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Report on capacity-building

Progress report on the Standards for Sustainable Development Goals project, phase II

Submitted by the secretariat

Summary

This document presents the main activities, results and impacts related to the standards for Sustainable Development Goals aspect of the project “Enhancing Usage and Uptake of Standards for Sustainable Development, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls” which is being carried out by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat from July 2019 to August 2022 thanks to contributions from the German Cooperation Fund through the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).

Proposed decision

“The Working Party takes note of the project report and thanks the Government of Germany and PTB for their generous contribution.”



I. Introduction

1. The project “Enhancing Usage and Uptake of Standards for Sustainable Development, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls” has been carried out by the ECE secretariat, since July 2019, thanks to the contributions from the German Cooperation Fund through the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).
2. The “Standards for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” project, phase II (SDG II) is the continuation of phase I of this project, which took place from July 2018 to July 2019.
3. The aim of phase II was to enhance the usage and uptake of standards developed by ECE and other international, regional, and national standards bodies by policymakers as vital tools to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The project was due to be finalized by December 2021 but was extended until August 2022.

II. Project activities (September 2021 – August 2022)

4. The ECE Portal on Standards for SDGs¹ was migrated to Drupal 9 making it more useable, accessible, and inclusive. This technical migration was obligatory to remain in line with other ECE platforms. In terms of security, all the obsolete code and vulnerabilities have been removed in Drupal 9, resulting in fewer security problems and security updates.
5. The ECE Standards Mapping Platform² (a comprehensive database that allows users to identify standards that can help to achieve individual SDGs) is now the world’s largest repository of standards mapped to SDGs. The database has grown from 1,500 standards mapped to five SDGs (2021) to more than 21,000 standards mapped to all SDGs; for example, the standards mapping database contains 1,891 standards mapped to SDG 12. The following organizations have contributed standards to the Standards Mapping Platform: ASTM International, Fairtrade International, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), ECE, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
6. To facilitate the use of the portal, each mapped standard is now featured with the following information: the name of the standard development organization (SDO), a link to the technical committee responsible for its creation, the title of the standard, the given reference code, document number, edition, publication year, SDGs associated with the standard and a link to the website where the standard is available for purchase or download. When transitioning to map all SDGs for multiple organizations in this phase II of the project, it was necessary to map to SDG in general and not the individual targets (as in phase I). The proof of concept in phase I of the project was based on desk research done within ECE; the current offering is based on the contributions directly from other SDOs.
7. The ECE Portal on Standards for SDGs features a collection of case studies.³ The submissions – each made with a standard ECE template – illustrate the effective application of standards for sustainable development. Forty-two case studies were submitted by representatives of national, regional, and international standards bodies. The studies received include: eight case studies for SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation); twelve case studies for SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), seven case studies for SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities); five case studies for SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production); seven case studies for SDG 13 (Climate action); one case study for SDG 14 (Life below water) and two case studies for SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals). The total number of case studies available on the ECE portal, including those submitted during phase I of the project, is 64.

¹ <https://standards4sdgs.unece.org/>.

² <https://standards4sdgs.unece.org/standards>.

³ <https://standards4sdgs.unece.org/case-studies>.

8. Expert commentaries were developed by leading standards authorities to highlight the important role of standards in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Fourteen commentaries were received and are now available on the ECE Portal on Standards for SDGs. The commentaries consider contextual determinants of success, barriers to the greater adoption of standards and the importance of capacity-building. The commentaries further highlight the need for innovative awareness-raising resources. Representatives of the following SDOs contributed expert commentaries: African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO); ASTM International; Austrian Standards International (ASI); Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS); Fairtrade International; Georgian National Agency for Standards and Metrology (GeoSTM); Green-E; Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS); National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI); Rainforest Alliance (RA); Round Table on Responsible Soy Association (RTRS); Royal Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN); Standards Norway (SN); Türk Standardlari Enstitüsü (TSE).

9. Three publications were developed during this period: (i) *Guidelines on Developing Gender-Responsive Standards* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/9); (ii) *Training Material on Gender-Responsive Standards* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/INF.2) and (iii) *Training Material on Standards in Support of the Sustainable Development Goals* (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/INF.3). The Guidelines publication was developed by the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI) Project Team 2 and presents practical steps that can be undertaken to ensure that standards and standards development practices increasingly meet the needs of women and girls. The two training materials will enable SDOs to generate greater awareness of the intersection of standards and gender.

10. Several awareness-raising videos were created by new and existing signatories to the Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development. The American Society of Mechanical Engineers developed a video which outlined their rationale for becoming a signatory and the importance of taking dedicated action on gender. Other signatories provided updates on their gender action plans and encouraged SDOs to undertake efforts to consider the gender-responsivity of their standards and development practices. Videos were received from the following organizations: Ente Italiano di Normazione (UNI), European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), Instituto Português da Qualidade (IPQ), Standards Council of Canada (SCC), Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS).

11. The ECE LearnQI⁴ platform is an open-access e-learning resource, which features innovative courses on key areas of quality infrastructure. The four self-directed courses – risk management, conformity assessment, market surveillance and gender-responsive standards – on the platform provide participants with a convenient way to gain a greater understanding of quality infrastructure (QI)-related topics at their own pace and in their own time. The four e-learning courses promote a dynamic learning approach, with interactive modules and the use of multimedia. The LearnQI training resource is a multi-course e-learning platform, with all courses available in English, French and Russian.

12. To identify needs and capacity, the GRSI Project Team 1 on Training and Best Practice created a survey intended to address training gaps and existing tools and resources within national standards bodies. The survey was disseminated in December 2021 to the GRSI network, with recipients given until late January 2022 to complete the survey. The survey results indicate that just under half of respondents have or are completing gender action plans. Most have no or informal targets (measurements) or indicators. Few gender action plans are or are informally reviewed on a regular basis. The findings of the survey underline that standards bodies saw gender action plans as being the most complicated part of their commitments to the Declaration.

13. The capacity-building workshops on “Standards for SDGs and Gender-Responsive Standards” were delivered: 26 April 2022 (English with Russian interpretation), 27 April 2022 (English), 3 May 2022 (English) and 4 May 2022 (French). Each day-long workshop was comprised of three sessions (1. Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals; 2. Gender-Responsive Standards; 3. Practical Guidance on Developing a Gender Action Plan).

⁴ <https://learnqi.unece.org/>.

The workshops enabled participants to gain practical experience to better understand gender-responsive standards and the steps to develop their individual gender action plans. Each workshop fostered a deeper understanding of standards for sustainable development, with workshops led by leading practitioners in standardization and gender equality. There were 280 registered participants for the workshops, representing more than 80 countries. Presentations, post-workshop materials and a workshop evaluation report are available on the event website.⁵

14. A second high-level event was convened under the project on 1 June 2022 and brought together standards experts to consider the project deliverables, discuss the importance of standards for SDGs and the need for continued work on gender-responsive standards. Under the title “Gender-responsive standards: bringing standards for sustainable development and gender-equality to standards development bodies”, the event featured four sessions (1. ECE leading the international community on gender-responsive standards; 2. Standards for SDG platform; 3. Implementing gender-responsive standards; and 4. Implementing gender action plans: objectives and challenges). There were 71 registered participants. Representatives of the following organizations participated in the high-level event: ARSO, British Standards Institution (BSI), CEN and CENELEC, ECE Expert Group on Resource Management (EGRM-ECE), IEC, ISO, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB), Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB), Spanish Association for Standardization (UNE), SCC, State Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues (United States of America), SIS, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Serbia, Work Safe New Zealand, WIPO, World Trade Organization (WTO), Yellow Window.

III. Impact

15. The “Enhancing Usage and Uptake of Standards for Sustainable Development, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls” project contributed to strengthening policymaker awareness and adoption of standards – developed by national, regional, and international standards bodies – as part of their strategies for the achievement of SDGs.

16. Activities undertaken as part of the project resulted in greater cooperation and mutual understanding between international SDOs, regulatory authorities, administrations, and policymakers. The project firmly established gender equality as a critical component in effective standards development and drew great interest from the standards community, as evidenced by the signing of the Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development by 77 international, regional, and national standards bodies worldwide.

17. The gender equality commitments (e.g. creating a gender action plan) made by these SDOs will directly impact and increase the participation of women in the setting of standards and the representation of their interests in the standards themselves. Recent signatories to the Declaration include: Agence National de Normalisation, de Métrologie et du Contrôle Qualité (ANM) of Benin, American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), and the Comisión Panamericana de Normas Técnicas (COPANT) and German Commission for Electrotechnical, Electronic, and Information Technologies of DIN and VDE (DKE).

18. The innovative resources developed as part of this project, including the LearnQI e-learning platform and ECE standards mapping database, will enable standards organizations to better understand and communicate the intersection of standards with the 2030 Agenda and women’s empowerment. As recommended in the evaluation of WP.6 activities (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2019/4), meeting times of GRSI were varied (i.e. 24 November 2021 (10:00 CET); 15 February 2022 (20:00 CET); 13 April 2022 (21:00 CET); 8 June (10:00 CET)) to accommodate the participation of global experts in other time zones.

⁵ <https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/366923>.

19. An evaluation of the capacity-building workshop sessions was led by external experts at Yellow Window. The team delivered an evaluation report which confirmed the impact of the workshop and high degree of satisfaction amongst participants. The evaluation found that participants were “clearly satisfied with the training workshop” and reported a satisfaction score across all evaluation items at 8.6/10. When questioned whether participants would be interested in further training that is specifically oriented towards skills development and practical implementation, the average score was 9.5/10. When questioned whether participants learnt what they expected to learn in the workshop, the post-workshop evaluation gave an average score of 8.7/10. In answer to “familiarizing participants with the concepts of gender bias and gender blindness,” the evaluation report confirmed that participants had given this 9.2/10.

20. The ECE LearnQI e-learning platform promotes active and independent learning. Offering courses at no costs and in a variety of languages, the intention is to further democratize online learning, making it accessible to all interested individuals. With sufficient funding, the Working Party will develop a series of e-learning courses which incorporate the 15 modules of the Education on Standardization programme (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2012/6).

IV. Follow up activities

21. Funding is being sought to begin a new project, which will support long-term capacity-building work with signatory standards bodies interested in developing and implementing gender action plans. A draft is being circulated to prospective partner agencies for input and requesting funding.

Annex

Signatories to the ECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development

African Organization for Standardization (ARSO), Agence Malienne de Normalisation et de Promotion de la Qualité (AMANORM), Agence Nationale de Normalisation, de Métrologie et du Contrôle Qualité (ANM) of Benin, Agence Togolaise de Normalisation (ATN), American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), amfori, Asociación Española de Normalización (UNE), Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR), ASTM International, Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas (ABNT), Association Sénégalaise de Normalisation (ASN), Austrian Standards International – Standardization and Innovation (ASI), Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS), British Standards Institution (BSI), Bureau des Normes de Madagascar (BNM), Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Comisión Panamericana de Normas Técnicas (COPANT), Comitato Elettrotecnico Italiano (CEI), Cyprus Organisation for Standardization (CYS), Danish Standards (DS), Deutsches Institut für Normung (DIN), Deutsche Kommission Elektrotechnik Elektronik Informationstechnik in DIN und VDE (DKE), Dirección General de Normas (DGN) of Mexico, Ente Italiano di Normazione (UNI), European Committee for Standardization (CEN) & European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), Fairtrade International, The Gambia Standards Bureau (TGSB), General Directorate of Standardization (DPS), Georgian National Agency for Standards and Metrology (GeoSTM), The Gold Standard, Icelandic Standards (IST), Institut luxembourgeois de la normalisation, de l'accréditation, de la sécurité et qualité des produits et services (ILNAS), Institut Marocain de Normalisation (IMANOR), Institute for Standardization of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ISBIH), Institute for Standardization of Moldova (ISM), Instituto Argentino de Normalización y Certificación (IRAM), Instituto Boliviano de Normalización y Calidad (IBNORCA), Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas y Certificación (ICONTEC), Instituto Dominicano para la Calidad (INDOCAL), Instituto Nacional de Calidad (INACAL) of Peru, Instituto Nacional de Normalização e Qualidade (INNOQ) of Mozambique, Instituto Português da Qualidade (IPQ), Instituto Uruguayo de Normas Técnicas (UNIT), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Latvian Standard (LVS), Lithuanian Standards Board (LST), Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA), Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB), National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology (NISIT) of Papua New Guinea, National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI), National Standards Body of Costa Rica (INTECO), New Zealand IEC National Committee, New Zealand Standards Organization (NZSO), Office Congolais de Contrôle (OCC), Organismo Hondureño de Normalización (OHN), Rainforest Alliance, Responsible Jewellery Council, Round Table on Responsible Soy Association (RTRS), Royal Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN), Rwandan Standards Board (RSB), Saint Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards (SKNBS), Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS), Servicio Ecuatoriano de Normalización (INEN), South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC), Standards Council of Canada (SCC), Standards Institute of Israel (SII), Standards Norway (SN), Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS), Swiss Association for Standardization (SNV), Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI), Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), Türk Standardlari Enstitüsü (TSE), Verra, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN).
