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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

(Seventy-first session, 24-26 February 2009,
agenda item 12(a))

**ISSUES THAT NEED CONSIDERATION AND
REQUIRE DECISIONS BY THE COMMITTEE**

Activities related to Euro-Asian transport links

Draft Work Plan of Activities of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links
(September 2008 – December 2009)

Note by the secretariat

At its first session, on 8 September 2008, the Group of Experts began to discuss its programme of work, objectives, tasks and deliverables (based on Informal document GE.2 No. 1 (2008)). In addition, members of the Expert Group have been requested to send written comments to the UNECE secretariat. Currently, the work plan is being revised to take into account expert comments and will subsequently be submitted to the Group for consideration at the next meeting of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links.

Background:

To address inadequate transport infrastructure, internationally unharmonized transport rules and cumbersome, costly and time-consuming border crossing procedures, the UNECE and UNESCAP worked in 2003-2007 with Governments of the Euro-Asian region as part of a global UN Development Account Capacity-building Project. The project's results have included the identification of the main Euro-Asian inland transport routes, prioritization of infrastructure projects, development of GIS database, analysis of non-physical obstacles, capacity-building workshops and the final study.

The first phase of the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) project ended in 2008 with the Ministerial Meeting in Geneva where high level representatives of 19 countries issued and signed a joint statement. The Ministers have confirmed their support for the EATL project and its continuation, endorsed the identified Euro-Asian routes and their priority development as well as promoted the creation of a mechanism to ensure co-ordination and monitoring of future EATL-related activities.

In this context, in early 2008, the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and the Executive Committee agreed to establish a Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links to ensure monitoring and coordination of EATL activities.

Objective:

The Expert Group is to ensure monitoring and coordination of activities aimed at developing efficient, safe and secure Euro-Asian inland transport links.

Expected accomplishments:

- EA1 An appropriate mechanism for coordination and monitoring of the development of the Euro-Asian transport links established to enhance cooperation in the field of transport in the Euro-Asian region
- EA2 Coordinated planning and development of efficient, safe and secure inland Euro-Asian transport links; evaluated and prioritized infrastructure projects along main Euro-Asian transport routes
- EA3 Strengthened national capacities to facilitate international transit, including border crossing along the Euro-Asian transport routes
- EA4 Further developed and updated Geographic Information System (GIS) database
- EA5 Project results are disseminated

Main activities:

- MA1.1 Organizing meetings of the Expert Group and other inter-regional meetings
- MA1.2 Exploring synergy with other initiatives that are implemented by other bodies

- MA2.1 Reviewing, extending and updating priority routes and projects
- MA2.2 Conducting studies to identify and analyse inland transport options and non-physical obstacles; collecting and analysing transport flows data statistics and trends
- MA2.3. Present a list of priority projects for gradual implementation by the countries involved
- MA3.1 Organizing subregional workshops to improve the capacity of stakeholders to effectively implement international conventions and agreements
- MA3.2 Providing advisory services to the concerned countries
- MA4 Reviewing, updating and extending the existing GIS database based on country contributions
- MA5 Reporting and disseminating project results and recommendations based on lessons learned

Work plan:

Expected Accomplishment	Main Activity	2008	2009	2010 (tentative)
EA1. An appropriate mechanism for coordination and monitoring of the development of the Euro-Asian transport links	Establish the Expert Group	X		
	MA1.1 Organize meetings of the Expert Group and other interregional meetings	X	X	X
	MA1.2 Exploring synergy with other initiatives that are implemented by other bodies	X	X	X

Expected Accomplishment	Main Activity	2008	2009	2010 (tentative)
EA2. Coordinated planning and development of efficient, safe and secure land Euro-Asian transport links; evaluated and prioritized infrastructure projects along main Euro-Asian transport routes	MA 2.1. Review, extend and update priority routes and projects	X	X	X
	MA 2.2. Conduct studies to identify and analyse inland transport options and non-physical obstacles, collect and analyse transport flows	X	X	X

	data statistics and trends			
	MA2.3. Present a list of priority projects for gradual implementation by the countries involved		X	X

Expected Accomplishment	Main Activity	2008	2009	2010 (tentative)
EA3. Strengthened national capacities to facilitate international transit, including border crossing along the Euro-Asian transport routes	MA3.1 Organize sub-regional workshops to improve the capacity of stakeholders to effectively implement international conventions and agreements MA3.2 Providing advisory services to the concerned countries	X	X	X

Expected Accomplishment	Main Activity	2008	2009	2010 (tentative)
EA4. Further developed and updated Geographic Information System (GIS) database	MA4. Review, update and extend the existing GIS database based on country contributions	X	X	X

Expected Accomplishment	Main Activity	2008	2009	2010 (tentative)
EA5. Project results are disseminated	MA5. Reporting and disseminating project results and recommendations based on lessons learned		X	X

List of activities that may be targeted by the Expert Group in case additional resources and time may be given to it.

1. Supporting initiatives in the areas of transport reforms and operationalization of identified routes generating synergy with other projects and initiatives through demonstration runs of trains, road caravans and market oriented pilot projects;
2. Promoting harmonized national strategies, legislation and integrated policies for transit transport cooperation on the basis of international conventions and agreements, as well as on best practices;
3. Recommending solutions to identified problems hampering smooth development of Euro-Asian inland transport;

4. Introducing simplified and accelerated customs and border crossing procedures for trustworthy transport operators and trading companies;
5. Promoting harmonized charging policies for international road transport of goods, based on cost-relatedness, non-discrimination and transparency;
6. Organizing national capacity-building workshops to enhance the competence and efficiency of relevant stakeholders, including those located at the borders of main Euro-Asian transport routes, with participation of government officials and representatives from the private sector focusing on implementation of major international conventions and promotion of best practices;
7. Comparing real scenarios of identified itineraries along EATL O/D (time-cost) routes against existing maritime (non only port to port) and analysing findings aimed at identifying conditions, commodities and costs that such options would be economically feasible in comparison to maritime, including possibilities for double stock container operations;
8. Introduction of reporting mechanisms for transit transport indicators in cooperation with the National Focal Points, customs and transport operators;
9. Developing of an internet GIS application for assessing of the status and monitoring the progress of the development of efficient, safe and secure Euro-Asian inland transport links in cooperation with stakeholders.

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