

UNECE

Success Stories in Technical Cooperation Towards the 2030 Agenda



UNITED NATIONS

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

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FOREWORD

Technical cooperation is an integral part of the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). It aims to strengthen the national capacity of member States to implement the UNECE legal instruments, norms and standards. It has a strong regional dimension and seeks to provide solutions to transboundary challenges in the UNECE region. All UNECE technical cooperation interventions aim to achieve a multiplier effect by promoting collaboration between member States, building and supporting regional networks of experts and policymakers, and promoting knowledge sharing among countries.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, has set high ambitions with a broad and universal sustainable development agenda for all UN Member States. The UNECE technical cooperation activities support countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in areas including transport, water, trade facilitation, forestry, statistics, and sustainable energy. This collection of recent technical cooperation case studies demonstrates the tangible contribution made by UNECE in supporting member States to achieve the SDGs through capacity building, advisory services and field projects.

The guiding principles of technical cooperation – focused, demand-driven, results-oriented, directly linked to our normative work, selectivity, and partnerships – are outlined in the Technical Cooperation Strategy adopted by UNECE member States. “Leaving no one behind” is a universal principle which has also been included in UNECE technical cooperation projects and activities since the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda in 2015.

Technical cooperation interventions have a real impact on people's lives: Trade facilitation measures have directly boosted entrepreneurship, energy efficiency projects will lead to greening the economies and to better health for all citizens, and road safety performance reviews will contribute to safer transport systems for all, which in return, will save human lives. The examples highlight some of our extensive in-house expertise which is available to member States in our region upon request.

UNECE Regional Advisers provide support from project design to implementation, ensuring that whenever possible, the results are disseminated to other countries and thus contribute to South-South cooperation. By leveraging in-house expertise, as well as our network of governments, international organizations, private firms, NGOs, academia and civil society actors, UNECE ensures that its technical cooperation portfolio is inclusive, and has strong local ownership.

By documenting the wide variety of work carried out by UNECE, this publication aims to inspire ever more effective partnerships with governments and stakeholders throughout our region to maximize our support to member States, and their progress towards meeting the global expectations of the 2030 Agenda.



Olga Algayerova
Executive Secretary & Under Secretary-General

*This publication was prepared by the Programme Management Unit with
the Working Group on Technical Cooperation of UNECE.*

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STRENGTHENING
COOPERATION ON
HYDROLOGY AND
ENVIRONMENT
BETWEEN **TAJIKISTAN**
AND **AFGHANISTAN**
IN THE UPPER AMU DARYA
(PANJ RIVER BASIN)



MAIN PROJECT INFORMATION

Overall objective	<i>Strengthening cooperation on hydrology and environment between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the Amu-Darya (Panj river basin)</i>
Related SDGs	 
Related SDG targets	<p>Goal 6, target 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.</p> <p>Goal 17, target 17.6: Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the UN level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.</p>
Relation to UNECE Programme of Work	Expected Accomplishments: (a) "Improved response to environmental challenges by UNECE constituencies"; and (b) "Strengthened implementation of ECE multilateral environmental commitments and increased geographical coverage", of Subprogramme 1 "Environment" of the UNECE Strategic Framework for 2016–2017, 2018–2019.
Beneficiary countries	Afghanistan and Tajikistan
Budget/Donor	US\$ 485,600 (Russian Federation and Finland)
Period of Implementation	2011–2017 (the project was extended until 2020)
Main implementing institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Energy and Water (Hydrological Department), and National Environmental Protection Agency of Afghanistan • State Committee on Environmental Protection and its Agency on Hydrometeorology of Tajikistan
Problem addressed	<p>The Upper Amu Darya basin is shared by Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Both countries lacked adequate information, institutional and policy frameworks for collaboratively monitoring and managing its water resources. Cooperation on a wider set of environmental issues, such as mountain resources and natural disaster preparedness, were also non-existent.</p> <p>Parts of the Amu Darya basin suffer from poor management that often leads to overuse and degradation. The basin is facing challenges including growing population, agricultural, infrastructure and industrial development, climate change and extreme weather (droughts, snowfall, and extreme temperatures). Adequate basin-wide management of water resources and exchange of environmental information among neighbouring countries is essential to address these challenges.</p>

Main activities

- Organize annual bilateral meetings between Afghanistan and Tajikistan to establish water and environmental cooperation;
- Establish a bilateral Technical Task Force (TTF) on hydrology and the environment to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the basin, and coordinate hydrological and environmental monitoring;
- Organize trainings on hydrology and environmental issues and joint scientific expeditions;
- Support the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the exchange of hydrological data and information relating to the Panj-Amu Darya river basin for the period of 2015–2017;
- Support the progressive broadening of the hydrology cooperation through trainings and the establishment of data transfer platforms (through capacity building events); and
- Support negotiations of a wider bilateral MoU on environmental cooperation.

Main impact achieved

The project is continuously enabling a long-term cooperation between Afghanistan and Tajikistan on hydrology and environmental cooperation. It led to improved hydrological knowledge and observations in both countries and increased access to information about water resources and environmental conditions in the Panj-Amu Darya river basin. These results are conducive to better management of environmental resources, better preparedness for natural disasters, improved planning for climate change adaptation, and peace and stability in the region.



1 Background

With a length of 2,500 km and a drainage basin covering 0.5 million square kilometres, the Amu Darya is the largest river in Central Asia. It originates in the mountains of Tajikistan and Afghanistan, and discharges in what is left of the Aral Sea (only one quarter of the initial basin, due to the diversion of its feeding rivers for irrigation). Precipitations in the river basin are low, and the river gets most of its water from mountainous sources. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan all withdraw freshwater from the river. Given this geographical setting, the Amu Darya is one of the most important shared water resources in Central Asia.

Afghanistan shares the Aral Sea basin with other Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Before the project, both Afghanistan and Tajikistan lacked adequate information, institutional and policy frameworks for monitoring and collaboratively managing common water resources. Hydrological monitoring was suspended in Afghanistan between 1980 and 2007. Two decades of war have destroyed the hydrological network of the country, which lacks the hydrological data necessary for hydrologic studies and analyses. This created problems in the planning and management of water resources and severely limited the country's forecasting and warning systems for floods and droughts.

The Upper Amu Darya basin greatly suffered from growing pressures and mismanagement, especially in times of war: many forests were destroyed and arable lands and pastures overused and degraded. In addition, increasing population, agricultural, infrastructural and industrial development, climate change and extreme weather are negatively affecting the basin. Adequate access to and sharing of information about natural resources and hazards are important for the sustainable development of agriculture, integrated water resource management and for other key sectors such as energy, industry, civil protection and the environment in both countries.

In the Upper Amu Darya, information on ongoing and planned water sector developments (hydrometeorology, flood control, irrigated agriculture and integrated water resource management) was fragmented. While Afghanistan substantially increased its hydrometric and climate monitoring network in recent years, including in the Panj river basin, data was not exchanged with Tajikistan. At the same time, Central Asian counterparts had little, and inadequate information on water sector developments in Afghanistan. As a result of these gaps, water management policies were based on incomplete information on the state, availability and quality of water resources, including flow forecast and flood control.

2 Country demand and UNECE comparative advantage

The project responded to official requests from the beneficiary countries, through the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) and of the work programme of its Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment. It contributes to the application of the UNECE Water Convention principles, although neither Afghanistan nor Tajikistan are Parties to the Convention. The UNECE Water Convention is the main international legal and institutional frameworks governing the management of transboundary water resources. The implementation of the Convention has led to significant improvement in transboundary water management in the UNECE region, making it the most advanced in this respect worldwide. The Parties amended the Convention in 2003 to allow countries outside the UNECE region to accede. As of March 2016, all UN Member States can accede to the Convention.

The foundations for this project were laid in 2005, when Afghanistan and Tajikistan exchanged visits of experts and senior officials to discuss emerging priorities for cooperation: energy, trade, border control, environment and hydrological monitoring. In 2008, the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) with partners UNEP, UNDP, OSCE and UNECE, engaged Afghanistan in regional assessment and discussions on the sustainability of the Amu Darya basin.

In both countries, agriculture is an important contributor to GDP and employment. Both countries have a large share of rural dwellers: 73% in both countries in 2016. In both countries, agriculture is an important contributor to GDP and employment. In Afghanistan, according to the latest data available (2011), over 38% of rural population lived in poverty. In Tajikistan, the figure (2015) was 35%¹. Most people in rural areas are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. Therefore, protection and proper management of natural resources, water being the most valuable, is key to job creation and poverty alleviation. The mountain communities in the upper Amu Darya are among the most vulnerable in both countries, due to the combined risks they face from insecurity, poverty, lack of food, poor access to safe water and electricity, and environmental stress factors.

¹ World Bank data extracted on 24 October 2017



By improving the management of the Amu Darya resources, the project directly contributes to the well-being of these communities.

The main national partners involved in the project are the Ministry of Energy and Water (Hydrological Department) and National Environmental Protection Agency of Afghanistan, and the State Committee on Environmental Protection and its Agency on Hydrometeorology in Tajikistan. Due to the strategic importance of water resources in both countries, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs are also closely involved.

The Pamir business association Milal Inter and the Aarhus Centre in Tajikistan supported the project by organizing events including a seminar on hydrology and environmental protection in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The NGO Zoi Environment Network assisted cooperation through local knowledge and contacts. The OSCE office in Tajikistan co-funded some project activities and supported implementation through its local presence.

3 Project actions

The project established bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan for the collection, exchange and dissemination of information on hydrology and the environment in the upper Amu Darya river basin. As a result, the understanding of shared water resources improved, and created a basis for wider environmental and water cooperation.

In 2010, the two countries established a Technical Task Force (TTF) for hydrological and environmental cooperation to develop the understanding of hydrology and the environment of the shared upper Amu Darya basin. The main objectives of the cooperation agreement were hydrological monitoring, disaster preparedness and risk reduction, and environmental protection.

Through bilateral meetings facilitated by UNECE in 2012–2013, the two countries agreed on initial cooperation activities. The cooperation led to the exchange of experience and good practices between experts and institutions, established a professional network, training for Afghan and Tajik students on environmental issues, and created communication and decision support tools between the two countries. The project also produced the Afghanistan-Tajikistan Cooperation Atlas,² a publication that provides a wealth of hydrological and environmental information on a basin, rather than at the national level only.

As a result of this ongoing cooperation, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2014 on the exchange of hydrological data and information relating to the Panj-Amu Darya river basin for 2015–2017. The project supported the exchange of hydrology data, which began in spring 2015. Tajikistan currently reports regularly on four hydrology stations along the Panj River, and Afghanistan has started reporting, albeit less regularly. The project built capacity countries on hydrology monitoring and data exchange, joint forecasts and flood warning mechanisms in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. In July 2015 for example, UNECE organized a training on modern approaches to environmental indicators and reporting for both countries.

Examples of joint hydrology activities supported by the project include listing hydrological and data transfer equipment, locations and status of hydrological stations, establishing snow cover monitoring, conducting joint glacier survey and assessment, and draft procedures and agreements on the sharing and exchanging of hydrological data.

The current phase of the project will contribute to the implementation of existing cooperation frameworks and protocols, such as the 2010 bilateral agreement on hydrology cooperation, the 2014 Protocol on Hydrology Data Exchange, the 2015 work programmes on hydrology and the environment, and the drafting and adoption of the wider MoU on environmental cooperation currently under negotiation.

In October 2016, UNECE organized a bilateral environmental training and a joint expedition to the Panj river. The expedition focused on good practices for soil and water conservation, climate change and biodiversity adaptation sites, and visited near-border nature reserves, botanical gardens, tree nurseries and sites with potential for eco-tourism. The findings of the joint expedition, training and expert meetings contributed to the development of a revised programme of cooperation between Afghanistan and Tajikistan on the environment through to 2017. A more comprehensive agreement for the future will be discussed in 2018.

2 <http://www.zoinet.org/web/sites/default/files/publications/AFG-TJK-atlas-web.pdf>

4 Results and next steps

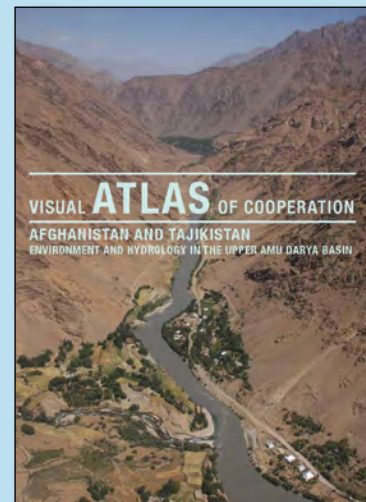
The project created an institutional framework, regulatory documents and an expert network for bilateral cooperation on hydrology and environment in the upper Amu Darya river basin between Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The project led to a ground-breaking hydrology cooperation agreement between the two countries, and to efforts toward the development of a wider MoU on environmental issues. A deeper collaboration on environmental issues between the two neighbouring countries contributes to reducing the impacts of climate change, protecting the environment and preserving peace and stability in the region.

The achievements of this project contribute in particular to SDG 6, target 6.5 (by 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate). The results also support Goal 17, target 17.6 (enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the UN level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism).

Afghanistan-Tajikistan Cooperation Atlas

With 100 photos and 50 maps and graphics based on official sources and original research, the Atlas presents information at the river basin level, and portrays entire basin-wide challenges. The Atlas supplements information already available in each of the countries and helps policymakers and experts, as well as readers outside the region, to understand the basin's natural resources, common needs and priorities, for example for disaster risk reduction. The Atlas includes illustrations, some with maps coupled with graphics, diagrams, photographs and text captions that provide a compelling and visual presentation of information, and to provide readers with a broader understanding of the priority environmental issues and trends in a geographic context.

The progress and results of the project are monitored through the annual bilateral meeting held between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, where the collaboration activities are organized and assessed. Progress and results are documented in regular project reports to donors.



The project has evolved from a cooperation on water resources to a wider cooperation on environmental issues. The MoU on the environment is currently being negotiated which will define the future and wider collaboration on a variety of environmental topics. These include water quality, biodiversity protection and glacier lakes monitoring. In light of the results achieved by the project so far, the Russian Federation provided US\$ 160,000 to continue the project from 2018–2020. Upcoming activities will strengthen the implementation of framework agreements, information sharing, and capacity building.

The governments of both countries expressed their deep appreciation of the project. At the bilateral meeting of senior officials in October 2015, participants reviewed the progress made since the Afghan and Tajik Agreement on water sources, signed in 2010. The meeting participants expressed appreciation to UNECE for its technical support in the organization of bilateral meetings and contribution to the preparation of documentation. In recognition of UNECE expertise, the countries requested UNECE to continue its technical support.

STRENGTHENING THE
NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY
MANAGEMENT CAPACITIES
OF **SELECTED DEVELOPING**
COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES
WITH **ECONOMIES IN**
TRANSITION



MAIN PROJECT INFORMATION

Overall objective	<i>Strengthening road safety management systems and improving road safety records in beneficiary countries</i>
Related SDGs	 
Related SDG targets	<p>Goal 3, target 3.6: Halve the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020.</p> <p>Goal 11, target 11.2: Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030.</p>
Relation to UNECE Programme of Work	Expected Accomplishment (d) "Strengthened capacity to implement relevant UN legal instruments serviced by UNECE, norms and standards, in particular in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia" of Subprogramme 2 "Transport" of the UNECE Strategic Framework for 2016–2017.
Beneficiary countries	Albania, Georgia, the Dominican Republic and Viet Nam
Budget/Donor	US\$ 498,000 from UN Development Account (UNDA) 9 th Tranche
Implementing period	2015–2018
Main institutions involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) • Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC) • Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure – Albania • Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development – Georgia • Ministry of Transport – Viet Nam • Ministry of Public Works – The Dominican Republic • Road safety institutions and road administrations • Municipalities, academia and civil society and NGOs working on road safety
Problem addressed	Each year, around 1.24 million people die in road traffic accidents globally. Up to 50 million people are injured, and many remain disabled for life. A disproportionate amount of road traffic deaths (90%) occur in low-and middle-income countries, despite these countries accounting for just 54% of the world's motor vehicles (WHO, 2015). Most of these deaths are due to the lack of basic safety measures and proper road safety management. In addition to the loss of lives, road crashes cost developing countries between 2-5% of their GDP, undermining efforts to reduce poverty and accelerate sustainable development.

Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct Road Safety Performance Reviews (RSPRs) that identified existing gaps and priority areas for intervention in each participating country;• Organize workshops and capacity building events focused on the issues identified in the RSPR in each country and on UN Legal Instruments on road safety;• Revise the RSPRs to reflect the feedback received from key stakeholders at workshops and include policy recommendations (on better road safety management, safer roads, vehicles and road users); and• Publish RSPRs in English and in the national language of each country.
Main impact achieved	The RSPRs mapped gaps and identified priority areas for road safety management in each country, helping countries to design targeted policy interventions. The workshops equipped participants with knowledge of technical and policy instruments for addressing the road safety issues identified. Beneficiary countries used the recommendations to update national road safety policy and management and initiate remedial actions in priority areas.

1 Background

Approximately 1.24 million people die every year, and another 20-50 million sustain nonfatal injuries because of road traffic accidents (WHO, 2015). These casualties have an immeasurable impact on the families affected, whose lives often change irrevocably, and on the communities in which these people lived and worked. Almost 90% of these deaths happen in low- and middle-income countries. It is estimated that road traffic crashes cost low- and middle-income countries approximately 2-5% of GDP (through health, insurance and legal costs, as well as infrastructure damage).

The four project countries have the highest mortality and motorization growth rates in their respective regions. According to the Global Status on Road Safety 2015, published by the WHO, mortality rates per 100,000 population in 2013 in the beneficiary countries were: Albania (15.1) and Georgia (11.8), the Dominican Republic (29.3) and Viet Nam (24.5). This compares to, for example, 2.8 in Sweden, or 2.9 in the U.K. The Dominican Republic in particular had the second most-dangerous roads in the world, according to the WHO.

In high-income countries, road deaths hit a peak in the 1970s, but have since fallen thanks to innovative and better safety measures, both within cars and on the roads. Many successful measures are not costly and are easy to replicate. For example, pedestrian footpaths and crossing points, better-designed junctions, changes in regulation such as making seatbelts and helmets compulsory, or tightening vehicle safety requirements and better implementation of speed limits and drunk-driving laws can save lives.

This project focuses on improving Road Safety Management Systems (RSMSs) in the beneficiary countries. A RSMS covers all aspects of road safety, such as legislation, funding, monitoring and evaluation, and research and development knowledge transfer. Governments have a primary role in establishing and maintaining efficient RSMSs. However, in low- and middle-income countries where the problem is most acute, governments often lack the human, financial and technical capacities needed to implement and improve them. The poor availability of road safety statistics and research, which prevents countries from identifying priority areas for intervention, aggravates the situation. An outdated legal and regulatory framework for road safety and weak coordination and duplication of responsibilities among road safety stakeholders also contributes to the problem.

Road accident deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, due to the poor state of roads and vehicles, lack of effective road safety regulations and management, and low quality of healthcare for victims of an accident, among other factors. Citizens of developing countries are being left behind by progress in road safety. The project aimed to reverse this trend. Road traffic accidents particularly affect young people: people aged between 15-44 years account for 48% of global road traffic deaths (WHO). According to the WHO, 49% of all road traffic deaths occur

among vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists): these categories typically include a larger share of citizens in developing countries. Moreover they tend to include poorer citizens: those who cannot afford a car and who are most exposed to daily traffic, such as commuters who walk to work, children who walk to school and the homeless. Most victims of car accidents are boys and working-age men, who tend to use roads more. According to the WHO, they are 3 times as likely to be killed in a road traffic accident as young females. Their death or injury can leave their family without a source of income and impose huge medical bills for cures and care for maimed family members, on those who do not have access to free or subsidized healthcare. Thus, the lack of road safety has a disproportionate impact on the poorer, most vulnerable citizens.

2 Country demand and UNECE comparative advantage

During the first quarter of 2014, the four beneficiary countries communicated to the UN Regional Commissions their interest in improving national road safety management systems and the implementation of UN legal instruments in road safety. Given that in 2010 the UN General Assembly proclaimed the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety in 2011–2020 with a goal to reduce global road traffic deaths and injuries by 50% by 2020, the project's objectives were particularly timely.

UNECE pioneered road safety activities in the UN system with the establishment of a Working Group on the prevention of road accidents in 1950. Its successor, the Global Forum on Road Traffic Safety, remains the only permanent body in the UN system that focuses on improving road safety. UNECE services UN legal instruments on road safety (traffic rules, road infrastructure, road signs and signals, vehicle safety and transport of dangerous goods), supports the development and promotion of best road safety practices, and organizes events to raise awareness on road safety. UNECE actively contributed to the development of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety and has an important role in promoting the implementation of the Decade's Action Plan. In 2015, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed Mr. Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety, with the secretariat provided by UNECE.

The project builds on the results of the UNDA 5th tranche project, "Improving Global Road Safety: Setting Regional and National Road Traffic Casualty Reduction Targets", which helped governments in low- and middle- income countries to develop regional and national road safety targets, and exchange experiences on good practices for achieving these targets.

The project was implemented by three UN Regional Commissions: UNECE, ESCAP and ECLAC. UNECE coordinated the project activities and gave substantive inputs across all countries. Each Regional Commission was responsible for the beneficiary countries in their area (UNECE for Albania and Georgia, ESCAP for Viet Nam, and ECLAC for the Dominican Republic). The project involved many national stakeholders, such as Ministries of Transport, Interior, Health and Education; road safety institutions and road administrations; academia; municipalities; civil society and NGOs working on road safety. The information for the RSPRs were gathered in close collaboration with national authorities and relevant road safety stakeholders. The most pressing road safety areas, analyzed in depth by each RSPR, were identified in cooperation with national stakeholders.



In order to increase the quality of the RSPR, UNECE invited the International Road Federation (IRF Washington) and the International Alliance for Responsible Drinking (IARD) to participate in the project as peer reviewers for specific topics (drink driving and road infrastructure safety).

3 Project actions

The UN Regional Commissions initiated the Road Safety Performance Reviews (RSPRs) by assessing the current road safety situation and management system in each beneficiary country. The RSPRs identified gaps in technical, financial and statistical capacities and other economic or social problems preventing countries from establishing or upgrading their road safety management system. The RSPRs also mapped gaps in national legal and regulatory frameworks, assessed the level of compliance with UN road safety legal instruments and the level of coordination among road safety stakeholders in each country. Each RSPR identified the most pressing areas for intervention (e.g. establishment of effective road safety management, institutional systems and legislative frameworks, collection and evaluation of accurate road safety statistics, implementation of UN legal instruments) and offered recommendations to improve the current situation.

Based on the priority areas identified by the RSPR, the project partners organized policy dialogues with national road safety stakeholders and national capacity building workshops focusing on the most pressing areas. Each recipient country benefited from two workshops. The first workshop presented the RSPR findings and recommendations and included a seminar on the most pressing road safety issues identified in the draft RSPR. The second workshop provided further training on the relevant priority areas and on accessing and implementing the UN legal instruments on road safety. National government officials, as well as stakeholders from academia, NGOs, the private sector and international organizations attended the workshops.

In addition to the country workshops, UNECE led an international capacity-building event on UN road safety legal instruments in Geneva (5-7 July 2017). The workshop prompted policy dialogue on improving road safety, and offered a valuable opportunity for participants to learn from best practices and the experiences of others and provided representatives with a chance to discuss progress in the preparation of RSPRs. The workshop strengthened the capacities of more than 50 stakeholders from Albania, Georgia, Uganda and Cameroon – two countries that also conducted Road Safety Performance Reviews - to build and improve Road Safety Management Systems.

Following the workshops, the RSPR reports were finalized, with recommendations, in close cooperation with national governments. The reports were published in English and in the national language of each country. A dedicated web page was established on the UNECE website to disseminate the project results¹.

All project activities benefited from UNECE expertise on road safety and UN legal instruments. UNECE contribution was particularly valuable for streamlining the RSPRs findings and recommendations and initiating a dialogue on road safety policy in each beneficiary country.

4 Results and next steps

The project raised awareness in the beneficiary countries on the need to address road safety challenges. It produced RSPRs for four countries with specific recommendations for improving road safety, such as empowering national road safety coordination body, re-introducing Periodic Technical Inspection (PTI) for passenger vehicles, updating national road design standards, and improving legislation on transport of dangerous goods. By mapping gaps, and identifying the priority areas for intervention, the project helped countries to identify focus areas. The RSPRs recommendations have created a solid basis on which national road safety policy documents (strategy, action plans) can be based in the future.

Through workshops and capacity building events on the priority areas identified, the project raised the capabilities of key policy and decision makers in the beneficiary countries on road safety management, safer vehicles, road safety statistics, addressing drink-driving, and limiting speeding. It also increased awareness of the importance of acceding to and implementing key UN road-safety related legal instruments. The RSPRs findings led to concrete policy actions in the beneficiary countries. In Albania the project raised awareness on, for example, gaps in legislation

¹ <http://www.unece.org/trans/themes/unda-road-safety-management-capacity-building-project.html>

of the transport of dangerous goods and on the necessity to strengthen the national road safety coordination body. The box below illustrates the example of Georgia.

These results support better policy-making for road safety, contributing to SDG target 3.6 (halve the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020) and to SDG target 11.2 (provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030). The project created a national dialogue on road safety issues, bringing together all national road safety stakeholders to discuss ambitious targets and adopt specific measures to meet them. The targets and measures identified in the RSPRs will trigger adoption of national strategic documents and improvements in road safety management in the future.

ROAD SAFETY IN GEORGIA AND THE ROAD SAFETY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The RSPR of Georgia analyzed the national and supranational legislative framework governing road traffic in the country, Georgia's institutional setup, road infrastructure, the status of the car fleet and road safety trends in the last decade. The number of traffic accidents has increased every year since 2010. According to official statistics for 2016, there were approximately 15.6 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants. This was more than 2.5 higher than the EU average. Over 2004–2014, the number of registered motor vehicles in Georgia increased by 230%. More than 90% of the vehicle fleet exceeds 10 years of age, and 45% is older than 20 years. The quality of road safety data could be improved in terms of robustness and accuracy. There is no centralized electronic data base related to road accidents.

Georgia has, in the past adopted road safety action plans, but they did not directly relate to the task of reducing deaths in road accidents or other quantified problems, nor were they monitored to assess their impact. The absence of a well-funded, functional lead agency, supported by efficient coordination arrangements, was also impeding progress towards improving road safety.

The RSPR of Georgia proposed concrete policy recommendations, for example:

- Strengthen the national legal frameworks for road safety, and distribute the responsibility more clearly among the government bodies at the central and local level;
- Set concrete numerical targets in the national road safety strategy;
- Improve the collection of road safety data and integrate them into a single database;
- Increase vehicle safety and re-introduce periodic technical inspection for passenger vehicles;
- Define new safe speed limit thresholds by type of road;
- Improve training and testing for drivers;
- Update road safety engineering principles based on international best practices;
- Develop sustainable, domestic funding sources for road safety, for example from fines, vehicle registration and insurance schemes; and
- Establish a trauma registry with relevant indicators.



The National Road Safety Action Plans for 2017 and 2018 were adopted based on the findings and recommendations of the RSPR. The RSPR supported the reintroduction of periodic technical inspections for passenger vehicles and the adoption of amendments on road safety legislation. The 2017 Action Plan specifically focuses on addressing driver violations by toughening sanctions, introducing a demerit point system improving the traffic control through speed cameras, and monitoring road sections using video surveillance. It envisages activities to improve road users behaviour through increasing awareness on road safety risk factors and social marketing campaigns to help influence the attitude of road users.

The project results were highly appreciated by all beneficiary countries, and national focal points highlighted the project relevance and appropriate timing. In 2017, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety initiated two further RSPRs, in Cameroon and Uganda, to which UNECE contributed its expertise. The two RSPRs followed the same methodology applied in previous beneficiary countries. Currently, UNECE is exploring options for conducting RSPRs in countries in Central Asia.

PROMOTING
ENERGY EFFICIENCY
INVESTMENTS FOR
CLIMATE CHANGE
MITIGATION AND
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT



MAIN PROJECT INFORMATION

Overall objective	<i>Building capacity for development of energy efficiency (EE) investment projects</i>
Related SDGs	 
Related SDG targets	<p>Goal 7, target 7.1: By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.</p> <p>Goal 7, target 7.2: By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.</p> <p>Goal 7, target 7.3: By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.</p> <p>Goal 7, target 7A: By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology.</p> <p>Goal 7, target 7B: By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support.</p> <p>Goal 17, target 17.1: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.</p>
Relation to UNECE Programme of Work	Expected Accomplishment (c) “Strengthened implementation of UNECE recommendations/guidelines, best practices and other normative instruments for sustainable energy development” of the Subprogramme 5 “Sustainable Energy” of the UNECE Strategic Framework for 2016–2017.
Beneficiary countries	54 countries from UNECE, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, and ESCWA member States. In the UNECE region, beneficiaries included Albania, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Montenegro and Serbia.
Budget/Donor	US\$ 1,250,000 from UN Development Account 8 th Tranche
Period of implementation	2012–2015

<p>Main implementing institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECA, ECLAC, ESCWA, ESCAP • Energy related ministries in beneficiary countries • Development Banks (Latin American Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Development Bank of Southern Africa, KfW Development Bank, World Bank, Eurasian Development Bank) • International Energy Agency, USAID, The African Union Commission, GreenShift Africa, credit institutions and business companies
<p>Problem addressed</p>	<p>Many developing countries and countries with economies in transition, have viable projects in energy efficiency (EE) that need financing. However, they often lack the capacity to turn these ideas into bankable projects, and the policy environment (regulatory, financial, institutional and socio-political) is not conducive to the financing of EE projects.</p>
<p>Main activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a benchmark framework for EE projects that describes the ideal regulatory, institutional, financial and socio-political conditions conducive to the financing of EE projects. Countries can assess their policies against this benchmark and identify areas for improvement; • Create a pipeline of 32 bankable EE projects across the five regions, ready to be financed; • Conduct a training in each region for project developers, national officials and experts to acquire financial engineering and business planning skills for EE investments and prepare bankable project proposals; • Organize a workshop in each region where project developers and government officials could discuss areas for policy improvements that would facilitate the financing of EE projects; • Produce 18 case studies on EE policies and reforms; and • Conduct five seminars on policy reforms to promote the financing of EE projects.
<p>Main impact achieved</p>	<p>A pipeline of 32 viable EE projects (an estimated value of US \$190 million) is available to help countries attract investors and obtain financing. A total of US\$ 139 million was committed for 18 of these 32 EE projects (as of October 2017). The project also led to the direct funding of projects through connections made at its events and to the establishment of a US\$ 400 million dedicated fund for EE projects by the Latin American Development Bank (CAF).</p> <p>National project developers acquired skills for preparing bankable EE projects. National officials gained knowledge on policies to facilitate the financing of EE projects. Project developers, government officials and any other stakeholders can refer to the benchmark tool created by the project to identify gaps in EE policies.</p>



1 Background

Developing countries, and countries with economies in transition often use inefficient and polluting energy systems. At the same time, their economies provide promising opportunities for Energy Efficiency (EE) improvements as well as for reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. In order to benefit from this potential, they need a strategy and tools for promoting self-financing energy efficiency initiatives which can raise economic productivity, diminish fuel poverty and reduce pollution. Currently, local private investors often do not finance EE projects because they are not well packaged for investment, and because local banks are generally unfamiliar with the modalities for such investments. Lack of financial incentives in national policies, together with energy pricing based on social considerations rather than cost recovery, further reduce incentives for investors. Moreover, the lack of experience on how to select and formulate EE investment projects on the part of project developers is a challenge. Policy-makers, project developers, private companies and the banking community are often unfamiliar with the investment potential and challenges of EE projects. Further, EE initiatives may require particular regulatory, policy and structural measures to be effective in local conditions.

The project identified the main obstacles to EE financing, namely: the absence of policy or institutional support, which discourages private investors; the lack of economic incentives and financing for EE projects; and the lack of adequate knowledge and experience in formulating EE project proposals and presenting them in a “bankable” format to attract investors.

Through a mix of research, workshops, training and policy tools, the project transferred knowledge, best practices and expertise to participants, and enabled them to create synergies and partnerships for catalyzing financial flows into EE projects.

2 Country demand and UNECE comparative advantage

The UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy has a mandate for inter-regional cooperation and a system-wide approach to the issues of energy and climate change, in line with the United Nations Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative. This project stemmed from discussions of UN Member States in 2008 in the framework of the Convention on Climate Change.

The project is one of few United Nations Development Account (UNDA) projects that are entirely global in their conceptual approach, development concerns, solutions and institutional involvement. The project brought together all five UN Regional Commissions, enabling the Secretariat to implement a genuine global campaign, and truly deliver as “One UN”.

The extensive experience of UNECE in implementing the “Financing Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for Climate Change Mitigation” (FEEI) and other projects in the area of energy efficiency equipped the project partners with in-house expertise on EE. This expertise was further captured in the content of the training and capacity-building activities implemented in this project.

UNECE led the initiation and formulation of the project and coordinated its execution, with ESCAP, ESCWA, ECA and ECLAC as co-operating partners. Financial resources were distributed equally across the five regions, and each Regional Commission selected its own approach for implementing in pilot countries. Preference was given to developing countries that (i) were giving priority to EE in their national policies and services, and that (ii) expressed interest to participate in the project. The inter-regional approach to the project implementation aimed to optimize resources, create synergies and enable the building of networks among regional and international experts. By leveraging the regional expertise of each Commission and creating both South-South and North-South exchanges, the project created a truly global repository of experiences and best practices and produced instruments and recommendations that can be tailored to the needs of countries at different stages of development.

3 Project actions

Based on case studies from developing countries and on experiences of developed countries with a successful EE strategy, the project developed a benchmark policy framework conducive to the financing of EE projects. The framework examines the legal, institutional, regulatory, economic, financial and socio-political conditions that can facilitate the financing of EE projects.

These include: financial and economic incentives for attracting investors; transparent administrative and authorization procedures for EE projects; effective cooperation among government bodies involved in energy policy; energy tariffs that allow investors to recover costs and take into account environmental costs (therefore offering incentives to final consumers to change behaviour); regulation that enables public-private partnerships or privatization of energy companies; and low interest rates applied by local banks to loans for EE projects.

Each country assessed its policy environment against the benchmark and identified gaps and areas for improvement. The project described several EE policies from around the world that stood out as best practices.

The project collected EE proposals and created a pipeline of projects. This pipeline contained 32 projects from 23 countries in the UNECE and ESCAP regions, nine projects from the ECA region, 17 projects from the ESCWA region, and 28 projects from five countries in the ECLAC region. As an example, the largest proposed project concerned the upgrading of the national power distribution system in Ecuador (approx. US\$ 473.2 million) to reduce technical and non-commercial losses.

The Regional Commissions organized five regional trainings (one in each region) for project developers, experts and national officials involved in EE on project formulation and development, financing and business planning. In the UNECE region, the session held in Yerevan (29 September–1 October 2015) addressed financial engineering and business planning skills, business development skills to prepare the equity and/or mezzanine finance participation of an investment fund, and the capacity to develop projects to a standard project identification format. The training also provided feedback for participants on individual project proposals.

The Regional Commissions organized five regional workshops on the regulatory, technical and policy requirements for EE investment projects. These workshops stimulated discussions between project developers and government officials on how governments could improve legislation and policies to facilitate the financing of EE projects. At these workshops, participants also examined the inventory of project proposals and exchanged expertise on drafting bankable EE projects.



The Regional Commissions prepared 18 national case studies on EE policies that were discussed at five regional policy seminars. Six case studies – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Georgia and Montenegro – were from the UNECE region. The objective of these case studies was to review existing national EE policies and regulations to propose eventual improvements. Each Regional Commission selected the case countries and assigned individual experts or institutions to conduct national or sector specific EE studies and policy reviews. A report synthesizing findings from the case studies established a catalogue of regulations and measures that are desirable and typically conducive to investments in EE.

Finally, the Regional Commissions organized a global workshop bringing together all stakeholders involved in the project with potential investors. Hosted by the government of Tunisia, the Global Workshop was conducted in conjunction with the 5th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in 2014. The Executive Secretaries of the five Regional Commissions adopted a joint statement¹ that outlines a global consensus position on energy policies for sustainable development, highlighting the importance of measures for EE. The Statement provided an opportunity to advocate the promotion of EE for sustainable development and climate change mitigation and to demonstrate coordinated global UN cooperation. In the Statement the Regional Commissions highlighted that, in order to enable investments in EE, governments should have a long-term vision for providing sustainable energy services, and promulgate sustainable policies and regulations that allow producers and consumers to respond to a dynamically changing energy market.

4 Results and next steps

The project addressed three essential areas: (a) training of candidate project developers on how to prepare better, more bankable proposals on EE investments; (b) initiation of a thorough policy debate in participating countries to improve incentives for investors in EE projects, and to create better business environments; and (c) advocacy for the creation of new regional, national or local energy efficiency financing schemes.

In UNECE and ESCAP regions, the project trained around 80 representatives from private and public companies from 23 countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central, Northern, South-Eastern and Southern Asia, as well as the Russian Federation and Turkey, on how to design and implement EE investment projects. The training enhanced the participants' skills to develop bankable project proposals and improved the understanding of local stakeholders of the value of EE measures.

The project identified best practices in EE policies from around the globe, drawn from policy evaluations and databases. A consolidated menu of best practice EE policies and measures provides participating countries a reference for adapting their needs.

For countries developing EE programmes, the policies offered guidance for selection. For countries with established and proficient EE programmes, the project helped to validate existing policies through a set of policy benchmarks. It further provided an opportunity for project developers, government officials and financial institutions to discuss EE investment proposals, their potential barriers and success factors and what governments could improve in legislation and policies to facilitate their funding.

As a result of the UNECE/ESCAP joint training courses held in Almaty (April 2013) and in Istanbul (June 2013), 32 project ideas and proposals were judged financially viable and promised good returns (see the box below). The aggregate value of the proposed projects amounted to approximately US\$190 million. The 32 project proposals were prepared by participants from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, China, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Montenegro, Pakistan, Serbia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The projects were assessed in terms of their payback period (PB), discounted net present value (NPV) on full project cost, and internal rate of return on all project investment. Most of the projects, particularly industrial EE projects, promised good returns and were financially attractive for developers and investors.

1 http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/ee21/Forum_November_Tunisia/Joint_Statement_Fifth_International_Forum_Final_All.pdf

As of October 2017, 18 of the 32 proposals had secured full or partial financing from various sources (equity, commercial loans, soft loans, grants, government funding, international financing institutions and mezzanine financing), whilst several other projects were in the process of applying for financing or had their applications under review. The aggregate funding provided for the successful projects amounted to US\$ 139 million. These results contribute directly to SDG 7 (clean and affordable energy). By promoting EE projects and facilitating their financing, the project increased access to renewable energy and energy efficiency. By facilitating financing for EE proposals, the project also directly contributed to SDG 17, target 17.1 to strengthen domestic resource mobilization.

UNECE and ESCAP Inter-regional Workshop on Energy Efficiency Investment Projects Pipeline

Instead of holding two separate smaller regional events UNECE and ESCAP conducted one joint event in Bangkok, Thailand (23-24 April 2014). The Inter-regional Workshop on Energy Efficiency Investment Projects Pipeline targeted project developers and owners, policy makers and experts in the field of sustainable use of energy, and representatives of business and banking communities.

Workshop participants identified key success factors for financing and implementation of EE projects, including (i) existence of appropriate legislation, norms and standards, government programmes and policies; (ii) support from international donors (soft loans, grants); (iii) support from regional and municipal authorities and national governments; (iv) public awareness of the benefits of EE; and (v) adequate level of demand for EE audits and technical advisory services. The workshop participants also identified important barriers to EE investments which interested countries need to address, including administrative barriers, such as problems in dealing with bureaucracy in obtaining permits and licenses. Participants noted that EE projects face additional financial challenges during periods when energy costs are low. The workshop also discussed and propagated the business model of energy service companies (ESCOs) which are not yet widely known, or applied in Eastern Europe or developing Asia.

As reflected in the project's evaluation carried out by an external consultant, the majority of participants in the training events expressed full satisfaction with the events. Participants of the capacity building activities emphasized their highly valuable role in improving their skills for obtaining financing for EE projects, and as an opportunity to network with people from other countries facing similar problems. Participants also appreciated opportunities to interact with the trainer(s) during individual meetings.

The results of this project are being monitored through the work of the UNECE Expert Group on Energy Efficiency. Project developers who took part in the project notify UNECE when their proposals get financed. Based on the experience acquired in this project, UNECE, together with ESCWA, is implementing a new project on investments in renewable energy that follows the same structure of this project, training project developers to prepare bankable projects. In addition, UNECE will continue to be involved in the field of promoting investments in EE measures and technologies, through the work of the UNECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency.




The project clearly demonstrated that EE policies can only be successful within a favourable policy environment. Therefore simultaneous action on all fronts, including institutional, legal, regulatory, economic, financial and socio-political levels, to create a business environment where national and international investors is critical for EE initiatives to thrive.



TRADE FACILITATION IN UKRAINE



MAIN PROJECT INFORMATION

Overall objective	<i>Facilitate international trade in Ukraine</i>
Related SDGs	  
Related SDG targets	<p>Goal 17, target 17.10: Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the WTO, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda.</p> <p>Goal 17, target 17.11: Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020.</p> <p>Goal 10, target 10A: Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with WTO agreements.</p> <p>Goal 16, target 5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.</p> <p>Goal 16, target 6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.</p>
Relation to UNECE Programme of Work	Expected Accomplishment (a) "Increased consensus on best practices and strengthened implementation of the ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business" of the Subprogramme 6 "Trade" of the UNECE Strategic Framework 2016–2017.
Beneficiary countries	Ukraine
Budget/Donor	<p>Ukrainian businesses supported the establishment of the Port Community System in Odessa with approximately US\$3.5 million. The Ukrainian Government and businesses also supported the Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Trade Facilitation and Logistics through in-kind contributions.</p> <p>A Czech Republic-funded project contributed around US\$ 20,000 for work on trade facilitation. UNECE provided approximately US\$ 25,000 in advisory services over 8 years.</p>
Period of implementation	2010–2017
Main institutions involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Economic Development and Trade • Ministry of Infrastructure • State Fiscal Service of Ukraine • IWG on Trade Facilitation and Logistics and other representatives of the business community

<p>Problems addressed</p>	<p>Ukraine is one of the most developed and populous countries of the former Soviet Union, with a GDP of US\$ 93.27 billion. However, since its independence in 1992, the country has faced problems in managing its foreign trade. Inefficient trade procedures, notably burdensome formalities, inefficient automation, and lack of transparency, pose substantial obstacles to trade. In particular, the large number of regulatory procedures administered by different agencies slowed down the clearing of goods. These issues became increasingly important following the break of economic and political relations with the Russian Federation in 2014, which led to a major change in Ukraine's trade patterns.</p>
<p>Main activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Port Community System (PCS) to centralize and streamline the custom information and procedures in the Odessa ports; • Establish an IWG on Trade Facilitation and Logistics in Ukraine; • Assess Ukraine's readiness to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and identified bottlenecks; and • Deliver capacity building activities in support of the TFA implementation.
<p>Main impact achieved</p>	<p>The PCS in the Odessa region ports substantially increased the efficiency and transparency of customs procedures in its ports, facilitating trade and making it easier for Ukrainian and foreign companies to do business. For example, the PCS led to a 15% decrease in waiting time for trucks to enter the port. The project was conceived as a pilot for a wider roll-out of a Single Window system for trade in Ukraine. This was approved by Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers in 2015 when it was introduced at all seaports of Ukraine.</p> <p>The IWG on Trade Facilitation and Logistics provided an institutional platform for interagency and public-private dialogue on trade facilitation in the country.</p> <p>The WTO TFA readiness assessment led by UNECE mapped gaps and identified priority areas for trade facilitation, allowing Ukraine to carry out targeted policy interventions to implement the WTO TFA. The workshops equipped participants with knowledge of technical and policy instruments to address the issues identified. As the OECD trade facilitation indicators show, in the last few years Ukraine has made progresses on some key indicators, such as involvement of trade community, fees and charges, formalities, and governance and impartiality.</p>



1 Background

In 2017, Ukraine ranked 80th in the World Bank Doing Business Report, well below the regional average for Europe and Central Asia.¹ For years, the lack of predictability and transparency in the actions of state authorities in customs administration and trade controls has been one of the main areas in need of reform. Goods entering Ukraine often face complicated regulatory procedures administered by various control agencies. Goods are subjected to such controls in all countries. However these controls, carried out by a number of often not coordinated organizations, delays regulatory control procedures and creates bottlenecks for foreign trade.

Ukraine's long-term issues in managing foreign trade were compounded by the outbreak of conflict in the Eastern part of the country in 2014. The conflict negatively impacted businesses and caused the breakdown of political and economic relations with its formerly major partner, the Russian Federation. Subsequently, disputes related to trade procedures and transit with the Russian Federation escalated. While in 2013 (before the conflict in Donbass), there was only one open WTO dispute between the Russian Federation and Ukraine; by October 2017 there were nine.² Ukrainian exports to the Russian Federation declined from 26% of the total in 2012 to 10% in 2016, while those to the EU increased from 25% to 37% over the same period³.

With the signing of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the EU in 2016, both sides committed to progressively opening their goods and services markets. However, despite the agreement, Ukrainian businesses struggle to access the EU market due to difficulties in meeting EU standards and to cumbersome trade procedures. Ukraine is therefore not fully exploiting trade opportunities with the EU.

The worsening trade deficit and long-term issues in managing international trade contribute to a difficult macroeconomic environment in Ukraine. The country needs a strategic approach to trade facilitation reform, addressing challenges on a variety of fronts, such as streamlining documentary for foreign trade for border crossing; facilitating customs and other inspection procedures; and eliminating all forms of corruption.

2 Country demand and UNECE comparative advantage

UNECE has close to 70 years of experience developing best practice recommendations for trade facilitation. UNECE has produced recommendations on establishing and functioning of national trade facilitation bodies, on issues such as developing a Single Window, its legal aspects and interoperability, as well as harmonization, and various codes used for trade information exchange. These recommendations have affected trade policy, procedures and practice in many countries around the world.

UNECE activities on trade facilitation in Ukraine focused on these issues, in the overall context of the sustainable development objectives. Working with relevant decision makers from government agencies and the business community, UNECE helped increase the efficiency of foreign trade procedures in Ukraine.

UNECE activities on facilitating trade in Ukraine accelerated in May 2010, when the head of the Public Advisory Council to the Customs Service of Ukraine requested a project in support of establishing a Single Window system in Ukraine. These activities built on several joint projects with UNECE, notably in the functioning of the then Ukrainian trade facilitation body UkrPRO, the implementation of the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UNECEFACT) trade facilitation standards and recommendations, and assistance to the programme "Ukraine as a Transit Country", before 2009. In addition, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) readiness assessment relied on the UN Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG)⁴.

Trade facilitation activities were conducted in collaboration with governmental bodies in Ukraine, notably the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ministry of Infrastructure, the State Fiscal Service (which includes Customs), the Port Authority of Ukraine, International Chamber of Commerce, Ukraine, and the Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Trade Facilitation and Logistics.⁵

1 <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/724161478691226394/pdf/110007-WP-DB17-PUBLIC-Ukraine.pdf>

2 https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_by_country_e.htm#ukr

3 UNCTAD data

4 <http://tfig.unece.org>

5 <http://www.singlewindow.org>

Throughout the implementation of the activities, further collaborations emerged with international institutions such as the European Union's Border Assistance Mission to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova (EUBAM), the Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP) under the Ministry of Justice of the United States, UNCTAD, (which supported the assessment of the readiness of Ukraine to implement the WTO TFA), and other development partners including the International Trade Centre (ITC), the European Commission, the WTO, and the German and Swedish international cooperation agencies.

3 Project actions

UNECE defines a Single Window⁶ for export, import and transit clearance as a system whereby trade-related information and/or documents are submitted once at a single entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements. UNECE also suggests that participating authorities and agencies coordinate their respective controls through the Single Window and provide facilities for payment of duties, taxes and fees.

The Single Window system benefit governments through better risk management, improved levels of security and increased revenue yields through enhanced trader compliance. The business community benefits from transparent and predictable interpretation and application of rules, and from better deployment of human and financial resources, resulting in appreciable gains in productivity and competitiveness.

As a first step toward such a system, Ukraine and UNECE started a pilot project for exchanging trade information in the ports of the Odessa region. These ports host approximately 70% of Ukraine's maritime trade. The Director of the Port Authority of Odessa requested technical expertise from UNECE, with funding predominantly from the Ukrainian business community. The system gradually evolved into a Port Community System (PCS) which enabled Ukraine to gain membership of the International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSA). According to IPCSA's definition, a PCS is a neutral and open electronic platform enabling intelligent and secure exchange of information between public and private stakeholders in order to improve the competitive position of the sea and airport communities. A PCS optimizes, manages and automates port and logistics processes through a single submission of data and connecting transport and logistics chains. The vast majority of companies exporting or importing containers through the ports of Odessa are small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Therefore, the simplification of trade procedures benefits mostly SMEs, promoting business creation, and job creation.

The first activities on the PCS focused on key elements such as drafting a feasibility study, developing a business model and establishing the IWG on Trade Facilitation and Logistics. UNECE provided advice on concrete activities for building and operating the PCS. The IWG was designed to include representatives of all relevant government regulatory agencies and the business community. As of October 2017, the group held 27 meetings, included discussions between Customs and the Port Authorities with various agencies on the IPCS project and various aspects of trade facilitation in Ukraine. The IWG discussed and drafted legislative texts, some of which were translated into national law. One example is legislation that allowed the PCS to issue and certify electronic signatures – an indispensable part of the single window system.

UNECE also assisted Ukraine on other trade facilitation activities, for example with the implementation of the WTO TFA to simplify, modernize and harmonize exports and imports processes. The obligations under the WTO TFA and under the DCFTA with the EU presented both opportunities and challenges for the country. UNECE expertise assisted Ukraine in assessing its readiness, and to maximize its potential.

When the WTO TFA text was adopted at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2013, the Vice Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine asked UNECE to develop an assessment of Ukraine's readiness to implement the WTO TFA. The Government of Ukraine then chose the IWG on Trade Facilitation and Logistics, established as part of the PCS project, as the platform to develop the readiness study. The study was prepared jointly by national experts in the area of trade facilitation, UNECE and UNCTAD.

The study classified trade facilitation measures in three categories, as required by the TFA: measures already implemented (category A measures); measures that would require more time (category B measures); and those that would require more time and international assistance (category C measures). A key finding of the report was that some measures that Ukraine had already notified to the WTO as implemented (category A), such trade facilitation

6 http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/recommendations/rec33/rec33_trd352e.pdf

benefits to authorized economic operators, pre-arrival processing and perishable goods, were not applied in practice.

The results of the readiness assessment were used by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade for its notifications to the WTO secretariat, as well as to develop plans to implement the remaining measures of the TFA. The Ukrainian Government plans to incorporate the IWG into the new Foreign Trade Council of Ukraine as the National Trade Facilitation Committee, in compliance with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, art. 23.2. The experience of the IWG is highly valued in the framework of the WTO TFA implementation.

Two of the capacity-building events on trade facilitation organized by UNECE focused on how to establish and run a national trade facilitation committee, and how to establish, step-by-step, a national Single Window, and how to harmonize the required trade data in compliance with international and EU standards. Additionally, UNECE, together with the secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) and Ukraine (as chair of BSEC), organized a seminar on Single Window interoperability in September 2017.

4 Results and next steps

At the end of 2015, Ukraine declared a maritime Single Window based on the PCS experience, which was operational in its basic form in all Ukrainian ports (for example with an electronic module for registering arriving vessels). Ports in the Odessa region gradually implemented the full features of the system: for example, information on arriving vessels is now exclusively processed electronically. In all other ports, arrivals are processed both electronically and in paper form. A further step in the development of the PCS and the maritime Single Window will be a full transition to electronic clearance of vessels in all of Ukraine's ports.

The main results of the Odessa PCS can be found at www.singlewindow.org, the dedicated web site that contains information on all the elements of UNECE work on trade facilitation in Ukraine. The main results of the implementation of the PCS in the Odessa ports are summarized in the box below.

The Port Community System in Odessa: Main Results

- The processing time of goods and vehicles in seaports dropped from 15 hours to 2.5 hours;
- The time required by the controlling bodies to register the arrival of sea vessels to the ports of Ukraine dropped from 3 hours to 15 minutes;
- The number of documents to be submitted by the sea agent dropped from 53 to just 11;
- As all forms and documents are now in electronic form and recoverable, the transparency of the entire process increased and opportunities for corruption decreased;
- The system reduced direct contacts between participants in the transport process and representatives of state institutions, cutting opportunities for corruption;
- The system introduced the automation of logistics processes in the movement of goods and vehicles in ports; and
- The PCS improved the planning of the logistics processes and control procedures, optimizing time and human resources.

As of October 2017, 1,156 organizations joined the agreement on information cooperation as part of the PCS, called "Administration of seaports of Ukraine": 29 government agencies and 1127 business entities that operate in seaports (230 marine agents, 13 port operators, 14 carriers, 870 cargo owners or their authorised personnel).

According to the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine, savings by businesses using the port amounted to UAH 5 billion per year and the capacity of the ports increased by 15% as a result of the PCS.

Using the experience of the PCS in Odessa, UNECE supported the Sea Ports Authority at the Ministry of Infrastructure to plan for a broader maritime Single Window project in Ukraine, which was declared operation by the Ministry in 2017 and presently supports the managers of the national Single Window project.

The IWG on Trade Facilitation and Logistics in Ukraine continues to serve as a think-tank on trade facilitation issues in the country. Ukraine plans to establish of a full-fledged national Trade Facilitation Committee. UNECE, as well as other international organizations and development partners, is using the results of the readiness assessment report to provide further technical assistance.

UNECE activities on trade facilitation in Ukraine improved trade procedures in a country that is undergoing a difficult transition due to geopolitical conditions and economic challenges. The project raised transparency and accountability of trade procedures in Ukraine, contributing to a better business environment thus promoting investments into the country.

These achievements directly support SDG 17, target 17.10 (to promote the international rules-based trading system under the WTO). The work on supporting the implementation of the TFA directly contributed to SDG 10, target 10.a (implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in accordance with WTO agreements) as only developing countries categorize measures under the TFA. At the impact level, the project also supports SDG 17, target 11 (significantly increase the exports of developing countries).

Besides the data on the dedicated website, which demonstrate concrete results, progress is also reflected by other trade-monitoring projects, such as the OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators. These show that, between 2015 and 2017, Ukraine improved its performance in involvement of the trade community, fees and charges, formalities, governance, and impartiality.

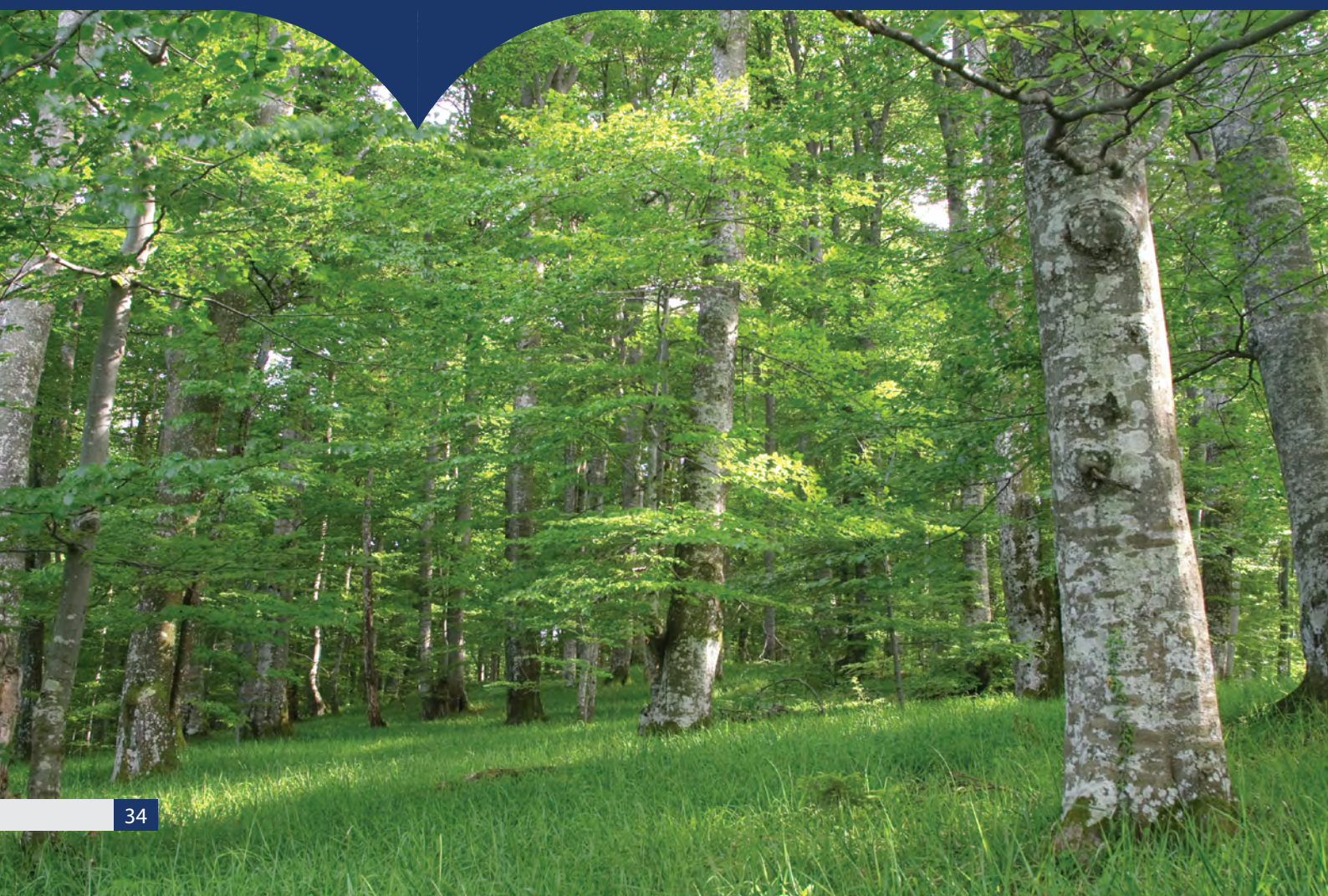
The fact that the project has been requested by national institutions and supported financially by the local business community and the Government, and not donor-driven, ensures its sustainability. At the same time the project has shown that placing the genuine interest of local stakeholders in implementing a project that corresponds to their needs at the centre of a project ensures its relevance and sustainability.

Ukraine plans to further develop the PCS in Odessa to include further categories, such as trade in agricultural products, finalize its maritime Single Window project using the experience of the PCS in Odessa, and develop its national Single Window system using international standards and best practice, together with the experience of the pilot project in Odessa and UNECE technical cooperation.

At the IWG meeting in October 2017, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade announced that the IWG will continue as a sub-group under the Trade Council, and will function as a national trade facilitation committee. Ukraine will use the results of the TFA readiness assessment led by UNECE and the related capacity-building events to fully implement the WTO TFA. UNECE will continue to support Ukraine to assure the interoperability of the Single Window with neighbouring states.



SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT FOR GREENER ECONOMIES IN THE **CAUCASUS** AND **CENTRAL ASIA**



MAIN PROJECT INFORMATION

Overall objective	<i>Strengthening the national capacity of countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia to enhance the contribution of the forest sector to greener economies through sustainable forest management</i>
Related SDGs	 
Related SDG targets	<p>Goal 15, target 15.1: By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.</p> <p>Goal 15, target 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.</p> <p>Goal 17, target 17.9: Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.</p>
Relation to UNECE Programme of Work	Expected Accomplishments (a) "Improved monitoring and assessment of the forest sector to support sustainable forest management" and (b) "Increased national capacity of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe in sustainable forest management" of the Subprogramme 7 "Forestry and Timber" of the UNECE Strategic Framework for 2014–2015 and 2016–2017.
Beneficiary countries	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
Budget/Donor	US\$ 500,000 from UN Development Account (UNDA) 8 th Tranche
Timeline	2013–2015
Main implementing institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry responsible for forestry in each country • Local authorities responsible for forestry at the regional and sub-regional level

<p>Problems addressed</p>	<p>Forests can address environmental problems such as soil erosion, desertification, pollution and climate change, and reduce the impact of natural disasters such as landslides, avalanches and flooding which otherwise impact heavily communities and their livelihoods. These issues are particularly relevant in the recipient countries, which have relatively scarce forest resources and are heavily affected by worsening climate conditions and by an increased frequency and strength of human induced and natural disasters such as droughts.</p> <p>Forest management in the region suffers from financial, data and capability gaps, which prevent countries from managing their forests effectively and sustainably. Some national bodies responsible for forestry use outdated sources of information and data that makes it difficult to assess the status of the sector. Furthermore, financing for the sector is scarce. Because of these issues, illegal logging, poor governance, overcutting and overgrazing have led to forest degradation, deforestation and severe erosion.</p>
<p>Main activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training programmes and material for government officials on sustainable forest management, wood energy and data collection; • Conduct two regional, eight national and 32 (four per country) local capacity building workshops on these issues; • Establish an UNECE webpage on forest-related issues to provide training materials and best practices; and • Provide coaching programmes in Georgia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to develop national action plans for sustainable forest management.
<p>Main impact achieved</p>	<p>The training, workshops and coaching increased the capacity of countries to develop policies to enhance the contribution of the forest sector to greener economies. The training materials on forest management, available online, allow trainers to replicate the training locally, achieving cascading benefits, and provide a repository of knowledge and best practices on forest management. The project deepened regional collaboration on forest management. As a result of the coaching programmes: Georgia adopted an Action Plan for forest development; Tajikistan is renewing its forestry strategy which will be followed by the development of a forestry Action Plan; and a National Forest Programme is undergoing approval process in Kazakhstan.</p>



1 Background

In the beneficiary countries of this project, forest and tree resources are scarce: according to the FAO, they cover around 4% of land on average (with the exception of Georgia, where forest covers 40% of land). Forests are closely connected to rangeland and livestock management, sometimes unsustainably. For example, forest land is often not adequately separated from pasture areas.

Forest governance in these countries suffers from institutional and capabilities gaps. When these countries gained independence in the early 1990's, they did not have institutional frameworks, adequate policies and information systems in place for managing forests. As a result, illegal logging, poor governance, overcutting and overgrazing led to forest degradation, deforestation and severe erosion. Moreover, the sudden decline of external wood supply and disruption of the economic system resulted in increased demand for domestic timber. A lack of adequate data (information systems on forestry often dates from Soviet times) makes it difficult to assess the real extent of deforestation. While in many European countries and in the Russian Federation, forests are often economically viable and generate revenues that are reinvested in the sector, in the countries selected for this project, forests are rarely economically productive. As a result, funding for the forest sector in the recipient countries is scarce and forests are considered non-productive land. This is far from the vision enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which sees forests as natural resources to be protected and valued both for their economic value, and as sources of environmental protection and landscape beauty.

Well-managed forests deliver environmental, social and economic benefits to countries. Forests perform an essential role in preventing environmental degradation (air and water pollution, soil erosion), serving as windbreaks and thus protecting agricultural fields, roads and railways, and reducing the impact of natural disasters such as landslides, avalanches and flooding. Given the increased frequency of natural disasters, such as droughts, adequate forest management in the region is urgent. As highlighted by some recent events, the countries considered are heavily affected by climate change. From 2000-2001 Central Asia and the Caucasus experienced a severe and prolonged drought, and the direct economic cost of lost agricultural production was estimated at US\$800 million (World Bank, 2005¹). The Aral Sea, once the world's fourth largest inland sea, is now reduced to one quarter of its initial volume due to its feeding rivers having been diverted to irrigate cotton. This reduction has led to drier summers and harsher winters. Evidence shows that there has been a general warming trend in Central Asia on the order of 1-2 C° since the beginning of the 20th century (IFAD, 2015), and in summer 2016, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyzstan endured a serious drought.

Deforestation aggravates these issues, as a much larger quantity of carbon dioxide is released in the atmosphere, exacerbating climate change. Forests also perpetuate the water cycle by retaining and cleaning water and by returning water vapor to the atmosphere. Forests also provide wood products that can substitute more carbon-intensive sources of energy and fossil fuels, and are an important source of local livelihoods. Nuts, fruits, berries, mushrooms, medicinal plants, trophy hunting, beekeeping and fodder are all important economic resources. Expanding the areas devoted to forests and improving their economic management could generate greater profits to be reinvested in the sector, increasing its sustainability.

The recipient countries have a high rural poor population that depends on agriculture and livestock for income and employment generation. Most of the damages and losses caused by droughts are due to the agriculture sector, affecting livestock and crop production and having severe consequences on local livelihoods, especially for smallholders and the poorest members of rural societies.

UNECE and FAO efforts were designed to strengthen knowledge of forest sector management among policy makers, and to support the development of forest national action plans in the selected countries.

1 Mainstreaming hazard risk management into rural projects. World Bank, Disaster Risk Management Working Paper Series no. 13, 36462. https://www.preventionweb.net/files/2489_364620MainstreamingOrisk01PUBLIC1.pdf

2 Country demand and UNECE comparative advantage

Through the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, the project countries expressed their interest in receiving capacity building and training support from UNECE. Forestry is an important theme, and all recipient countries are signatories to major environmental conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the World Heritage Convention. These include commitments to halting the loss of forests to reduce emissions and protect biodiversity.

Before this project, UNECE was assisting member States in developing their forest management, through the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Policy, and other thematic experts groups, in the framework of the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work. This work focused on enhancing capacities for sustainable forest management, data collection, monitoring and analysis, as well as on promoting the engagement of national experts from the region in activities such as forest monitoring and statistical reporting. This project built on these efforts, and utilized the extensive expertise of UNECE and FAO on sustainable forest management, markets and wood energy.

UNECE and FAO led the project, which was implemented through partnerships in the region, drawing on existing regional networks, together with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in each country. All recipient countries developed their own legal frameworks on forests in the early 1990s. However, the existing legal framework is often not adequately enforced, as countries face severe budget constraints and forests are not identified as a priority. Forests in the region face some major immediate threats, such as unsustainable harvesting, overgrazing in forest and wood lands, fires, pests and diseases, lack of dedicated human and financial resources, and weak information systems. In all recipient countries, the government is the main manager of forest resources, and are therefore the main beneficiaries of the project. These institutions have local substructures (state forestry enterprises) operate under the control of the central government and carry out forestry works according to the forest management plan approved at the central level (except in Kazakhstan, which has been promoting deeper devolution of forest management responsibilities to the local level).

After national independence, forestry institutions faced financial and capability gaps. Currently, all recipient countries have research institutions dealing with forestry, and an increasing number of NGOs combating deforestation. Some governments are increasingly acknowledging the role of local people and communities in forest management. Yet, establishing a trustful relationship between governments and local communities remains challenging, as these communities often have limited rights or control over natural resources.

Improving forest management requires strengthening government capacity to analyze challenges, prioritize interventions, mobilize resources, formulate and implement policies and evaluate progress. A solid monitoring system based on adequate data is essential to support these activities with accurate information.

3 Project actions

The project helped countries to address capacity gaps in forest management by providing knowledge, capacity building, training materials and advisory services on forest sector policies and institutions to government officials.

The project activities focused on two areas of intervention:

1. Training for government and local officials on sustainable forest management, wood energy and data collection. This was done through two regional, eight national and 32 (four per country) activities; and
2. Coaching programmes in three countries (Georgia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan) to develop National Action Plans (NAPs) for sustainable forest management, targeting active facilitators and drafters of strategies or NAPs.

Representatives of the national forest authorities in the three pilot countries participated in the joint UNECE/FAO session in Rovaniemi in December 2013. Representatives contributed to the endorsement of the Rovaniemi Action Plan (RAP)² for the forest sector in a green economy, which formed the basis of the coaching programme for the pilot countries. The RAP, which was prepared as a joint effort with governments, academia, industrial associations

2 <https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/publications/SP-35-Rovaniemi.pdf>

and NGOs, describes how the forest sector in the UNECE region could lead the way towards the emerging green economy at the global level. It provides an overall vision, objectives and specific activities, and identifies potential actors, who might contribute to achieving the stated objectives. This project actively contributes to the RAP, in particular to its objective E.0. "to develop and communicate ambitious and realistic strategies for governance and monitoring of the forest sector", and to its activity E.0.4. "to develop the capacities (skills, information, institution, etc.) of all stakeholders to implement sustainable forest management and forest protection and monitor progress in its implementation". The RAP provided a comprehensive framework for forestry policies that helped the countries in formulating their NAPs.

In the recipient countries, the forest sector suffers from lack of knowledge and expertise, as well as from underfinancing which limits the possibilities for improvement. Thus, UNECE and FAO played an important role in channelling the financial support needed for the forest management activities, and tailoring these resources to the specific needs of each country.

4 Results and next steps

By supporting the drafting and adoption of NAPs for forests, the project promoted a long-term vision for the forest sector in each country, and enabled exchanges of experience and mutual learning between countries.

As a result of the coaching programmes, Tajikistan is renewing the forestry strategy document, which will be followed by the development of an action plan for the sector. A National Forest Programme is undergoing the approval process in Kazakhstan. Finally, Georgia adopted a NAP for forest development (see below). Coaching sessions greatly enhanced the ability of pilot countries to advance green economy principles and sustainable forest management development. The multiplier effect achieved by training trainers, and by making available the training materials to be replicated, is a strength of the project, which ensures that knowledge and capacity-building instruments are available to local authorities and people working in forestry on the field.

These results support countries in their efforts to achieve SDG 15, in particular targets 15.1 (by 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements) and 15.2 (by 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally). The project increased the capacities of participating countries to manage their forests sustainably. The project also contributed to a shift in the way national and local authorities and local community consider forests, seeing them not just as unproductive land, but rather as a natural richness that can enable them to achieve a greener economy in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

National Action Plan for the Georgian Forest Sector in a Green Economy

The National Action Plan for the Georgian Forest Sector in a Green Economy³ (the Action Plan) describes how the forest sector could contribute to the development of a green economy in Georgia and communicates the potential of the forest sector to policy makers, the general public and decision-makers in other sectors. The NAP is the result of a series of national and local multi-stakeholder workshops on Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in Georgia held in 2014–2015.

The NAP provides a broad background (definitions, international processes, broad perspectives), a national perspective (circumstances, problems, legislation, stakeholders), and concrete actions (pillars, respective goals, possible solutions). The main goals include increasing forest resources by 30%, creating more jobs related to the sector, increasing forest revenues and increasing energy efficiency through forest resources. Proposed actions include eliminating illegal logging, attracting investments through hunting and plant nurseries, developing better education for foresters, decentralising forest management and improving the legislative basis for the sector. The NAP also proposes a strategy for better engaging stakeholders from all segments of society into forest management.

3 https://www.unec.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/Forest_Policy/Capacity_building/Georgia_Action_Plan_and_Report_eng.pdf

The project mainly targeted capacities at the national level, but also reached out to the local level to ensure that staff from local forest-related administrations were trained and made aware of options for further support. To this end, UNECE and FAO delivered tailored local training workshops, thereby ensuring a multiplier effect by training trainers to deliver training at the local level. In addition, the project fostered regional collaboration between countries on Sustainable Forest Management (SFM).

Most countries participating in the project (Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) decided to engage in another UN project on forests, "Accountability Systems for Sustainable Forest Management in the Caucasus and Central Asia". This second project builds on the outcomes achieved and further aligns them to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, in particular to SDG 15 (life on land). The objective of this project, which will run until 2019, is to strengthen the national capacity of the five target countries to develop national criteria and indicators and reporting, or accountability systems for SFM.

The coaching approach for capacity building and for the development of NAPs provided support at regular intervals over a long period of time to build the necessary capacities, and ensure full national ownership of the process. Coaching has empowered staff at the country level, and has contributed to a strong national ownership of the process with positive consequences for institutionalizing the acquired skills and knowledge. In general, such results are less likely to be achieved through one-off capacity-building events. The regional approach has also proven successful, as the recipient countries share a common history and have a common technical background on forestry and other issues.

Key stakeholders from all beneficiary countries were satisfied with the contents of the training programmes and acknowledged that their knowledge on policy formulation, bioenergy generation and data collection had increased as a result. Based on the training materials, some participating organizations elaborated and adopted a training package for the forest sector's contribution to green economy that can be used in combination with other forest-related training. Some used specific information pertaining to data gathering techniques in community information campaigns on forest related issues. Several participants noted that the workshops helped them to develop innovative approaches to forest management. Some 43% of participants replicated training materials from the dedicated UNECE webpage⁴.




4 <http://www.unece.org/forests/capacitybuilding.html>



STRENGTHENING
NATIONAL CAPACITIES
FOR **SUSTAINABLE**
HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT
IN SELECTED COUNTRIES
WITH **ECONOMIES IN**
TRANSITION



MAIN PROJECT INFORMATION

Overall objective	<i>Strengthening national capacities for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition</i>
Related SDGs	  
Related SDG targets	<p>Goal 7, target 7.3: By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.</p> <p>Goal 11, target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.</p> <p>Goal 11, target 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.</p> <p>Goal 11, target 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.</p> <p>Goal 11, target 11.B: By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels.</p> <p>Goal 13, target 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.</p>
Relation to UNECE Programme of Work	Expected Accomplishment (a) "Improved capacity for policy formulation and implementation in housing, urban planning and land administration" and (b) "Strengthened implementation of UNECE guidelines on housing, urban planning and land management" of the Subprogramme 8 "Housing, land management and population" of the UNECE Strategic Framework for 2014–2015 and 2016–2017.
Beneficiary countries	Armenia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Tajikistan
Budget/Donor	US\$ 533,000 from UN Development Account 9 th Tranche
Period of implementation	2014–2017
Main institutions involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Habitat • Ministries and local authorities in charge of housing and land management in each country

<p>Problem addressed</p>	<p>Countries with economies in transition face multiple challenges related to housing and land management, such as lack of regulation on multi-storey buildings, unpreparedness to natural hazards such as earthquakes and lack of emergency management plans, and a shortage of affordable and decent housing, especially for vulnerable groups, the poor and the disabled and energy inefficient buildings. These challenges are cross-cutting, ranging from energy efficiency, sustainable cities, climate change, infrastructure, to access so safe water and urbanization. Governments often lack adequate skills, legal instruments and funding for addressing these integrated challenges.</p>
<p>Main activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International experts, in cooperation with national experts of the beneficiary countries, drafted a profile of housing and land management for each country. The profiles are an effective tool for governments to analyze their housing and urban development policies, the institutional, legal and financial frameworks governing housing and land management, and to compare progresses internationally; • Conduct one workshop in each country to discuss the priorities for government and other stakeholders for housing and sustainable development; • Country Profiles incorporated feedback from the governments and became the basis for drafting National Action Plans (NAPs) for the housing sector in each country; • Provide guidelines or drafting the NAPs on the basis of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and organize capacity building events for refining the NAPs; and • Advisory services to implement the recommendations made in the Country Profiles (such as the preparation of a law on management of multi-apartmenthousing in Armenia).
<p>Main impact achieved</p>	<p>The project strengthened the capacity of beneficiary countries to develop policies for sustainable housing. Through the Country Profiles, recipients were provided a detailed insight of the current state and main challenges facing their housing sectors. Each country produced a NAP on their housing sector, with policy directions based on the priority and challenges identified in the country profiles, and refined through feedback from housing experts. The NAPs, as well as the increased awareness and knowledge of housing and land issues in recipient countries, are expected to drive better housing and land policies in the future, delivering more sustainable cities, better energy efficiency and more affordable and decent housing.</p>



1 Background

Countries with economies in transition face some common challenges in housing:

1. Rental markets are often underdeveloped and there is limited provision of social housing and/or subsidy systems for low-income households;
2. The management structure for multi-family housing blocks remains underdeveloped; and
3. The housing sector is characterized by low standards of energy efficiency.

As a result, the countries affected have seen their housing stock deteriorate and have been unable to cater to the housing needs of low-income residents. The poor tend to suffer the most from the lack of affordable housing or from housing of poor quality, that can put them at greater risk from either natural disasters (for example housing that is not earthquake-resistant) or affect their quality of life (for example with unreliable electricity). The market alone cannot solve these issues without government intervention. However, many countries with economies in transition lack the capacity to develop and implement policies for sustainable housing. Sustainable housing means that everyone has a choice of housing types and tenures at reasonable cost within inclusive and well-served neighborhoods, well-equipped, good quality, safe and healthy housing, and energy-efficient and eco-friendly homes.

This project aimed at strengthening the capacity of countries to develop such policies. By improving access to sustainable housing in the recipient countries, the project targeted mostly the poor and vulnerable groups such as those who lost their houses in natural disasters, young people with low incomes and the disabled.

2 Country demand and UNECE comparative advantage

UNECE has been working on housing and land management policies since it was established in 1947. This work has included the development of building standards by the UNECE Panel on Housing Problems (a predecessor of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management). Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management are a flagship activity of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management. The profiles are an effective tool for governments to analyze their housing and urban development policies, strategies, institutional and financial frameworks and to compare the progress made internationally. UNECE prepared the first Country Profiles for Serbia and Montenegro in 2006 (both were updated in 2014). The Country Profile for Tajikistan was completed in 2011, the Republic of Moldova in 2015, and Armenia (the second for the country) in 2017.

UNECE contributed its expertise on housing standards, management of housing stock, energy efficiency, land management and real estate markets. UN-Habitat contributed expertise on urban management and planning, tenure and informal settlements, building materials and participatory planning. The main local institutions involved in the project were the government bodies and local authorities responsible for housing and land management, as well as homeowner associations and private companies dealing with housing construction and management.

3 Project activities

UNECE prepared a Country Profile of the housing sector in each beneficiary country, as requested by the respective governments. The Country Profiles were drafted by international experts in cooperation with national experts in each country. They provide a strategic analysis of the housing sector, identified challenges and priorities, and included specific policy recommendations to improve housing and land policies. The Country Profiles helped the governments to assess their policies, strategies, institutional, regulatory and financial frameworks for the housing and land management sectors. They also provided information to potential investors, including both private sector and international organizations.

Based on the Country Profiles, each country developed a NAP for Sustainable Housing. The project developed guidelines for drafting the NAPs on the basis of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. The Geneva UN Charter (endorsed in April 2015) is a non-legally binding document that aims to support UNECE member States as they seek to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all.

The guidelines for the NAPs advise governments on how to organize the institutional setting for successfully implementing their NAP, how to manage interactions among stakeholders including businesses, local authorities, international organizations and foreign donors and how to leverage efficiencies in housing and land management policies. The project established an inter-ministerial coordination group that guided the development and implementation of the NAP. These groups strengthened intra-governmental communication and collaboration on housing and land issues in the recipient countries.

The NAPs contain blueprints for further reforms of the housing sector. For example, the NAP of the Republic of Moldova focused on multi-apartment buildings, especially on the issues of energy efficiency (developing financial mechanisms to promote energy efficiency in multi-apartment buildings), and on devolution of responsibilities to local authorities. The NAP of Tajikistan focused on promoting the energy efficiency of residential buildings and technical control of new construction. In Armenia, priorities included spatial planning, municipal management and smart cities. In Serbia, the NAP focused on establishing a comprehensive framework for the housing policy and on a draft national law on housing as a central tool for the NAP's implementation.

Governments presented proposals for the NAPs at the national workshops, based on policy recommendations of the Country Profiles and on other relevant projects and studies. UNECE staff, national, and international experts shared guidance documents, international studies and best practices to be taken into account for the NAPs. For example, through the national workshop in Tajikistan, the NAP was reviewed to include measures on the modernization of the housing stock and infrastructure, monitoring energy efficiency in buildings and development of architectural design standards.

UNECE plans to publish a policy paper on best practices and lessons learned, together with guidelines for the preparation and implementation of the NAPs for Sustainable Housing.

4 Results and next steps

The project strengthened the capacity of the selected countries to develop policies for sustainable housing, with all recipient countries developing NAPs with concrete policy directions for their housing and land management. The achievements of this project contribute directly to SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities). Because the issues addressed by this project, such as energy efficiency, natural disaster preparedness and affordable housing are cross-cutting among many development dimensions, the project also indirectly contributes to SDG 7 (affordable and sustainable energy) and SDG 13 (climate change).

All countries regularly report on the implementation of the NAPs through the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, and UNECE also conducts regular surveys of the implementation of policies.

Housing and land management country profile of Armenia

The Country Profile of Armenia, the second for the country (the first conducted in 2004), was launched in 2017. The results showed considerable progress in implementing sustainable housing and land management policies since the first Country Profile provided its recommendations. For example, the government has taken actions to improve its legal and regulatory framework for energy efficiency and resilient housing. Armenia set a goal to achieve 23% savings in energy in residential buildings in 2020 compared to 2010 levels. The government also implemented strategic policy documents on balanced regional and urban development, such as the General Settlements Plan and The Armenia Development Strategy for 2014–2025. Armenia also established an effective land administration system. All real estate is now registered in the cadaster, property rights have been secured, and today real estate transfers are based on the effective registration of property rights. Moreover, Armenia now provides efficient services of property and land rights registration for its citizens, some of which are accessible digitally.

Despite these achievements, significant challenges remain on access to decent housing and mitigation of disaster risks. Armenia is at high risk of earthquakes, landslides and mudflows and hail storms. The government has adopted a number of laws and regulations on seismic hazard reduction and emergency management.

Design and construction regulations have been revised to reflect actual seismic hazards and to ensure more accurate identification of the seismic load on buildings. At the same time, damages from the 1988 Spitak earthquake are still present, with some 517,000 people left homeless after the earthquake still in need of adequate housing. Access to adequate and decent housing remains the main challenge in Armenia. Around 60,000 families (8% of households) require improvement in their living conditions, and 8,000 families live in dormitories and rooms adapted as dwellings. More than 50% of multi-apartment buildings should be renovated to improve earthquake resistance and energy-efficiency. The National Strategy on Developing Social Housing Stock, adopted by the government, lacks regulations on a number of issues on social housing provision and affordable rental sector.

UNECE assisted Armenia to implement key policy recommendations of the Country Profile, such as the development of the legal framework and financial mechanisms for the provision of affordable decent housing and management of multi-apartment buildings. Based on the recommendations of the Country Profile, the Government of Armenia, with the help of UNECE, UN-Habitat and the UNDP office in Armenia, elaborated a draft National Action Plan (NAP) on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development. The draft NAP was assessed during the workshop, with representatives from various ministries and stakeholders, and was finalized to incorporate their feedback. The project also prepared a law on the management of multi-apartment buildings, drafted in cooperation with UNDP, and organised a study trip for members of Armenian national authorities responsible for housing to Estonia (held in December 2017) to learn about Estonia's experience in multi-apartment buildings' management, on which the country is a leader. The study trip included meetings with all key national agencies and financial institutions (banks, agencies) dealing with management of multiapartment buildings and housing.

In Armenia, UNECE also prepared the Smart Sustainable City Profile of the city of Goris. The City Profile was elaborated by UNECE in cooperation with the State Committee on Urban Development, the Municipality of Goris, UNDP Armenia and the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus. "Smart Cities" should be inclusive, resilient, safe, sustainable and use the innovative information and communication technologies to be more connected. Recommendations from the City Profile will help further the economic development of Goris.

The joint activities implemented during the last three years in Armenia demonstrate the value of synergies and cooperation within the UN system, as well as with other international organisations, through the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). This strong inter-agency collaboration will ensure effective support to Armenia for the implementation of its NAP. The policy recommendations of the Country and City Profiles should significantly support Armenia's efforts to achieve SDG11, sustainable cities and communities, as well as other SDGs such as SDG 7, affordable and clean energy.

The Minister of Construction of Serbia noted the significant achievement of the project and its positive impact on the development of housing policies in Serbia. At the UNECE Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management (November 2017), Ministers from Armenia and Tajikistan stressed the important role of UNECE support to countries for promoting sustainable housing and urban development.

In cooperation with national and local governments, universities and NGOs in each country, UNECE is building a network of Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence¹. Geneva UN Charter Centres support the Committee in the implementation of the Charter through active dissemination of information on the Charter and its principles through publications, mass media, and national and local capacity building, advisory services and networking activities.

In 2018, the Geneva UN Charter Centre for Excellence in Estonia, established in cooperation with the Estonian Union of Cooperative Housing Associations, will train housing experts and representatives of national and local authorities from Armenia, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova and other countries on managing multi-apartment buildings and housing energy efficiency. In the coming years, UNECE will support Armenia and Ukraine in developing their housing legislation to support the governments' efforts to promote sustainable housing.

1 <http://www.unece.org/housing/charter.html>



Success Stories in Technical Cooperation

Towards the 2030 Agenda

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