UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies
Update on WP.6 activities
December 2023

33ʳᵈ annual session of WP.6, 23-24 November 2023

The 33ʳᵈ annual session of WP.6 concluded successfully on 24 November 2023. During this meeting, member States elected the new WP.6 Bureau comprised of:

- Ms. Heidi Lund (Sweden), chair
- Ms. Gabrielle White (Canada), vice-chair
- Mr. Davit Tkemaladze (Georgia), vice-chair
- Mr. Marco Pangallo (Israel), vice-chair
- Mr. Anthony Quinn (United States of America), vice-chair

Ms. Rosie Seville (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) stepped down as vice-chair; the bureau members and the member States expressed their gratitude for her engagement.

This session also approved the revised *Recommendation K on Metrological Assurance of Conformity Assessment and Testing* and endorsed the paper on gender and salutation code lists. Internal working practices were also presented to harmonize and ensure greater transparency of membership, meetings and projects. The secretariat also provided some guidance on representation and the use of titles within WP.6.

This session also marked the launch of a publication on *The Basics of Quality Infrastructure for Trade*. Quality infrastructure is the unsung hero of trade; it is essential for market access whilst promoting essential regulatory objectives such as safety, quality and sustainability in industrial goods. Finding the information on these requirements is often much more complex than identifying trade tariffs and requires a certain level of technical knowledge. This publication provides a baseline understanding of the different elements of quality infrastructure such as metrology, standardization, market surveillance, conformity assessment, and risk management and builds upon the events on the topic.

Compliance of artificial intelligence

The high-level panel discussion of the 33ʳᵈ Session was on "How to target continuous compliance; Conformity assessment, legal metrology and market surveillance tools for the changing dynamics of digitals goods." The main focus of attention was on artificial intelligence embedded within products, recognizing the emerging questions that this technology can raise for quality infrastructure agencies.

WP.6 presented a paper on the topic which outlines the base principles which should be considered to address regulatory compliance of products with embedded technologies including several United Nations base principles such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the current work within the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). It also establishes some considerations that market surveillance authorities can take in order to harmonize their approach to the compliance of products with embedded artificial intelligence.

WHERE YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

- Invite standards development organizations to become signatory to the Declaration on Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development and encourage them to fill out the questionnaire template for a future guide on best practices on related gender action plans.
- Participate in the WP.6 meetings in view of the proposed topics (outlined on the next page).
- Invite experts to join our project on conformity of products with embedded AI or other technologies.
- Invite experts to join our future work on trunk pipeline safety of hydrogen.
- Invite experts to join the work of WP.6 subgroups outlined on the next page.

Tell us what areas you are interested in by filling out this 1-minute survey
to be included on the subgroup mailing lists (or to request to no longer receive any updates).

MARS

Advisory Group on Market Surveillance

The MARS has nearly completed their work to revise *Recommendation M on the Use of Market Surveillance Infrastructure as a Complementary Means to Protect Consumers and Users against Counterfeit Goods*. You are welcome to delegate experts to this work or participate in the public review of the final draft which will be circulated shortly.

It was suggested that it could be useful to also review *Recommendation N on Good Market Surveillance Policies and Practices* for a potential review. The group proposed to eventually organize a webinar on this topic in early 2024.

Next meetings: **20 Feb., 4-5 April (WP.6 3rd Forum), 27 Sept. 2024**

START

Ad Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques

The sectoral initiative on pipeline safety (SIPS) and the sectoral initiative on equipment for explosive environment (SIEEE) are jointly working towards the creation of a common regulatory arrangement on trunk pipeline safety of hydrogen. This work will be coordinated with the ECE Sustainable Energy Division. The project should launch shortly.

The sectoral initiative on cybersecurity will consider updating the examples in the annexes. The group is seeking a new expert to coordinate this work. You are welcome to propose candidates.

The START also plans to shortly launch a review of *Recommendation L on the International Model for Transnational Regulatory Cooperation Based on Good Regulatory Practice* in view of dealing with systems, processes and services would be useful. This work should be launched in early 2024.

Next meeting: **5 April 2024 (WP.6 3rd Forum)**

START-Ed

Education on Standardization Initiative

The sectoral initiative on education on standardization is planning its next activities. This may include a questionnaire to educational institutes to survey the needs in this area.

Next meeting: **2 April 2024 (WP.6 3rd Forum)**

ToS-GRS

Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards

The ToS-GRS are pleased to welcome UL Standards and Engagement, the Kyrgyzstan Center for Standardization and Metrology, the Salvadoran Organization for Standardization and the Lesotho Standards Institution as the 83rd, 84th, 85th and 86th signatories of the *Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development*. The Team is also compiling a repository of gender action plans and thanks Canada for also contributing. In 2024, work on guidance for standards-related gender action plans will be one of the main focuses. The new publication, *Why Gender-Responsive Standards are Better for Everyone* is now available.

The ToS-GRS hold bi-monthly conference calls and often invite external speakers to present the work they are doing related to gender-mainstreaming. In July, they hosted a representative from UNDP to present their work on gender biases and in November, they hosted an expert on gender and trade finance. They also hosted a webinar on the cross section between circular economy, standards and gender. These meetings are open to all experts.

Next meetings: **7 Feb., 3-4 April (WP.6 3rd Forum), 5 June, 11 Sept., and 6 Nov. 2024**

GRM

Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems

Work is still underway on the project on "Integrated risk management in single window systems". The project team is running a survey of regulators and will begin drafting their text in early 2024.

GRM is also conducting a survey of regulatory agencies on their risk management during the COVID pandemic to see if the principles laid out in *Recommendation P on Crisis Management in Regulatory Systems* has been useful.

Next meetings: **15 Feb., 2-3 April (WP.6 3rd Forum), 13 June, 12 Sept. and 14 Nov. 2024**

OTHER DATES TO SAVE

3rd Forum of WP.6 subgroups: **2-5 April**, Geneva
SCTCS 9th annual session: **26-28 June**, Geneva
WP.6 34th annual session: **26-28 August**, Geneva