

Introducing the
Technical Cooperation Programme
of the **United Nations**
Economic Commission for Europe



UNITED NATIONS

ABOUT US

Established by the Economic and Social Council in 1947, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of five regional economic commissions of the United Nations.

UNECE sets out norms and standards and develops conventions to facilitate regional cooperation and regional integration, contributes to better cohesion of countries of the region and their beneficial integration in the world economy.

UNECE also provides member countries with a forum for policy dialogue on broad economic and sectoral issues, including on environment, transport, statistics, economic cooperation and integration, sustainable energy, trade, timber and forestry, housing, land management and population.

It brings together 56 countries located in Europe, North America and Central Asia. Over 70 international, professional organizations and non-governmental organizations also attend our meetings.

OUR TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

Technical cooperation activities form an integral part of the work of our Commission and are aimed at improving the national capacity of member states to implement the UNECE legal instruments, norms and standards as a means of their integration in the region and the world economy. All our technical cooperation activities have a strong regional/subregional dimension and seek to provide common solutions to transboundary problems.

Our comparative advantages

- Through our technical cooperation, we establish a **direct link** between international legal instruments, norms and standards and their implementation.
- We have well-established national and subregional **networks** of policymakers and technical experts, critical for the long-term sustainability of technical cooperation activities and projects.
- We have **in-house technical expertise**, which ensures optimal use of resources.
- We achieve a **multiplier effect** by targeting cross-border issues and covering a wide range of beneficiaries in several countries.

Guiding principles

Our technical cooperation activities are guided by the following principles:

- **Focus.** We focus our activities on countries with economies in transition.
- **Demand driven.** We provide technical assistance upon requests from Governments, either individually or in groupings.
- **Results oriented.** Our activities aim at enhancing national capacity and strengthening national ownership of economic development.

- **Direct linkage to what we do.** We aim to improve the capacity of countries to implement UNECE's norms, standards and other legal instruments.
- **Selectivity.** We chose only those areas in which we have in-house expertise and where we can ensure optimal use of our resources.
- **Cooperation and partnership.** We work in close cooperation and partnership with other organizations and stakeholders, including the private sector and the academic community.

What is the purpose of our technical cooperation activities?

The purposes of our technical cooperation activities are to:

- Improve the capacity of countries to implement UNECE international legal instruments, norms, standards and regulations.
- Support subregional and regional integration by strengthening institutional frameworks.
- Assist countries in developing and implementing technical assistance programmes/projects, with a special focus on addressing transboundary problems.
- Support countries in capacity-building efforts towards achieving internationally agreed development goals.

Types of our technical cooperation services

The main types of our technical cooperation services are the following:

- Advisory services to assist countries in implementing our legal instruments, regulations, norms and standards, and for formulating specific projects/programmes.
- Capacity-building activities (workshops, seminars, study tours and training) for assisting countries to implement global and UNECE legal instruments, regulations, norms and standards.
- Field projects, including those with a multisectoral and/or subregional focus, in areas where we have a comparative advantage.

Our cooperation with other organizations

We enjoy cooperation with numerous international and other organizations, including NGOs, the private sector and the academic community. This ensures rationalized division of labour, reduces costs, increases the impact and ensures the sustainability of projects.

One of our key partners at the country level is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). With the signing of the Cooperation Framework between the United Nations Regional Commissions and UNDP in October 2007, our cooperation with the UNDP received a fresh impetus.

We also participate in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in countries with economies in transition, and contribute to the One UN pilot programme in Albania.

At regional level, we actively collaborate with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in implementing technical cooperation projects and contributing to the review of implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension under the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding between OSCE and UNECE.

Our Regional Advisers

We have six Regional Advisers, one for each in the following areas: economic cooperation and integration, environment, statistics, sustainable energy, trade and transport.

What do our Regional Advisers do?

- They **offer advice** on how to implement the UNECE legal instruments, norms and standards.
- They **organize** capacity-building activities and implement projects.
- They **assist** the governments in drawing up their development projects/proposals.
- They **raise funds** for specific technical cooperation activities.
- They **identify cross-sectoral synergies** and carry out cross-sectoral activities.
- They facilitate **sharing experiences and good practices** among countries of the region/subregion.
- They **disseminate information** about the UNECE work.

MAIN AREAS OF OUR TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

Environment

Our environmental activities focus on helping countries implement the following UNECE conventions:

- Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution
- Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents
- Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the “Aarhus” Convention)



In Central Asia, our projects on transboundary water cooperation and improved water management form an important part of our engagement. Within the framework of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), we have developed a “Cooperation Strategy for the Rational and Efficient use of Energy and Water Resources of Central Asia” and prepared diagnostic reports on the region’s energy and water resources.

Transport

We provide advisory services, as well as strategic guidance and substantive backstopping to technical cooperation projects, to develop coherent pan-European transport networks, corridors and areas, and Euro-Asia transport links;

We conduct capacity-building projects, seminars, training courses, etc. to assist countries in acceding to, and implementing UNECE legal instruments on transport. In particular, we assist them in applying the TIR Convention (Convention on International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets) or the European Agreement concerning International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR). We also offer them support in adopting norms and standards, as well as in transferring know-how and sharing best practices, and in implementing global commitments on transport;



We help strengthen national legal and regulatory frameworks on road safety;

We provide support to transport initiatives and projects, in particular within the framework of SPECA, and in collaboration with such organizations as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization and the Central European Initiative.

Statistics



We provide expertise to senior government officials and deliver capacity-building for national statistical organizations. Our work also involves implementing commonly agreed international statistical standards for use in national official statistics so that policymakers and other users of statistical information can access methodologically sound and internationally comparable data. We also provide technical cooperation in the following areas:

- Preparing and publishing the results of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.
- How to track the non-observed economy.
- Improving the reliability of price statistics.
- Developing the timeliness of statistical information (seasonal adjustments and short-term economic statistics).
- Production and dissemination of gender statistics.
- Present statistical information in an understandable and communicative way.
- How to disseminate statistical information efficiently, e.g. to policymakers, research institutions and the business community.

Economic cooperation and integration



We work to promote a policy, financial and regulatory environment conducive to economic growth, innovative and knowledge-based development and higher competitiveness. Technical cooperation in this area focuses on the following:

- Creating a supportive environment for innovative development and knowledge-based competitiveness.
- Promoting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and enterprise development.
- Promoting an enabling environment for efficient financial intermediation in support of innovative development.
- Facilitating the effective regulatory protection of intellectual property rights and strengthening their role in innovative development.
- Promoting best practices in efficient public-private partnerships.
- Fostering wider and deeper international economic integration in the UNECE region.

Sustainable energy

We provide advice and technical assistance in accelerating the process of regional integration of the energy economies of member States and their energy infrastructure, while promoting more sustainable energy systems.

The forms and methods of our operational activities usually involve a combination of the following:

- Preparing and implementing specific programmes, both issue-oriented and subregional in nature.
- Preparing project proposals for funding by international organizations and donor countries.
- Developing and preparing substantive studies relating to policy issues and energy strategies.
- Offering support for the transition of national economies and energy markets towards more sustainable energy production and use by increasing the market share of renewable energy sources in the current energy mix.
- Assisting governmental organizations in implementing the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change, in particular the Kyoto Protocol.
- Developing and implementing programmes for capacity- and institution-building, the organization of workshops, seminars, training and expert group meetings, consultative and advisory missions, and study tours.



Trade

Our work in trade focuses on the following areas:

- Training in trade facilitation, the “Single Window” for export and import clearance, data harmonization, and electronic business strategy development.
- Trade-policy advice related to trade development and regional integration.
- Capacity-building activities on trade-policy issues; WTO accession and trade-facilitation negotiations.
- Capacity-building activities on the implementation of UNECE’s commercial agricultural standards (e.g. organizing seminars on standards for the export of potatoes, eggs, meat, fresh and dried fruit, and vegetables).



Three countries have already begun implementing “Single Window” projects: Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Serbia has strengthened its work on a Single Window and many others, including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have expressed their interest in these projects.

In partnership with the countries, the World Customs Organization, the European Commission and the United States Customs, we have launched two regional initiatives on trade-data harmonization and the Single Window, using our standards and recommendations.

Timber and forestry



Most of our activities are carried out jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The main areas of our programme are:

- Forest products
- Forest resources
- Forest policies
- Forest institutions

We focus mainly on capacity-building workshops on forest-sector policies and institutions, as well as on forest-products marketing and wood-energy development.

We help countries with economies in transition to fully participate in the regional and global forest-resource assessment and to meet the requirements for providing the basic information at an international level.

A team of specialists leads the work on forest policies and institutions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. They monitor trends, assess needs and facilitate the exchange of experience in policy developments and reform.

We recommend that national development strategies should include national forest programmes based on broad consultations among all the relevant stakeholders and address three pillars of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic), as interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Housing and land management

We assist countries in their technical and policymaking activities, including by:

- Carrying out country-specific assessments of the housing and land administration sectors known as “housing profiles” and “land administration reviews”.
- Offering guidance on management of multi-family buildings and housing finance.
- Carrying out assessments and offering guidance to address the formation and development of informal settlements.
- Offering guidance and conducting projects to promote energy efficiency in housing.
- Conducting technical assessments and providing advice on how to set up sound cadastral land and property registration systems.

SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA

UNECE provides its technical assistance to Central Asia mainly through the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). Launched in 1998 by the presidents of Central Asian States, SPECA is supported jointly by UNECE and UNESCAP. The objective of the Programme is to strengthen subregional cooperation by facilitating discussions and offering technical assistance on regional issues.

The SPECA Economic Forum is a platform for strategic discussions and the source of new ideas for the programme. It meets annually in conjunction with the meetings of the Governing Council. The Council provides policy guidance for the work carried out, identifies priorities and approves the work plans. It consists of senior policymakers at the level of vice-prime-ministers or ministers from the member countries, as well as the heads of UNECE and UNESCAP.

The Council provides strategic guidance to six project working groups in the following areas:

- Transport
- Water, Energy and Environment
- Trade Development
- Knowledge-based Economy Development
- Statistical Capacity-building
- Gender and Economy

The activities of each project working group are supported by the relevant secretariat divisions of UNECE and UNESCAP.

SOME OF OUR MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Dam safety in Central Asia



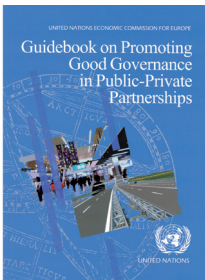
More than 100 Central Asian dams and water-control facilities are ageing and are not adequately maintained. Meanwhile, the number of people living downstream from these dams is growing. If a dam were to break, the humanitarian and economic consequences could be enormous. Therefore, to prevent such major dam accidents, in collaboration with UNESCAP we launched a project to help the countries work together to ensure safer dams. The joint project resulted in a model national law on safety of large hydraulic facilities, including dams, intended to be a basis for national harmonized legal frameworks for dam safety. A draft was drawn up of a regional agreement on cooperation on dam safety, which stipulates, inter alia, exchange of information and notification of other countries in case of accidents with

dams. The Central Asian countries are active in this work to improve or revise the existing legal provisions and institutional modalities for dam safety.

Tajikistan and Turkmenistan will develop a national law on safety of hydraulic structures including dams by adapting the model law; Kyrgyzstan will create a national commission on safety of dams; Kazakhstan is considering changing its Water Code to incorporate provisions for regulating dam safety.

Uzbekistan is working towards enforcing the law on safety of hydraulic structures, which was adopted in 1999. All the countries are interested in pursuing regional cooperation on dam safety by setting up a legal and institutional framework along the lines of the proposed regional agreement.

Promoting Good Governance in Public-Private Partnerships



Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure development are special contractual arrangements between public and private entities that share risk and provide services over a period of often 30 to 40 years. They can provide Governments with resources, new technology and innovative management. If suitably used, they can greatly improve the quality and quantity of public services. However, they require a strong public sector that performs a new role with new skills, and specialized institutions that set out procedures and processes by which the public and private sectors can develop partnerships. In short, they require good governance.

Weak governance has often resulted in poorly constructed projects and a lack of transparency and accountability. This, in turn, has generated a backlash against the whole PPP concept.

To address this problem and strengthen the governance of PPPs, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe has published a Guidebook on Promoting Good Governance in Public-Private Partnerships. The book sets out seven principles of good governance and shows how to apply them. Based on the book, a number of Governments have begun to develop their own PPP training programmes.

Using the Guidebook and training modules, in the Russian Federation the PPP Centre of the Vnesheconombank and the Moscow State University Higher School of Economics are developing certified training programmes for public administrations in PPPs.

The Regional School of Public Administration is also using the book in a PPP curriculum in South-East Europe.

Energy efficiency in Kazakhstan

The general objective of our programme in Central Asia is to accelerate energy-efficient development and to reduce the power intensity of GDP by creating administrative, legal, economic and technical conditions for using energy resources efficiently and increasing power safety in that region.

UNECE has estimated, for instance, that Kazakhstan's potential for energy saving is 60 per cent of the total potential of all the Central Asian countries together. UNECE helped set up Kazakhstan's first National Energy Efficiency Centre in 2008. The Centre is also a symbol of the growing awareness and commitment to energy efficiency in that region. It gathers together academics, politicians and practitioners, offering them a forum for exchanging ideas and expertise.

The Centre focuses on technical analysis and energy audits, legislation, and the creation of energy-efficiency markets. It also identifies investment project priorities, raises awareness about the need for energy efficiency and energy saving, and promotes regional and international cooperation. It advocates for the money saved from energy efficiency improvements to be used on research and further energy efficiency investment. UNECE aims to extend the network of Energy Efficiency Centres into neighbouring Central Asian countries.



Bringing together governments, energy industries and the financial community to build a secure and sustainable energy future

Facilitating trade in South-East Europe

One of our main objectives in the area of trade is to reduce barriers to trade in goods and services by promoting wider application of our international norms, standards, instruments and recommendations, particularly in trade facilitation. One of our key trade-facilitation recommendations requires the establishment of a "Single Window", a facility that provides a country with a single entry point for clearing all export, import and transit information and documents.

In 2005, the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia requested us to help alleviate the burden of trade-document procedures. These procedures had been slowing down the movement of goods after the introduction of new State borders in the Western Balkans.

In response, working with the Government in Skopje, notably the Customs authority, and with USAID, in 2006 we organized a regional conference in that country on trade facilitation, the Single Window for export and import clearance, and trade data harmonization. Almost all South-East European countries attended.

Among the results of the conference was the launching of a Single Window project in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as a regional initiative on data harmonization. During the following years, the authorities of that country managed to build the first stage of a Single Window.

A web-based facility providing a single location for filing licences for foreign trade operations was officially launched in February 2009. The authorities had been working with the experts from the conference, building on the UNECE standards and tools, participating in further regional training courses, and getting more support from USAID, Sweden and various organizations.

UNECE provided the basic standards and a broad platform on which it gathered all relevant agencies with their experts to assist the beneficiary country. This pilot project is an innovative step in the overall development of the Single Window concept for foreign trade in the broader European space.

FUNDING OF OUR TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

UNECE technical cooperation activities are funded from the UN regular budget and from extrabudgetary resources: bilateral and multilateral.

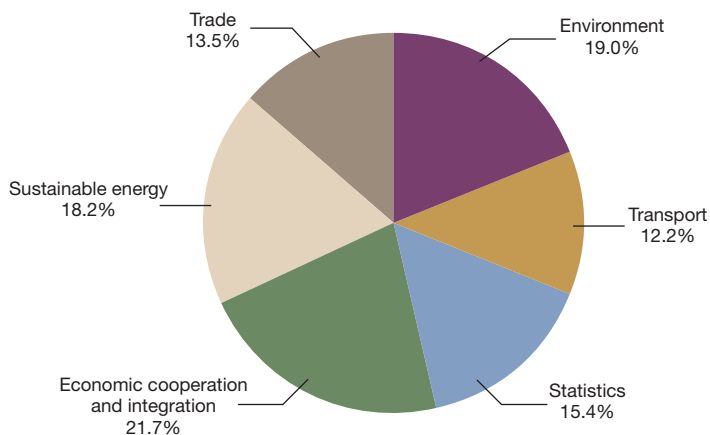
Regular budget

Funding for our technical cooperation activities comes from the UN regular budget under: (a) the programme “Economic Development in Europe”; (b) the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC); and (c) the Development Account.

Funding for technical cooperation under the programme “Economic Development in Europe” supports mainly two types of activities: advisory services and capacity-building (training, workshops and seminars) in countries of the regions.

Under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, UNECE delivers regional and subregional advisory services, provides training and implements field projects. The RPTC funding provides the UNECE with operative flexibility to respond to urgent, unanticipated needs of countries of the region in technical cooperation when funding from any other section of the regular budget is not available.

Funding under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation in 2008, by uses



Source: UNECE Executive Office, December 2008

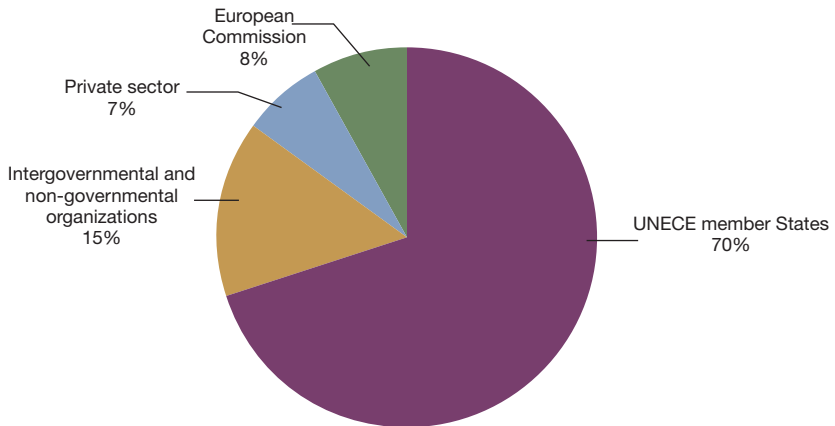
In recent years, UNECE has also been increasingly involved in the implementation of projects funded from the UN Development Account. These projects support the efforts of countries with economies in transition to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These projects also promote regional, subregional and interregional cooperation, to facilitate their better integration into the world economy.

Since the inception of the Development Account in 1998, nine UNECE-led projects worth about US\$ 6 million were approved for funding. Three of them have been successfully implemented, another six are currently under implementation. In addition, two UNECE-led projects (one global and another interregional) were recommended for funding under the seventh tranche of the Development Account.

Extrabudgetary resources

Extrabudgetary contributions reached US\$ 10.3 million and accounted for almost 70 per cent of all UNECE resources for technical cooperation activities in 2008. The UNECE extrabudgetary resources originate from a variety of sources, including the private sector, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (e.g. the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Road Union, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization, etc.) and the European Commission.

Funding from extrabudgetary resources in 2008, by source

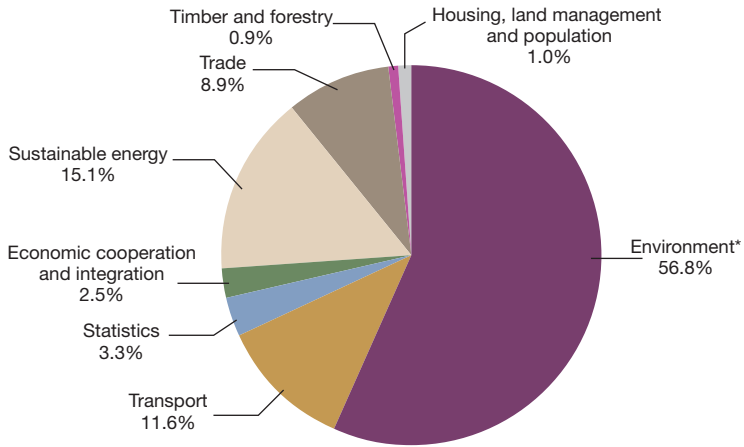


Source: UNECE Executive Office, December 2008

Member States have been the most generous donors to the UNECE technical cooperation activities, accounting for almost 70 per cent of all extrabudgetary resources in 2008.

The top 10 donors, by size of contribution, were: Russian Federation, Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Italy, France, Spain, United Kingdom and Sweden.

Funding from extrabudgetary resources in 2008, by use



*Includes the contribution of US\$ 2.9 million to the Trust Funds established under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for funding the work of the coordinating programme centres.

Source: UNECE Executive Office, December 2008

It is noteworthy that environment accounted for the greatest share (56.8 per cent) of the UNECE extrabudgetary expenditures for technical cooperation activities followed by sustainable energy (15.1 per cent) and transport (11.6 per cent).

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