

SPECA and the SDGs



SDG targets that can be better achieved through subregional cooperation in SPECA

In 1998, following up on a request from the five Central Asian countries, the United Nations launched the Special Programme for the Economics of Central Asia (SPECA) to strengthen subregional cooperation and the integration of Central Asia into the world economy. Azerbaijan and Afghanistan joined in 2005. UNECE and ESCAP support the Programme together.

In 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address crucial issues facing the global community, covering five key areas: people, peace, prosperity, the planet, and partnerships to achieve the Goals. In the SPECA setting, it is important to define a clear, limited and achievable list of SDGs and targets, which would benefit from subregional cooperation, and fall within the mandates of the six SPECA Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), which are active in water, energy and the environment; sustainable transport; trade; knowledge-based development; statistics; and gender and the economy.

The UNECE carried out a study to analyze the links between the work on SDGs on the national and subregional SPECA levels. It mapped what countries and development partners are doing to support the implementation of SDGs in the SPECA countries, and led to the formulation of a set of policy recommendations. In this process, the SPECA TWGs identified a list of SDGs and targets, which correspond to their mandates, to the priorities and needs of the SPECA countries; and subregional cooperation on which can substantively facilitate SDG implementation.

The TWGs decided to concentrate on:

The WG on Water, Energy and the Environment:

-  SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), target 6.5, and
-  SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), targets 7.1 and 7.2.

The WG on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity:

-  SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing), target 3.6;
-  SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), target 7.3;
-  SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), target 9.1;
-  SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), target 11.2; and
-  SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), target 12.c.

The WG on Trade:

-  SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), targets 17.10, and 17.11. The WG made tangible contribution to progress on target 17.10 through a SPECA Trade Policy Forum in Ashgabat in May 2016 (notably on WTO accession), national WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement readiness assessments and trainings for trade facilitation implementation.

The WG on Knowledge-Based Development:

-  SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), targets 8.2 and 8.3;
-  SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), targets 9.1, 9.4, 9.5, 9b and 9c.
-  SDG 13 (combat climate change and its impacts), targets 13.1, 13.3
-  SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), targets 17.1, 17.2

The WG on Gender and the Economy:

-  SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), targets 1.4 and 1.b
-  SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) targets 4.4, 4.5 and 4.7
-  SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), in particular targets 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5a, 5b, and 5c, which are related to the economy.
-  SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), targets 8.3, 8.5, 8.8 and 8.10.
-  SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), targets 9.1, 9.3 and 9c.
-  SDG 10 (Reduce inequality within/among countries), targets 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4.

The WG on Statistics has a specific role, as the collection, processing and analysis of statistics is of high importance for the review and monitoring of progress in the achievement of all SDGs. Consequently, the Group will continue its general work on building capacity in the statistical systems of the SPECA countries to collect and process statistics. Targets 17.18 and 17.19 of SDG 17 (Partnerships) partly cover these objectives.

The above list of SDGs and targets, which the SPECA TWGs have selected for future work, in consultation with the SPECA Governments, may become an SDG framework, on which to concentrate the implementation of the SPECA Programme, in order to support the participating countries in achieving the identified SDGs and targets.