

27 October 2009
ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links
Third session
Istanbul, 12-13 November 2009

EATL PHASE II - TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY ROUTES AND INVESTMENTS

Extension of EATL priority routes to newly involved countries and update of related information

(Note by the secretariat)

The work plan of activities of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links contains, under action 2.1 the revision, extension and updating priority routes and projects identified in Phase I. With regard to the priority routes, the detailed action plan refers to (i) collection of country information on priority routes through uniform questionnaire and (ii) revision of the EATL priority routes based on country inputs.

At its 2nd session, held on 7 September 2009, in Geneva, the group discussed the ways and means of collecting, reviewing and updating the information on the national EATL routes and priority transport infrastructure projects. The group agreed that a complete EATL route questionnaire will be sent to those countries which did not participate in the EATL Phase I project, while a simplified version will be sent out to countries which participated in Phase I. The latter will update the information provided during Phase I. End of 2009 was set as the deadline for replies. These questionnaires have been prepared by the secretariat, with assistance from external consultants, and will be communicated to the National Focal Points soon.

In view of the forthcoming 3rd Third Expert Group Meeting, to be held on 11–13 November 2009, in Istanbul, and the expected discussions on the questionnaires and related country inputs, the secretariat has prepared this note containing explanations on the methodological framework for the extension of EATL priority routes to newly involved countries, the questionnaires and the process for collecting and updating related information.

With regard to the EATL project prioritization and updating, the secretariat will provide additional information, in a separate explanatory note.

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF MAIN EURO-ASIAN INLAND TRANSPORT ROUTES UNDER THE UNECE-UNESCA EATL PROJECT (PHASE I)

1. In 2001, the General Assembly approved the project “Capacity-building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages” (2002-2006). The project included a component focusing specifically on Euro-Asian transport links. The overall objectives of the project were: i) to assist Member States of ECA, ECE, ESCAP, ESCWA and ECLAC in strengthening their national capacities for developing interregional land and land cum-sea transport link, and ii) to promote interregional cooperation to facilitate interregional trade and tourism.

2. Within this overall framework, since 2003, ECE and ESCAP started to jointly implement the project component on developing Euro-Asian transport links. The following countries were invited to participate and designate Focal Points: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. In 2004, Greece, during its chairmanship-in-office of the Organization of the Black Sea Cooperation (BSEC), expressed the wish to be associated to the activities of the project..

3. A major first step of the project was to identify, through consensus, the main Euro-Asian transport linkages of international importance which may form the basis for the extension of Pan-European Transport Corridors (PETCs) towards eastern Asia, and the extension of Asian transport networks towards Europe. National Focal points agreed that the four Euro-Asian transport corridors presented in the “ECE-ESCAP Strategic Vision” be used as the starting point for discussions. (<http://www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/background.html>). Within each of these broad corridors, however, there was a need to identify the Euro-Asian transport linkages/routes.

4. Given that all of the countries participating in the project are Contracting Parties and/or members of the UNECE European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) and/or the UNESCAP Asian Highway Agreement and the UNECE European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) and/or the UNESCAP Trans-Asian Railway Agreement, it was agreed that these networks be used as the basis for the route alignments. Moreover, a number of qualifications were deemed necessary. Therefore the identification of the routes was based on the following criteria:

- They are within recognized UNECE/UNESCAP networks;
- Not all links in these networks should be included, but only those most relevant;
- Proposed routes should be of Euro-Asian importance;
- Inland water routes and major sea ports should be also considered¹;
- Transport interchange and cargo storage points, including inland container depots and border crossing facilities, should be considered as integral parts of the routes;
- They should have borders with EATL participating countries;
- There should be consensus by neighboring countries, indicating their readiness to contribute to their development;

¹ Air transport was not addressed in the framework of the EATL Project

- Ideally, selected routes should either be already operational, or be in an advanced state of “readiness” for operations. This “readiness” may be considered from both a technical perspective and from the perspective of political willingness;

5. In four Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) under the project government representatives from these countries have identified the main Euro-Asian rail, road and inland waterway routes to be considered for priority development and the main transshipment points along these routes.

6. Once countries agreed on the routes which would form the “Euro-Asian transport linkages”, country experts provided a huge amount of data² on technical characteristics and performances of main rail, road and inland water transport infrastructure, borders crossing points, ferryboat links, intermodal terminals and ports along the identified Euro-Asian routes. (<http://www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/intro.html>). These inputs were facilitated through a uniform questionnaire prepared by UNECE and UNESCAP secretariats.

7. The Meeting of Ministers of Transport of countries in the Euro-Asian region, held on 19 February 2008, in Geneva, inter alia, confirmed its support for the development of Euro-Asian transport links and endorsed the priority routes and projects identified by the EATL Project Phase I.

II. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EXTENSION OF EATL ROUTES TO NEWLY INVOLVED COUNTRIES

8. It is therefore understood that the extension of EATL routes under EATL Phase II, addresses only the newly involved countries. In order to ensure consistency of the newly proposed routes, their selection should be based on the same criteria used under EATL Phase I. Furthermore, in order to ensure smooth integration of the new routes into the well established structure under EATL Phase I, the following additional conditions should be met:

- Proposed routes should connect to existing EATL routes³;
- Spelling of towns/stations/ports etc, should be consistent with the nomenclature used in international agreements;
- Proposals should be accompanied with the provision of related data.

9. The end of December 2009 was set as the deadline for the submission of proposals and related data (technical characteristics and performances of main rail, road and inland water transport infrastructure, borders crossing points, ferryboat links, intermodal terminals and ports) along the identified Euro-Asian.

10. In view of the limited time available National Focal Points of newly involved countries are invited to be ready with their proposals on the Road, Rail and Inland Water Routes during the 3rd Expert Group Meeting, to be held in Istanbul, 11-13 November 2009. Submission of data on technical characteristics and performances can follow after the identifications of the routes.

² Used also for the creation of a GIS database and related maps developed by the project.

³ Please refer to the routes and maps shown in the “Joint Study on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages”, pp. 59-113.

III. THE QUESTIONNAIRES

11. Consequently, the questionnaires to be circulated to the National Focal Points by the secretariat are divided into two main categories. First, those addressed to newly involved countries. And second, those addressed to all other countries aimed at updating the data already submitted under the EATL Phase I.

12. Annex I provides an overview of the type of templates which will be included in the questionnaire of the first category. **It is for information only.** An Excel file containing the same tables will be sent to the National Focal Points of newly involved countries to facilitate the data collection exercise.

13. National Focal Points of other countries, will receive separately an Excel file containing the tables with the existing data of their country, which are to be competed and/or updated as appropriate.

14. National Focal Points of all countries involved are invited to ask questions or make comments on the questionnaires, at the 3rd EGM.

Annex I. Data Tables

1. ROAD TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE ON EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKAGES

From	To	AGR Reference No. (if applicable)	Road Class AGR	Asian Highway (AH) Reference No. (if applicable)	Road Class AH	Length (km)	Number of lanes (total)	Road Condition (Good, Fair or Poor)	Annual Average Daily Traffic	Road toll (if any) Y/N	Movement of ISO containers possible? Y/N	Current Bottlenecks or Missing Links

2. RAIL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE ON EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKAGES

From	To	AGC Reference No. (if applicable)	AGTC Reference No. (if applicable)	Trans-Asian Railway (TAR) Y/N	Length (km)	Track gauge (mm)	Number of tracks (DT=double, ST=single)	Traction (E=electrified, NE=non-electrified)	Loading gauge (UIC)	Max. load per axle (tonnes)	Siding length	Missing links or bottlenecks

