Economic Commission for Europe
Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

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

Thirty-fourth session
Geneva, 26(pm)–28 August 2024
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Matters arising

Report from the Bureau of Working Party 6

Submitted by the WP.6 Chair

Summary

The objective of this report is to provide a brief overview of the activities and accomplishments of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) undertaken since its last report in 2023.

Document (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2024/INF.1) is submitted by the WP.6 Chair to the thirty-fourth annual session for information.
I. Overview of activities

1. Since the thirty-third session, the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) has had the opportunity to test and roll out the working procedures as detailed in ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/12 and ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/13. There were several projects launched and all followed these procedures; overall, it has been a success. Two points may require slightly more detail: how to validate government employees as members (is this automatic or does it require something like a confirmation from their entity) and how a project team needs to deal with comments received during a public review period. Next year the subgroups will need to each be renewed and we can test the procedure linked to that at that time (there is a rule on a minimum number of active members).

2. Artificial intelligence (AI) and the challenges that quality infrastructure will face to ensure continued compliance of products with embedded digital technologies has been a key topic since the thirty-third session. The conference held during that session on “How to target continuous compliance” helped to inform the project which was launched in December 2023 and to orient the guidance which is provided. This has resulted in an overarching common regulatory arrangement (CRA) on products and/or services with embedded AI or other embedded technologies presented in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2024/11; as per the discussions during the thirty-third session, this is accompanied by a declaration in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2024/12 which government agencies can sign to signify their agreement to apply the basic principles set out in the overarching CRA.

3. Since the thirty-third session, there have been two other projects launched, in conformity with the Programme of Work.
   - Revision of Recommendation L on the International Model for Transnational Regulatory Cooperation Based on Good Regulatory Practices under the Ad-Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START)
   - CRA for trunk pipeline safety in relation to hydrogen under START

4. The project on integrated risk management through a single window system under the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) has continued and has requested an extension of one year to finalize the guidance under preparation.

5. WP.6 also featured a number of webinars during this period:
   - 2 April 2024, “Risk management and green, digital transformation”\(^1\) under GRM
   - 3 April 2024, “Gender consideration for green and digital transformation”\(^2\) under the Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (GRS)
   - 4 April 2024, “Market surveillance and green, digital transformation”\(^3\) under the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS)
   - 5 April 2024, “Harmonizing Regulatory Requirements on Pipeline Security for Hydrogen”\(^4\) under the START and in cooperation with the Sustainable Energy Division’s Hydrogen Task Force

II. Deliverables during the period November 2023–May 2024

6. During this period, WP.6 subgroups and experts with support of the secretariat have completed the following deliverables which are put forward to the thirty-fourth annual session for approval:

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\(^1\) [https://unene.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387911](https://unene.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387911)
\(^2\) [https://unene.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387904](https://unene.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387904)
\(^3\) [https://unene.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387966](https://unene.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387966)
\(^4\) [https://unene.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387890](https://unene.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387890)
III. Reporting on gender balance within WP.6

7. The WP.6 Bureau during this period has been comprised of one chair and four vice-chairs, with two women and three men. At the annual sessions of all of the subgroups, the new chairs and vice-chairs for the four subgroups were nominated. There are four subgroup chairs, two are women and two are men. There are a total of nine vice-chairs between these four subgroups, three are women and six are men.

Graph 1: Proportion of women in the leadership of WP.6 (Bureau and its subgroups) as of August 2024.

8. There are nearly 2500 experts who registered an interest in and are following the work of WP.6. There are 927 women, 1187 men and 277 who have not disclosed their gender. There is a slight decrease in the total number (though the proportion remains constant) since last year’s report; the secretariat has tried to reach out to experts to ensure that its database is clean and up to date.

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5 The WP.6 Bureau held a leadership meeting (WP.6 Bureau and the chairs, vice-chairs and coordinators of all the subgroups) on 22 November 2023 and held a dedicated WP.6 Bureau meeting to prepare the WP.6 34th annual session on 24 May 2024.
**Graph 2: Proportion of women experts registered in WP.6 as of October 2023**

9. The Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) held an annual meeting,\(^6\) and three working meetings during this period.\(^7\) There were on average 21 experts at the working meetings and around 65 experts at the annual session. The percentage of women at these meetings was 35 per cent; this is up from the 27 per cent reported in 2023, approaching a gender balance.

10. The Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (ToS-GRS) held an annual meeting,\(^8\) three working meetings\(^9\) and one webinar during this period.\(^10\) There were on average 44 experts at the working meetings, and around 80 experts at the conference and annual session. The average percentage of women at these meetings was 66 per cent; this is a decrease from the 74 per cent reported in 2023, approaching a gender balance. The increase in participation from the previous year is also in part due to invited speakers during the working meetings.

11. The Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS) held an annual meeting\(^11\) and one working meeting\(^12\) during this period. There were on average 55 experts at these meeting. The average percentage of women at these meetings was 38 per cent.

12. The Ad-Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START) held one annual meeting\(^13\) during this period. The percentage of women was 50 per cent.

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\(^6\) GRM Annual Session, 2–3 April 2024 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387564).

\(^7\) GRM met on 14 September 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375763), 30 November 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/385305) and 15 February 2024 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387877).

\(^8\) ToS-GRS Annual Session, 3–4 April 2024 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387566).


\(^10\) ToS-GRS held a webinar on 27 September 2023 on standards and circular economy (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375760).


\(^12\) MARS met on 20 February 2024 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/388092).

\(^13\) START Annual Session, 5 April 2024 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/387571).
Graph 3: Proportion of active women experts (participating in meetings and webinars) in the subgroups of WP.6 during the period November 2023 to May 2024.

13. The overall gender balance of active participation within WP.6 remains relatively stable at a 50-50 ratio.

Graph 4: Overall proportion of women experts actively participating within all activities of WP.6 (participating in meetings and webinars) during the period November 2023 to May 2024.
Annex

Key activities of WP.6 and its secretariat

I. Liaison activities during the period November 2023 – May 2024

- 7–10 November 2023, World Trade Organization (WTO) Technical Barriers to Trade Committee (TBT) meeting, Geneva
- 14 November 2023, WTO Youth Trade Summit, Engendering Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies, Geneva
- 21 November 2023, iNetQI meeting, online only
- 18 January 2024, bilateral meetings with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) central secretariat, Geneva
- 23 January 2024, World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), university students’ training, Geneva
- 29 January 2024, iNetQI meeting, online only
- 31 January 2024, WFUNA university students’ training, Geneva
- 29 February 2024, iNetQI meeting, online only
- 12–15 March 2024, WTO TBT meeting, Geneva
- 13 March 2024, GlobalAI Association, “How AI is changing our professional life – and not only”, Geneva
- 21–22 March 2024, ECE Sustainable Energy Division Hydrogen Task Force meeting, Geneva
- 9 April 2024, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “International regulatory co-operation for trust in the circular economy; Challenges of adapting to a circular economy”, Paris
- 18 April 2024, iNetQI meeting, online only
- 25 April 2024, EU/Canada Missions, “Supporting women in international trade”, hybrid
- 29 April 2024, WFUNA university students’ training, Geneva
- 14 May 2024, UN AI Advisory Board consultative meeting on standardization, online only
- 30–31 May 2024, International Telecommunication Union, AI4Good Summit

II. News pieces