



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 September 2023

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

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

Programme of work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies for 2024

Submitted by the Bureau*

Summary

This document presents the detailed *Programme of work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies* based on the *Trade subprogramme's draft programme of work for 2024* (ECE/CTCS/2023/10) that was endorsed during the eighth session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards on 26–27 June 2023.

This document is presented to the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) for decision.

Proposed decisions:

“The Working Party adopts the *Programme of work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies for 2024*.”

“The Working Party recommends the extension of the mandates of WP.6 subgroups in the annexes of document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/14 for further two year periods: the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS) in annex III, the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START) in annex IV, the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) in annex V and the Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (ToS-GRS) in annex VI. It requests the secretariat to seek, as appropriate, the approval of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Executive Committee.”

* This document has not been edited by a professional editor.



I. Introduction

1. The *Programme of work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)* aims to create value to sustainable international trade through best practices identified with member States and industry. As per its terms of reference (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11), the Working Party: “aims to promote regulatory cooperation, standardization policies and activities which contribute towards reducing technical barriers to trade, promoting sustainable development in its all dimensions including, for example, gender equality, climate and environmental protection, circular economy and the adaptation to new technologies”. This work is vested in the Regulatory Cooperation Unit of the Market Access Section of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

2. The objective, the strategy, the planned results and the deliverables in the programme of work correspond to those contained in the ECE *Proposed programme budget for 2023* (A/78/6 (Sect. 20)). This document provides for targeted actions on mainstreaming a gender perspective into standards development organizations. The deliverables planned in this document for WP.6 are presented in annex I. The work of the subprogramme is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

II. Relation to overall objectives within the United Nations

3. The Working Party is in a unique position to support multiple objectives of the United Nations and ECE. It works on quality infrastructure which, among other things, ensures that goods put on the market are compliant with applicable regulations. This is done, for example, through the use of standards. Through its gender-responsive standards initiative, WP.6 has demonstrated that if gender mainstreaming aspects are taken into account at the level of standards development, the resulting goods, processes and services will be gender-responsive. A similar approach can be taken on other cross-cutting topics and help contribute to ensuring that products on the market have taken into account key objectives such as sustainability, circularity, digitalization, or disaster risk reduction.

A. Sustainable Development Goals

4. The Working Party has been deeply engaged in mapping standards to SDGs and providing guidance on how standards can help to achieve the SDGs. Efforts will be made to continue enhancing and updating the Standards 4 SDG portal.¹ The Working Party contributes, among others to improving gender equality (SDG 5), fostering decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), providing quality infrastructure (SDG 9), supporting circular economy approaches (SDG 12), and working through partnerships (SDG 17). The projects of WP.6 plan to continue to support SDGs throughout 2024.

B. Circular economy

5. At the sixty-ninth session of ECE held on 20 and 21 April 2021, member States committed to step up efforts to promote circular economy approaches and sustainable use of natural resources in the existing relevant ECE sectoral work programmes as appropriate (E/2021/37-E/ECE/1494). The Working Party chose this as the theme of its thirty-first session where each work area discussed how it can contribute to circularity. Integrating the principle of circularity into the standards of product designs will help to ensure sustainable end-of-lifecycle management of goods. The projects of WP.6 plan to continue exploring ways to support circularity throughout 2024.

¹ See: <https://standards4sdgs.unecce.org/>

C. Digital and green transformations

6. At the seventieth session of ECE, held on 18 and 19 April 2023, member States committed to support digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region (E/ECE/1504). The Working Party has already integrated aspects of digitalization into its general work, notably concerning risk management and product compliance. The Working Party has developed guidance on artificial intelligence from both a control perspective of products integrating such technologies and from a risk management perspective of common regulatory objectives and plans to develop further guidance on the topic. Work on this theme is planned to continue in 2024.

7. WP.6 seeks to promote further horizontal guidance across its subgroups with respect to regulatory challenges related to digitalization. This includes topics like cybersecurity, privacy, artificial intelligence and data-based products.

D. Disaster risk reduction

8. Responding to the dramatic increase in extreme weather events and mega-disasters is one of the greatest challenges of our present age. Climate change, rapid urbanization and population growth in hazard-prone cities and coastal areas make action all the more urgent. This is outlined in the *United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience* (see background document presented to the 2018 annual session of WP.6, agenda item 6). WP.6 and its secretariat shall continue to work on presenting and orienting its pertinent work which can help to support the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

III. Highlights of expected achievements during 2024

A. Regulatory cooperation

9. Products placed on markets need to comply with the regulatory requirements in domestic and export markets. Consistent with the requirements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) administered multilateral trading system, technical regulations should be developed with the aim of addressing health, safety and environmental concerns without posing unnecessary barriers to trade. Businesses need to study, understand and comply with such regulatory requirements by implementing standards referenced in national technical regulations. Harmonizing these requirements across borders based on internationally agreed standards can facilitate this process and contribute to common principles for enforcement of product safety, security and market surveillance. This is supported by the *Recommendation L on International Model for Transnational Regulatory Cooperation Based on Good Regulatory Practice* and is the main objective of the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START).

10. In the area of regulatory cooperation, WP.6 plans to conduct the following activities:

(a) Review for possible updates the *Recommendation L on International Model for Transnational Regulatory Cooperation Based on Good Regulatory Practice* notably to provide guidance on services and processes harmonization

(b) Develop a common regulatory arrangement for trunk pipeline safety in relation to hydrogen and/or ammonia or other gases and circulate a questionnaire to the user community to capture information on application of regulations today

(c) Develop further examples relative to the common regulatory arrangement for cybersecurity

(d) Develop materials (presentation slide deck, resources, media content) that can be used to promote the work of START

(e) Explore further guidance on continuous compliance of products with embedded digital technologies related to quality infrastructure (i.e. standardization, metrology, international regulatory cooperation, market surveillance, risk management)

(f) Review existing recommendations and guidance material (beyond those specifically listed elsewhere in this document) to evaluate if revisions or modifications are necessary with a view to ensuring regulatory harmonization

B. Market surveillance

11. Market surveillance enables Governments to ensure that products comply with mandatory regulatory requirements. The Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS) develops and promotes best practice guidelines that could serve as a reference framework for Governments.

12. In the area of market surveillance, WP.6 plans to conduct the following activities:

(a) Update the *Recommendation M on Use of Market Surveillance Infrastructure as a Complementary Means to Protect Consumers and Users against Counterfeit Goods* and plan for guidelines on implementation of this recommendation

(b) Review for possible updates linked to digitalization and sustainability the *Recommendation N on Good Market Surveillance Policies and Practices*; a webinar on this topic could also be planned in support of this

(c) Continue exchanges of experience in the area of market surveillance in order to identify and bring forward best practices in this field while further developing the network of global and regional market surveillance entities

(d) Enhance cooperation with customs agencies, with an objective to improve controls at the border and application of market access regulations

(e) Develop further the *Market Surveillance Model Initiative Guide to the Use of the General Market Surveillance Procedures* covering all phases of market surveillance from planning of inspections to dangerous product recall

(f) Develop guidance related to the challenges for market surveillance in relation to products with embedded digital technologies

C. Risk management

13. Risk management aims to safeguard against hazards that stem from the quality of products and services – or lack thereof – that have the potential to cause harm or damage the health and safety of consumers and the environment. Standards and technical regulations are – among other things – risk mitigation tools and they should be proportionate to risks they were set out to address. Development and enforcement of regulations require application of the state-of-the-art risk management tools. Taken collectively, regulations make products safe, make organizations' processes stable and ensure consumers are better protected from hazards. The Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) is the focal point within WP.6 for this work.

14. In the area of risk management, WP.6 plans to conduct the following activities:

(a) Develop training materials and guidance documents on the implementation of the suite of risk management recommendations

(b) Analyse the survey on the application of crisis management principles described in *Recommendation P on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems* during the COVID-19 crisis

(c) Develop best practice on applying integrated risk management within the single window

(d) Develop guidance on risk management tools to be applied within the context of SDG 14 (based on *Recommendation T on Standards and Regulations for Sustainable Development*) and explore their potential application in the field of product safety

(e) Develop guidance on risk management tools for evaluating the level of risk of products that cannot be assessed by standard conformity assessment methods (such as products with embedded advanced technologies)

(f) Enhance cooperation and liaison through the secretariat of WP.6 with customs agencies, other government agencies, international organizations working in the field and other risk management organization, with an objective to improve and harmonize risk management procedures and to contribute to the risk management activities of other international organizations

D. Gender-responsive standardization

15. The lack of gender-responsive standards and awareness of their importance has resulted in unnecessary health and safety risks for women and girls and led to standards having unequal impacts in other areas. As standards-setting bodies progressively develop policies for mainstreaming gender in their activities and in the management of their organizations, there is an evolving need for further guidance and implementation tools. In 2016, WP.6 launched the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative and in 2022 the Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (ToS-GRS) was approved. This is an important contribution to SDG 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. This has resulted in the publication in 2018 of the *Recommendation U on Gender-Responsive Standards* and the *Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development* which has to date eighty-two signatories.

16. In the area of gender-responsive standardization, WP.6 plans to conduct the following activities:

(a) Enhance the implementation of the *Recommendation U* and encourage national standards bodies and relevant standards developers to sign the *Declaration* and report on impact

(b) Develop a model best practice for a gender action plan for a standards development body

(c) Develop materials (e.g. materials catered to different types of audience, materials that highlight the impact of gender-responsive standards in daily life, resources on how to implement the *Guidelines on Developing Gender-Responsive Standards*) to further raise awareness

(d) Develop training material on gender-responsive standards and ensure its translation into other languages such as French, Russian and/or other official United Nations languages

(e) Act as a focal point for information-sharing, collaboration and developing relevant solutions such as national gender action plans

(f) Explore further areas that GRS could add guidance

E. Education

17. Building awareness on standards and the standardization processes is important not only for those within specific industries using standards, but for all those who may potentially be impacted by standards, in other words, anyone who would be involved in commercial trading activities. The education on standardization initiative (START-Ed) has been established as a platform for cooperation and exchange of experiences on teaching standards and the impact of standardization policies for international trade including methodological and practical support to teachers both in vocational and academic setting.

18. In the area of education, WP.6 plans to conduct the following activities:

- (a) Explore labour market requirements regarding new skills and competences of graduates in relation to standards and standardization policies
- (b) Further develop e-learning courses which reflect the model curricula proposed by START-Ed
- (c) Invite experts to continue promoting the importance of knowledge on standards to university graduates and elaborate necessary teaching tools to use WP.6 modules and then share relevant experiences

IV. External factors

19. The Regulatory Cooperation Unit is expected to implement these activities (outlined in annex II) on the assumption that: (a) there is political will and cooperation among Governments, standards bodies and other key quality infrastructure institutions; (b) there is demand for ECE standards and recommendations; (c) member States provide the necessary information and support; (d) there is active participation by experts in ECE technical meetings; and (e) donor support for the work of the subprogramme is adequate.

V. Additional resources being sought

20. If additional resources can be secured, the Working Party will
- (a) conduct a follow-up project to the Standards for SDG / Gender-responsive standards project
 - (b) maintain and further develop the LearnQI e-learning portal²
 - (c) respond to requests for capacity-building by member States
 - (d) support the implementation of ECE WP.6 recommendations by member States, as appropriate

² See: <https://learnqi.unece.org/>

Annex I

Deliverables to be implemented in 2024

1. The mandates of WP.6 and its subgroups provide the legislative framework for its deliverables. The table below lists all deliverables, by category and subcategory, for the year 2024 that are expected to contribute to the attainment of the objective of WP.6 stated above. This table is an excerpt from the *Proposed programme budget for 2024 (A/78/6 (Sect. 20))*.

2. The deliverables of the subprogramme fall into the following main categories: (a) facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies; (b) generation and transfer of knowledge, including technical cooperation projects, training events, seminars, workshops, and publications; (c) substantive deliverables; and (d) communication deliverables.

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>2024</i>
	planned

Quantified deliverables

A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies

Parliamentary documentation (number of documents)

2. Documentation for the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies 14

Substantive services for meetings (number of three-hour meetings)

6. Meetings of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies, its Bureau and related expert bodies 13

B. Generation and transfer of knowledge

Field and technical cooperation projects (number of projects)

9. On enhancing usage and uptake of standards for sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls 1

Seminars, workshops and training events (number of days)

13. Workshops for policymakers and experts in low- and middle-income countries in the ECE region on trade procedures, supply chain management, conformity assessment and market surveillance, and women's entrepreneurship 6

Publications (number of publications)

17. On trade standard guidance in the following areas: quality infrastructure, risk management, education and sustainable development 2

18. On mainstreaming a gender perspective into standards 2

Technical materials (number of materials)

24. Training material and guidelines on trade standards and/or regulatory cooperation 2

Fact-finding, monitoring and investigating missions (number of missions)

27. Fact-finding missions on [...] regulatory cooperation and standardization and regulatory and procedural barriers to trade 1

C. Substantive deliverables

Consultation, advice and advocacy: Advisory services to government officials and other stakeholders in at least 10 ECE member States on [...] regulatory cooperation and standardization and regulatory and procedural barriers to trade

D. Communication deliverables

Outreach programmes, special events and information materials:

Booklets, fact sheets and information brochures reaching at least 17 ECE programme countries and for more than 1,000 public and private sector experts.

External and media relations:

Press releases, publication launch events and articles in external newsletters intended for government officials and experts working on trade

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>2024</i>
Digital platforms and multimedia content: subprogramme's website.	planned

Annex II

List of planned activities and outputs of the Working Party 6 in 2024

1. Within this broad mandate, the secretariat proposes to undertake the following activities
 - (a) To prepare and service the thirty-fourth annual session of WP.6 comprised of:
 - fourteen documents
 - four half-day meetings
 - reporting
 - (b) To prepare and service the annual meeting of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS) (comprised of two half-day meetings) and:
 - prepare the reporting to the WP.6 annual session
 - organize a webinar (probably on the revision of Recommendation N)
 - assist in the finalization the revision of Recommendation M
 - (c) To prepare and service the annual meeting of the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) (comprised of two half-day meetings) and:
 - prepare the reporting to the WP.6 annual session
 - organize a webinar (probably on sharing best practices)
 - conduct a survey on the application of Recommendation P
 - collaborate through the secretariat with ISO/TC 262 and ISO/TC 292 in developing work on disruption-related and supply chain risks
 - identify and involve regulators in the group's work, in particular chief risk management officers
 - (d) To prepare and service the annual meeting of the Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (ToS-GRS) (comprised of two half-day meetings) and:
 - prepare the reporting to the WP.6 annual session
 - organize a webinar
 - seek further signatories to the *Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development*
 - assist with the preparation of guidance material in this area
 - establish a repository of case studies on gender action plans
 - prepare two publications on themes related to this area (probably on gender action plan implementation)
 - (e) To prepare and service the annual meeting of the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START) and its initiatives (comprised of two half-day meetings) and
 - prepare the reporting to the WP.6 annual session
 - organize a webinar (probably on trunk pipeline safety of hydrogen transport and/or cybersecurity)
 - prepare a publication on themes related to this area (probably on regulatory harmonization)

(f) To support the activities of the education on standardization initiative (START-Ed):

- prepare and service a meeting of the initiative (comprised of one half-day meeting)
- prepare the reporting to the WP.6 annual session
- organize a webinar
- continue the cooperation through the secretariat with the League of European Research Universities and the University of Geneva

(g) To promote and advocate for the use of standards in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

- contribute to ECE and United Nations-wide initiatives on SDG implementation and support the participation of standards organizations

(h) To cooperate with WTO: WP.6 secretariat will participate in the meetings of the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement as well as the WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender in 2023 and 2024 and provide updates on its activities in these meetings.

Annex III

Terms of reference of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS Group)

A. Establishment of the Advisory Group

1. The establishment of an advisory group on market surveillance matters was a recommendation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) International Forum on Market Surveillance (29 October 2002, Geneva), which was endorsed by the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6)¹ and the ECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development² in May 2003.

B. Objectives of the Advisory Group

2. Market players such as public authorities, manufacturers, retailers, importers, and consumers/users need transparent rules of play. Consistent and effective procedures in the field of the protection of consumers and workers are a precondition to address this concern. Improved coordination and creation of best practices for market surveillance authorities are of great importance. Such cooperation and coordination are essential for the good functioning of both national markets and for the ECE region at large in order to eliminate distortion of competition and to protect consumers. Transparent and consistent best practices will also contribute to the facilitation of international trade.

3. The general task of the Advisory Group on MARKET Surveillance (MARS Group) is to contribute to the activities of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) aimed at creating conditions conducive to the development and promotion of global trade and economic cooperation.

4. The specific tasks of the Advisory Group are

- to provide for interaction on a national/regional/international level between all players concerned, including public authorities, manufacturers, retailers, importers, and consumers/users against goods not in conformity with legislation being placed on the market;
- to increase transparency and attract attention to the responsibilities of public authorities and their staff for market surveillance with regard to their accountability in the chain of control;
- to identify best practices and methods ensuring fulfilment of legitimate objectives (such as protection of human health or safety, animal or plant life or health, or the environment and to ensure fair competition) in existing legislation;
- to promote (and when necessary initiate) coherent best practices and to elaborate relevant recommendations concerning market surveillance within the ECE region.

C. Composition of the Advisory Group, its membership and participation in its meetings

5. Members of the Advisory Group are representatives from ECE member States and other United Nations Member States.

¹ The name of Working Party 6 changed in 2004 to its current name: “Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies”.

² The name of the Steering Committee changed in 2014 to its current name: “Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards”.

6. The Advisory Group is open to participation by experts from international organizations as well as to representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as observers in their personal capacity.

7. The Advisory Group may establish project teams of experts to prepare projects requiring specific expertise, which are expected to become a part of the general activities of the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group can work with interested Governments and organizations on financing and implementation of such projects.

8. United Nations Member States, international organizations, standards development organizations, NGOs and private sector participants are encouraged to consider gender balance when nominating representatives to participate in the Advisory Group.

9. The ECE secretariat will provide necessary support to the Advisory Group and its project teams within available resources.

D. Reporting

10. The Advisory Group works under the guidance of WP.6, in accordance with terms of reference and working practices adopted by WP.6 and reports to it. The Advisory Group works on the understanding that its final reports, proposals or recommendations will be decided by WP.6 as an intergovernmental body.

Annex IV

Terms of reference of the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team)

A. Establishment of the Team of Specialists

1. The establishment of the Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team) was suggested at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) International workshop on implementation and use of international standards (18 May 1999, Geneva) which was organized in conjunction with the ninth session of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies¹ (17–19 May 1999, Geneva). The Working Party supported and approved this proposal. The establishment of the Team was endorsed by the third session of the ECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development² (8–10 June 1999).

B. Objectives of the Team of Specialists

2. The general task of the Team of Specialists is to contribute to the activities of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) aimed at creating conditions conducive to the development and promotion of global trade and economic cooperation.

3. The specific task of the Team of Specialists is to examine the possibilities for reducing non-tariff barriers to trade by limiting the content of related regulations to the essential requirements for meeting regulatory objectives and using reference to international standards as the preferred means for setting out detailed requirements, including conformity assessment requirements.

C. Composition of the Team, its membership and participation in its meetings

4. Members of the Team are representatives from ECE member States and other United Nations Member States.

5. The Team is open to participation by experts from international organizations as well as to representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as observers in their personal capacity.

6. The Team may establish project teams of experts to prepare projects requiring specific expertise, which are expected to become a part of the general activities of the Team. The Team can work with interested Governments and organizations on financing and implementation of such projects.

7. United Nations Member States, international organizations, standards development organizations, NGOs and private sector participants are encouraged to consider gender balance when nominating representatives to participate in the Team.

8. The ECE secretariat will provide necessary support to the Team of Specialists and its project teams within available resources.

¹ The name of Working Party 6 changed in 2004 to its current name: “Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies”.

² The name of the Steering Committee changed in 2014 to its current name: “Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards”.

D. Reporting

9. The Team of Specialists works under the guidance of WP.6, in accordance with terms of reference and working practices adopted by WP.6 and reports to it. The Team of Specialists works on the understanding that its final reports, proposals or recommendations will be decided by WP.6 as an intergovernmental body.

Annex V

Terms of reference of the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM)

A. Establishment of the Group of Experts

1. At its forty-fifth meeting, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Executive Committee (EXCOM) decided to establish a Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) on the recommendation by the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and the Committee on Trade,³¹ to consider how risk management can contribute to an efficient regulatory framework.

B. Objectives of the Group of Experts

2. The Group of Experts aims at an improved management of hazards that have the potential to affect the quality of products and services, and/or cause harm or damage to people, the environment, property and immaterial assets.

3. To achieve this goal, the Group of Experts will

- collect and share information about hazards resulting from use of products and from production processes;
- develop and share best practices on how to address these hazards through regulatory and managerial best practices.

4. The Group of Experts will develop and share best practices – including, if relevant, in the form of recommendations – as regards the use of risk management tools to

- (a) achieve proportionality between technical regulations and the risks they set out to address, including through regulatory impact assessment and best regulatory practices;
- (b) choose among alternative regulatory instruments;
- (c) assess the respective merits of risk-based regulations and deterministic regulations in different contexts and sectors;
- (d) increase effectiveness of the implementation of regulations and standards as regards pre-market activities (certification, registration, conformity assessment) and post-market ones (inspections and market surveillance);
- (e) improve managerial control of processes and operations as a contribution to a consistent and predictable implementation of standards and regulations;
- (f) analyse legal and supply chain requirements on traceability of goods as a means of meeting legitimate security and consumer safety concerns;
- (g) promote measures to build mutual confidence through better access and wider sharing of relevant information among regulatory agencies, at both national and regional levels (data banks on dangerous goods).

¹ The name of the Steering Committee changed in 2014 to its current name: “Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards”.

C. Composition of the Group of Experts, its membership and participation in its meetings

5. Members of the Group of Experts are representatives from ECE member States and other United Nations Member States.

6. The Group of Experts is open to participation by experts from international organizations as well as to representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as observers in their personal capacity.

7. The Group of Experts may establish project teams of experts to prepare projects requiring specific expertise, which are expected to become a part of the general activities of the Group of Experts. The Group of Experts can work with interested Governments and organizations on financing and implementation of such projects.

8. United Nations Member States, international organizations, standards development organizations, NGOs and private sector participants are encouraged to consider gender balance when nominating representatives to participate in the Group of Experts.

9. The ECE secretariat will provide necessary support to the Group of Experts and its project teams within available resources.

D. Reporting

10. The Group of Experts works under the guidance of WP.6, in accordance with terms of reference and working practices adopted by WP.6 and reports to it. The Group of Experts works on the understanding that its final reports, proposals or recommendations will be decided by WP.6 as an intergovernmental body.

Annex VI

Terms of Reference of the Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (ToS-GRS)

A. Establishment of the Team of Specialists

1. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI) was started following decision 4 of the 2016 WP.6 annual session (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2016/2, paragraph 20). Since then, it has delivered Recommendation U on Gender-Responsive Standards and a Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development which has been signed by over eighty standards development organizations. At the thirty-first annual session of WP.6 in 2021 GRSI recommended the establishment of a Team of Specialists to continue this work (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2021/2, paragraph 29).

2. GRSI noted multiple times throughout its meetings since 2016 that gender mainstreaming is not a one-off activity but requires long-term investments. The network of gender focal points which has been established through the Recommendation U and the Declaration establishes a de facto Team of Specialists internationally which will require a forum to continue to exchange on best practices and to develop further guidance on the topic. It is for this reason that a Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (GRS) was proposed and approved at the seventh session of the Steering Committee on Trade and Standards (decision 2022-05) and subsequently approved by the ECE Executive Committee at its 124th meeting on 30 September 2022.

B. Objectives of the Team of Specialists

3. Standards have a pervasive and influential role in society. Standards bodies continue to face unequal gender representation in the technical committees that develop standards and in their governance structures. They lack specific tools for the evaluation of the potential impact of standards on women's health, safety, well-being and agency. Gender equality is a human right to which gender-responsive standards contribute. The gender-responsiveness of standards will benefit all of society, and also will support the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. The general task of the Team of Specialists on GRS is to contribute to the activities of WP.6 aimed at ensuring gender mainstreaming in standards development.

5. The specific tasks of the Team of Specialists are to:

- provide a forum to identify and exchange best practices in gender-responsive standards development on a national / regional / international level among all concerned stakeholders
- encourage the adoption of the Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development and assist signatories to effectively implement the Declaration
- increase transparency and attract attention to the responsibilities of public authorities and standards development organizations to strive to create a standards development environment which enables gender inclusivity and equality
- promote (and when necessary initiate) coherent best practices and elaborate relevant recommendations concerning gender-responsive standards within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region and beyond.

C. Composition of the Team of Specialists, its membership and participation in its meetings

6. Members of the Team of Specialists are the gender focal points of the signatories of the *Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development* as well as representatives from ECE member States and other United Nations Member States.

7. The Team of Specialists is open to participation by experts from international organizations as well as to representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as observers in their personal capacity.

8. United Nations Member States, international organizations, standards development organizations, NGOs and private sector participants are encouraged to consider gender balance when nominating representatives to participate in the Team of Specialists.

9. The Team of Specialists may establish project teams of experts to prepare projects requiring specific expertise, which are expected to become a part of the general activities of the Team of Specialists. The Team of Specialists can work with interested Governments and organizations on financing and implementation of such projects.

D. Governance

10. The Team of Specialists is guided by its Chair, supported by one or two Vice-Chairs, in accordance with the Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1). The Chair and Vice-Chair(s) shall be appointed at the first meeting of the group.

11. It is the responsibility of the Chair that the objectives of the Team of Specialists are met and follow the relevant sections of the WP.6 programme of work.

12. Members of the Team of Specialists, as resources permit, undertake the substantive work, including the preparation of documentation for the meetings and the reports to be submitted to the WP.6 annual sessions.

13. The ECE secretariat will provide necessary support to the Team of Specialists and its rapporteur groups / project teams within available resources.

14. The Bureau and members of the Team of Specialists are encouraged to support the secretariat in mobilizing extrabudgetary resources to facilitate the work of GRS.

E. Reporting

15. The Team of Specialists works under the guidance of WP.6, in accordance with terms of reference and working practices adopted by WP.6 and reports to it. The Team of Specialists works on the understanding that its final reports, proposals or recommendations will be decided by WP.6 as an intergovernmental body.
