documents) and exploratory research not resulting in a deliverable to be published do not necessarily need to follow the three-step process above, unless requested to do so by the WP.6 bureau, the relevant sub-group chair, or the secretariat.

² <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual>

Annex I

Organizational diagram of WP.6



Source: ECE

Annex II

Project proposal template

All fields required unless indicated as "if applicable"

WP.6 Project Proposal			
Project name:			
Date last updated:		Sub-group (if applicable):	
Proposed by:		Mandate (ref. in PoW para no.):	
1. Project purpose			
<i>(background, including relation to PoW)</i>			
2. Project scope			
<i>(what is included in the work and what is the expected deliverables)</i>			
3. Project team membership			
<i>(please list at least six WP.6 experts who will participate, from at least three different UN Member States, two of which must be within the ECE region) (please also indicate any exclusions to participation)</i>			
Initial list of at least six experts: <i>(with delegation and email)</i> <i>(may be provided after submission but project cannot start until this list is established)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • 		
Please choose:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Membership is open to all WP.6 experts knowledgeable in the topic.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Membership is reserved to:	<i>(please describe the restrictions/exclusions)</i>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In addition, Member States may invite technical experts from their constituency to participate.	
4. Initial contributions			
<i>(any existing work which will help to formulate the deliverable or which could potentially overlap with the proposed deliverable)</i>			
•			
•			
5. Proposed leadership			
Proposed Leader:		Email:	
6. Estimated timetable			
Inception expected completion duration <i>(please choose only one)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 month <i>(everything is nearly ready to start)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 months <i>(normal procedure)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months <i>(may take some time before ready to start)</i>	
Development expected completion duration <i>(please choose only one)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 months <i>(everything is already written)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months <i>(should be a quick project)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	12 months <i>(normal procedure)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	18 months <i>(will require a bit more research)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	24 months <i>(will require a lot of research)</i>	

Annex III:

Comment template and log

Public review of the WP.6 project :	
<i>Comments welcome until¹ :</i>	<i>yyyy-mm-dd</i>

¹All comments should be sent to the UNECE WP.6 secretariat within the allotted timeframe. Comments received after the deadline may not be taken into consideration.

Comment submitter name:		Email:		Submission date: (yyyy-mm-dd)	
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Please return completed template to: regulatory.cooperation@un.org

Please make all comments using this template. Please propose suggested changes in order to resolve your comments.

Line number	Type of comment ²	Comment	Proposed change <i>(Comments without proposed changes may be disregarded)</i>	Disposition <i>(leave blank)</i>	ID # <i>(leave blank)</i>

²Type of comment: ge = general; te = technical; le = legal; ed = editorial