



*UN Development Account Capacity Building Project
on Interregional Transport Linkages*

3rd Expert Group Meeting on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages
(27 – 29 June 2005, Istanbul, Turkey)

Document 1. Project overview and progress to date

Introduction

The current document refers to the decisions adopted at the 2nd Expert Group Meeting on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (Odessa, Ukraine, November 2004) the actions which have been taken to follow-up on those decisions. To facilitate the discussion, the document has been structured according to the order in which the topic will be covered in the agenda of the 3rd Expert Group Meeting.

I. Review of selected Euro-Asian routes for priority development

a. Summary of technical specifications of selected routes

The 2nd Expert Group Meeting identified, selected and adopted major rail and road routes of the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages for priority development and cooperation, subject to a number of reservations expressed by countries (as contained in paragraph 17 of the Report of the Meeting). The summary table of the road and rail routes adopted at the 2nd EGM are given in *Document 2. “Summary of technical specifications of proposed road and rail routes”*. This document also identifies the border crossings, breaks-of-gauge (for railways), and missing links.

b. Comments by countries, including reservations made during the 2nd Expert Group Meeting

A summary of the responses to the reservations expressed during the 2nd EGM (ref. paragraph 17 of the Report of the Meeting) is given in *Document 3. “Summary of responses received on the proposed routes”*. This document also contains the additional comments and proposals were received from Armenia and Uzbekistan.

c. Progress on the GIS database and maps

Based on the information provided in the Country Reports, the technical specifications of the routes were consolidated into Excel spreadsheets.¹ These spreadsheets show the current status of the routes and missing data.

¹ Country reports were received from all actively participating country except Afghanistan. However, road data for Afghanistan is available from the Asian Highway database (UNESCAP).

The road and rail routes have been plotted on a map showing all of the participating countries. Country-level maps have also been prepared to show the details of the road and rail routes.

Countries are invited to comment on a number of issues regarding the GIS database and maps, including 1) desired level of aggregation/disaggregation of data; 2) how the database should be maintained and by whom; and 3) whether to retain all of the specifications given in the original country report outline. At the minimum, it will be necessary to request countries to provide the data for all of the nodes to be included in the database, including their geographic coordinates (x/y location).

II. Proposals for Euro-Asian priority inland water routes and ports

Document 4. “Inland Water Transport routes and ports” contains a summary of IWT linkages proposed in the Country Reports, together with the information on river ports along these linkages. Countries are invited to present their priority inland water routes and associated ports at the 3rd EGM.

III. Intermodal connectivity of selected Euro-Asian routes

A. Black Sea and Caspian Sea ports

Document 5. “Information on Sea Ports, including responses to the BSEC/UNECE/UNESCAP questionnaire on Black Sea ports” contains a summary of information on all sea ports provided in the Country Reports.

At the 2nd EGM, the Meeting noted that there was “a need to thoroughly consider the ways in which the Black Sea ports fit into the proposed routes, taking into account both existing facilities and plans for future development” (paragraph 18). The issue of connectivity to the Euro-Asian routes is also relevant for the Caspian Sea ports.

In this regard, UNECE presented the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages project to the Meeting of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Working Group on Transport (Thessaloniki, Greece, 26 – 27 January 2005). The Working Group discussed the need to reach synergy between the BSEC and UNECE-UNESCAP initiatives, and agreed to UNECE’s proposal to elaborate with the Black Sea PERMIS a questionnaire on the Black Sea ports. A summary of the results of the questionnaire are given in *Document 5. “Information on Sea Ports, including responses to the BSEC/UNECE/UNESCAP questionnaire on Black Sea ports”*.

The member states of BSEC agreed to the need for closer cooperation with the Euro-Asian project, as reflected in the Declaration of the Meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States (Thessaloniki, Greece, 28 January 2005).

B. Inland container depots, intermodal freight terminals and freight villages/logistics centres along selected routes

Document 6. Inland Container Depots and other transshipment facilities contains a summary of information on inland container depots and other intermodal freight points

provided in the Country Reports. Countries are requested to assist the secretariat in locating the various facilities along the selected routes.

IV. Identification of priority investment needs to improve transport operations along selected Euro-Asian routes

The 2nd EGM agreed to follow a similar methodology as that used for the TEM and TER Master Plans for the prioritization of projects along the selected routes (paragraphs 26 and 27 of Report of the 2nd EGM). The secretariat has been working with the consultant to fine-tune the methodology for the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages project. Document 7. “Proposed methodology for the prioritization of investment projects” presents the proposed methodology and sample templates. Countries are invited to comment on the proposed methodology and the sample templates.

V. Non-physical obstacles and security risks to transit transport along the selected routes as well as measures to remove them

The task of identifying non-physical obstacles along the selected routes is the first step in the next phase of the project, which looks at facilitation issues for transit transport. The 2nd EGM agreed that the UNESCAP time/cost methodology could be applied for the assessment of the proposed routes, and that information may also be sought from freight forwarders, hauliers and other transport operators.

The secretariat has been in contact with a small number of freight forwarders, who provided aggregate time and costs for origin-destinations but not in detail for specific routes. Countries are therefore requested to try to fill in the relevant information on the routes within their countries, as far as possible. An Excel file containing the proposed routes has been prepared for this purpose and will be distributed at the 3rd EGM.

In this regard, it should be noted that UNESCAP time/cost methodology is being utilized in other related activities including the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA); and demonstration runs of container block trains along the Trans-Asian Railway Northern Corridor; and the joint OSJD-ESCAP project on operationalization of Euro-Asian rail routes with particular reference to landlocked countries in Asia and Caucasus. It is, therefore, expected that the information collected under the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages project may also be used as inputs into these other activities, and vice versa.

International organizations, including TRACECA, IRU, UIC, and OSJD, are invited to provide their inputs in the identification of non-physical obstacles and security risks to transit transport along the selected routes and propose measures to remove them.

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