
Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (WG-STTC)

26th Session
25 November 2021
(Videoconference)

PROGRAMME OF WORK 2022-2023
(Item 5.5 of the Agenda)

Note by the UNECE / ESCAP

1. This document presents the draft Programme of Work 2022-2023 of the SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (WG-STTC).
2. The draft Programme of Work 2022-2023 has been prepared by UNECE/ESCAP in line with the Vienna Programme of Action (2014), the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022-2026), the Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030 (2019), the recommendations on 11th SPECA Governing Council (2016) and the Ashgabat initiative on reducing barriers to trade and transport using United Nations legal instruments, norms, standards and recommendations while bolstering connectivity in the SPECA region (2019).

Issues for consideration

At its twenty-sixth session held online, the WG-STTC is invited to:

- (a) Review and, if necessary, modify the Draft Work Programme 2022-2022,
- (b) Adopt the Programme.

Background

3. On its Fourteenth Session held on 21 November 2019, the SPECA Governing Council adopted revised Terms of Reference for Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity. The WG STTC shall:

- Provide a platform for strategic discussions on supporting progress towards achieving the directly transport-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3, SDG 9 and SDG 11) and targets, and contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, as a whole, through sub-regional cooperation, exchange of best practices and experiences, consultation, relevant activities and implementation of projects in SPECA countries
- Raise awareness of SPECA countries on the transport-related SDGs and the role of transport and connectivity in supporting the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda; provide information and share best practice experiences, taking into account interlinkages between the SDGs
- Promote policy dialogue: to support accession and efficient implementation of the United Nations transport-related legal instruments; for coordinated development of road and railway networks, dry ports and intermodal transport; for elimination of physical and non-physical barriers to transport, and for safer and more environmentally friendly transport system and
- Provide analytical work and capacity-development activities and tools in the areas of transport infrastructure development, sustainable transport operations, operationalization of international transit corridors, use of new technologies and innovation, regulatory harmonization, intermodal transport, border crossing facilitation, transport of dangerous goods, and other areas, including identification of funding modalities for SPECA activities.

4. Based on the 10th SPECA Governing Council decision, the Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity served as a platform for supporting the efforts of SPECA countries towards achieving the transport-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. The WG-STTC mostly focused on the following transport-related SDGs:

- a) **Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (Road Safety)
- b) **Goal 9.** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (Sustainable infrastructure)
- c) **Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Sustainable (urban) transport for all)
- d) **Goal 13:** Reduce carbon footprint (Climate action)

PROGRAMME OF WORK 2022-2023

In line with the Vienna Programme of Action (2014), the Ministerial Declaration and Regional Action Programme on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022-2026), the Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030 (2019), the recommendations of 11th SPECA Governing Council (2016) and the Ashgabat initiative on reducing barriers to trade and transport using United Nations legal instruments, norms, standards and recommendations while bolstering connectivity in the SPECA region (2019).

1. Organization of regular sessions of SPECA WG-STTC

Activity 1.1 The SPECA countries will host the twenty seventh and twenty eighth sessions of SPECA WG-STTC with assistance of UNECE/ESCAP. The WG-STTC agreed that venue and date of the next meeting will be decided at the later stage.

2. Sustainable transport development in SPECA region

Activity 2.1 SPECA members States take necessary actions to support implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022-2026)

Activity 2.2 SPECA members States take necessary actions to implement goals and activities defined in the Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030¹

Activity 2.3. The SPECA countries will pursue strategic discussions on the national and sub-regional policies in support of sustainable transport connectivity in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Activity 2.4 Subject to funding availability, SPECA countries and ESCAP/UNECE develop and implement sub-regional transport projects of common interest to enhance sustainable transport connectivity in the sub-region and beyond

3. Enhancement of legal frameworks for efficient and sustainable transport, transit and connectivity

Activity 3.1 SPECA countries take steps to accede to and efficiently implement United Nations transport legal instruments, recommended for accession at the second session of SPECA WG-STTC, as well as Conventions relating to transport of dangerous goods and perishable foodstuffs.

¹ Adopted at the 81st session of the ITC held in Geneva on 19-22 February 2019

Activity 3.2 SPECA countries, which have not already done so, take measures towards becoming parties to or implementing the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports and participate in relevant Working Groups.

Activity 3.3 SPECA countries, which have not already done so, are encouraged sign/accede to key UNECE infrastructure agreements (AGR, AGC and AGTC) and legal instrument related to road transport (Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) concerning the Electronic Consignment Note) and participate in relevant Working Groups.

Activity 3.4 SPECA countries take policy measures for transport facilitation in line with the UNESCAP Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport and UNESCAP Regional Cooperation Framework for the Facilitation of International Railway Transport, as well as application of model agreements and guidelines².

Activity 3.5 SPECA countries provide the text of agreements, additions, corrections or updates to the Database of Agreements on International Road Transport developed by ESCAP Transport Division.

Activity 3.6 UNECE and UNESCAP provide technical assistance to SPECA countries, upon request, in the form of capacity development workshops, seminars or advisory services, on accession to, and implementation of major United Nations transport legal instruments.

4. Increased international and sub-regional cooperation in inland transport infrastructure development for better connectivity and sustainability (SDG 9)

Activity 4.1 SPECA countries actively participate in the meetings of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies, ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport and Committee on Transport, biannual sessions of the working groups on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and dry ports, and other international fora that will assist the integration of the transport systems within and beyond SPECA region as well as harmonization with existing international standards and norms, set by the United Nations agreements and conventions.

Activity 4.2 SPECA countries regularly report on transport infrastructure developments, especially those within the SPECA region and those linking to neighboring countries and international transport corridors. SPECA countries are requested to submit timely and relevant data to Asian Highway Network Database. SPECA countries are also advised to use results of the Euro Asian Transport links project Phase III.

² <https://www.unescap.org/resources/transport-facilitation-tools>

Activity 4.3 SPECA countries take steps to ensure adequate fund allocation for transport infrastructure development and maintenance.

Activity 4.4 National transport authorities in the SPECA countries develop national transport infrastructure in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreements on Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway Networks and Dry Ports, as well as the infrastructure agreements under the purview of the ITC (AGR, AGC and AGTC) as a priority.

Activity 4.5 UNECE/ESCAP provide technical assistance to SPECA countries, upon request, in collection and harmonization of data and indicators on transport-related SDGs and targets with the particular focus on the sustainable aspects of transport infrastructure and operations

5. Assistance to SPECA countries to enhance transport operational connectivity along international transport routes in SPECA region (SDG 9)

Activity 5.1 Subject to availability of resources, UNECE/ESCAP provide technical assistance to SPECA countries upon request in identifying/isolating/addressing major contributors for more efficient sub-regional and international inland transport operations, including within the framework of the results of the EATL project. Special attention should be paid to development of railways and intermodal transport and to the use of new technologies.

Activity 5.2 SPECA countries take measures for the application of ESCAP transport facilitation tools and models³, and the UNECE/OSCE handbook on best practices at border crossings – a trade and transport facilitation perspective.

Activity 5.3 ESCAP/UNECE provide technical assistance to SPECA countries, upon request, in the form of workshops, seminars or advisory services, in establishing or strengthening national facilitation coordinating mechanisms, simplification/harmonization of border-crossing procedures and documentation for international transport, and digitalization of transport services using information and communication technology, including eCMR, eTIR International. Transport facilitation frameworks/models/tools developed by UNECE/ESCAP could serve as a reference in that respect.

Activity 5.4 SPECA countries take an active part in the work carried out towards unified railway law, on the basis of the Joint Declaration on the promotion of Euro-Asian rail transport and activities towards unified railway law⁴.

³ <https://www.unescap.org/resources/transport-facilitation-tools>

⁴ Signed in Geneva on 26 February 2013

Activity 5.5 SPECA countries, with assistance of UNECE and ESCAP, in line with their mandates and capacities will support establishment the Regional Centre of Transport and Communication Development under auspices of United Nations.

6. Increased awareness and understanding of road safety issues and potential interventions, and improved collaboration in the SPECA region (SDG 3)

Activity 7.1 SPECA countries take steps to address road safety issues in line with second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030. SPECA countries are encouraged to deposit their instrument of acceptance of the new Annex II bis to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network on the Asian Highway design standards for road safety. SPECA countries are invited to volunteer for preparation of Road Safety Performance Review (RSPR). Subject to availability of resources, UNECE will provide technical assistance to SPECA countries in RSPR preparation.

Activity 7.2. UNECE/ESCAP provide technical assistance to SPECA countries in supporting their efforts to improve road safety and in setting regional/national goals, targets and indicators on road safety, improving vehicle safety and safety of vulnerable road users, based on the best practice and existing United Nations legal instruments.
