

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

(Seventieth session, 19 – 21 February 2008,
agenda item 3)

UNECE
Economic Commission for
Europe



UNESCAP
Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific

Joint project on developing Euro-Asian transport links (Phase II)

Project Title: Joint UNECE-UNESCAP Project on developing Euro-Asian transport links - Phase II.

Objective: The objective of the project is to assist Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) to develop efficient, safe, sustainable and secure Euro-Asian land and land-cum-sea transport links and foster cooperation in the field of transport to facilitate interregional trade and tourism between Europe and Asia.

Background: Globalization and liberalization of national economies is leading to a sharp increase in trade and transport between Asia and Europe. Most of the traffic has so far been following maritime routes. However, the development of efficient Euro-Asian inland transport routes would provide credible alternatives, as well as the opportunity for participation in the globalization process with improved market access for the concerned landlocked countries and areas that lie along the routes and, at the same time, be a major, strategic tool for the development and integration of countries in the Euro-Asian region. Countries along the Euro-Asian transport routes are often constrained by inadequate transport infrastructure, transport legislation that differs from one country to another and cumbersome and time-consuming border procedures. To address these constraints, the UNECE and UNESCAP, jointly invited the Governments of 18 countries in the Euro-Asian region, to participate in a Project, funded by the UN Development Account over the period 2002-2007, aimed at strengthening their national capacities for developing Europe-Asia transport links and promote cooperation in the field of transport to facilitate interregional trade and tourism. These countries are: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

So far, the project has achieved tangible results. These include, the identification of the main Euro-Asian road, rail, inland water transport routes and transshipment points; an initial analysis of the main physical and non-physical obstacles along the selected routes; evaluation and prioritization of infrastructure projects on the basis of an agreed methodology; collection and processing of a large volume of technical and operational data using Geographic Information System (GIS); creation of a GIS database and relevant GIS maps; organization of a number advisory workshops and interregional meetings dealing with transport infrastructure and facilitation issues; and the elaboration of an in house study. These achievements are considered as a solid basis for continued cooperation for the development of Euro-Asian transport linkages among the countries involved and more countries, from both Europe and Asia that will be willing to participate in future. However, the project will come to an end in

December 2007 and with it its useful results and the momentum created, whilst much cooperation is still needed and for long time.

At its 68th session, held in Geneva, 7-9 February 2006, the UNECE Inland Transport Committee, following the recommendation of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics, requested the UNECE secretariat to prepare jointly with UNESCAP a proposal for the continuation of the project in a new phase beyond 2007, to make every effort in order to raise funds from potential donors for its implementation, and to apply the most appropriate framework in order to ensure that the Expert Group established under the UNECE-UNESCAP joint project on Euro-Asian transport linkages, becomes functional as a permanent mechanism ensuring continued monitoring of relevant activities. At its 11th session, held in Almaty, 29-30 March 2006, the SPECA Working Group of Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation expressed similar requests. A number of international fora have recognized the importance of the continuation of the UNECE-UNESCAP work on developing Euro-Asian transport links, including the Council of Ministers of ECMT, in their meeting in Moscow, 24-25 May 2005, and the First Meeting of the EU-Black Sea-Caspian Basin Expert Working Group on Transport Infrastructure, held in Kiev, 13-14 December 2005.

In view of the above, the UNECE and UNESCAP propose the present project, the implementation of which would ensure the establishment of a coordination and monitoring mechanism for the development of the Euro-Asian transport links.

Expected Accomplishments:

The implementation of the project will result in:

- (a) Enhanced cooperation in the field of transport among the countries concerned to facilitate the development of trade and tourism between Europe and Asia;
- (b) Coordinated planning and gradual development of efficient, safe, sustainable and secure land and land-cum-sea Euro-Asian transport links;
- (c) Evaluated and prioritized infrastructure projects along main Euro-Asian transport routes;
- (d) Strengthened capacities of national officials dealing with international transit transport, including border-crossing formalities along the Euro-Asian transport routes;
- (e) Improved transport performance along main Euro-Asian transport routes through a reduction of border crossing delays and transport costs and increased reliability of international transport operations along these routes;
- (f) National transport legislation in these countries, which is further harmonized and based on UNECE and UNESCAP conventions and agreements on transport.

Indicators of Achievement

The indicators for this project are:

- (a) Number of km of new construction or rehabilitation/upgrading of existing transport infrastructure along the main Euro-Asian transport routes in line with the required international standards and technical specifications;
- (b) Annual national investment in transport infrastructure and facilitation along the main Euro-Asian transport routes;
- (c) Number of infrastructure projects assessed and prioritized;
- (d) Improved transport operations along the main Euro-Asian transport routes, as measured by a reduction in transport costs and waiting times at the major border crossing points;

- (e) Number of countries actively participating in the project, and of those acceding to and implementing the respective international agreements and conventions in the field of transport;
- (f) Level of satisfaction of the concerned countries and major stakeholders.

Duration

This project will be carried over a period of four years from 2008-2011.

Proposed Activities

The proposed main activities include:

- (a) Setting up the appropriate mechanisms for ensuring coordination and monitoring of the development of the Euro-Asian transport links as well as active involvement and cooperation of the countries and other bodies concerned:
 - i. Establishment of a functional mechanism ensuring continued monitoring of relevant activities, based on the Expert Group established under the UNECE-UNESCAP joint project on Euro-Asian transport links, in close cooperation with other international or regional organizations and bodies concerned;
 - ii. Establishment of appropriate and/or strengthening existing national and sub-regional bodies, including national transport facilitation committees, concerned with coordinating and monitoring implementation of policies and activities related to the development of transport infrastructure and transport facilitation along the main Euro-Asian transport routes, with participation of government officials and representatives from private sector, as appropriate;
 - iii. Convening of interregional and sub-regional meetings, as appropriate, to enhance ownership of the project by stakeholders, ensuring necessary cooperation, monitoring developments, raising awareness, and discussing modalities and managements issues;
- (b) Further assessment and prioritization of transport infrastructure projects along the main Euro-Asian transport links:
 - i. Reviewing and updating priority projects of transport infrastructure identified in the previous project phase using the same methodology, and based on country contributions;
 - ii. Presentation of a list of priority projects for gradual implementation by the countries involved up to 2020, indicating whether relevant funding is secured or not;
- (c) Further development and regular updating of the Geographic Information System (GIS) database established during the previous project phase with a view to assist better coordination and monitoring of the development of the Euro-Asian transport links and reporting;
 - i. Reviewing, updating and extending the existing GIS database for covering all necessary elements, as appropriate, based on country contribution and other sources, including from international or regional organizations and bodies concerned;

- ii. Publication of an interim progress report, by the end of the 2nd year and of a final report by the end of the 4th year, presenting the achievements in all issues addressed by the project, according to available data, as well as additional information to be provided by country contributions through uniform Questionnaires;
 - iii. Development of an Internet application for the presentation of relevant data considered most appropriate by the participating countries, in a user-friendly way by applying GIS technology.
- (d) Promotion harmonization of transport legislation and administrative procedures for the development of international transport operation along the main Euro-Asian transport routes:
 - i. Promoting harmonized national strategies, legislation and integrated policies for transit transport cooperation on the basis of the international conventions and agreements in the field of transport, including those developed by UNECE and those listed in UNESCAP resolution 48/11;
 - ii. Introducing simplified and accelerated customs and border crossing procedures for trustworthy transport operators and trading companies;
 - iii. Promoting harmonized charging policies for international road transport of goods, based on cost-relatedness, non-discrimination and transparency.
- (e) Strengthening the capacities of national officials dealing with border crossing formalities and procedures:
 - i. Organizing national workshops to enhance the competence and efficiency of relevant stakeholders including those located at the borders of the main Euro-Asian transport routes, focusing on implementation of major international conventions and agreements in the field of transport in the concerned countries;
 - ii. Promoting best practices and transfer of know-how among the countries concerned and between them and other sub-regions along the main Euro-Asian transport routes;
 - iii. Providing advisory services to the concerned countries.
- (f) Improving the performance of border crossing operations along the Euro-Asian transport links:
 - i. Facilitation and simplification of customs procedures through the promotion of joint border posts and best practices, including automated customs systems, and implementation of TIR Agreement;
 - ii. Introduction of reporting mechanisms for transit transport indicators in cooperation with the National Focal Points, customs and transport operators;
 - iii. Elaboration and introduction of national and sub regional systems for regular assessment of the status and monitoring of progress in the major border crossing along the Euro-Asian transport routes in cooperation with customs and stakeholders.
- (g) Preparing recommendations for further actions based on lessons learned.
- (h) Disseminating widely relevant information:

Resource Requirements (in United States Dollars)

1. Organization of interregional, sub-regional and national Expert Group Meetings, seminars and workshops. (In support of activities ((a),(b), (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g)): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 4 Interregional (18 experts/each and organization costs); ii. 2 sub-regional (2 experts/each-9 countries/each and organization costs); iii. 5 national (organization costs). 	255,000
2. Expert assistance in setting up the necessary mechanisms for ensuring cooperation of stakeholders other bodies concerned and collection of information. (In support of activity (a), (b), (c) and (f))	20,000
3. Support from external consultants for further assessment and updating of prioritization of transport infrastructure projects along the main Euro-Asian transport links. (In support of activities (a), (b), (c) and (g))	35,000
4. Support from external consultants for preparing software programs for collecting, processing, preparing progress reports, disseminating information, developing GIS database, and participating in interregional and subregional meetings, (In support of activities ((a), (b), (c), (f), (g) and (h)).	55,000
5. Support from external consultants in strengthening the capacities of national officials on border crossings, sharing best practices, transferring know-how, introducing and setting border crossing reporting and monitoring mechanisms, preparing recommendations and participating in interregional, subregional and national meetings, as appropriate. (In support of activities (a), (d), (e), (f) and (g)).	55,000
6. Travel of staff to attend meetings and capacity-building workshops, evaluate and report progress of work, coordinate activities, provide advisory services and share experiences. (In support of all activities).	95,000
7. Acquisition of computer equipment. (In support of activities (b), (c) and (f)).	15,000
8. Programme support cost (13%), general operating expenses, supplies, miscellaneous.	80,000
Total	610,000