



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 September 2015

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

Fifty-eighth session

Geneva, 30 November–1 December 2015

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Intermodal transport terminals

Study on intermodal terminals

Note by secretariat

I. Mandate

1. At its fifty-seventh session the Working Party considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2014/5 on intermodal transport terminals. The Working Party recalled that it addressed this topic during its thirty-seventh session (18–19 April 2002), had established a Group of Experts to consider measures to increase the efficiency of combined transport terminal operations. During its fifty-fourth session (2–3 November 2011) the theme for substantive discussion was, “The Role of terminals and logistics centres for intermodal transport”.

2. The Working Party felt that concrete follow-up activities should be undertaken to support the development of seamless international rail and intermodal transport operations at the pan-European level. In particular, the Working Party decided that it should discuss and agree on the structure of the information needed before addressing the ways that this information should be collected and made available.

3. The Working Party decided that a concrete study should be prepared by the secretariat on mapping and categorizing the types of terminals that exist in the UNECE region and on the facilities offered by such terminals. The Working Party requested the secretariat to draft a formal document for the fifty-eighth session on how such a study should be structured.

4. This document has been prepared in line with the requirements set out above and draws on the information that has been discussed at previous sessions of the Working Parties and from other UNECE Transport publications including the UNECE report on hinterland connections.

II. Background

5. The term intermodal terminal is often used to describe a number of different types of freight transport infrastructure with at its core a facility that facilitates the transfer of goods between different modes of transport. Intermodal terminals usually involve the transfer of goods from road to rail (and vice-versa) but can also have infrastructure that transfers freight to inland waterways, maritime transport (through ports) and aviation. The facilities can be large or small and can serve a number of customers or be exclusive to one owner operator.

6. This multitude of examples shows that while freight movers have almost unlimited choice when it comes to choosing a location for their transshipment, it also means that they do not often have the necessary information to be able to make an informed decision on which terminal to choose.

7. As mentioned in Section I, the aim of this document is to identify how to prepare a study that can facilitate the industry in breaking down the information asymmetry that exists in the sector and facilitate the further modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

8. Section III below sets out the basic structure of the study and is essentially the core terms of reference of the study. Section IV sets out the proposed process that would ensure the successful completion of the study.

III. Structure of the study

9. The study will need to draw on other relevant studies and produce a report which highlights the following key aspects:

- Overview of the current state of the intermodal transport sector in the UNECE region – the study is to cover the entire region.
- Identification of what types of intermodal terminals exist and how many they are across the UNECE region looking particularly at categorising them according to the type of transport mode they serve.
- Provide information on each of the terminals in relation to (non-exclusive list):
 - The goods it can handle (e.g. dangerous goods or otherwise);
 - The opening hours of the terminal;
 - Any specific requirements for accessing and operating in the terminal including key contacts;
 - The average goods handling time according to the different modes of transport;
 - Any customs procedures that need to be pursued;
 - The physical characteristics of the terminal (e.g. number of tracks, number of cranes, etc.);
 - The facilities available for drivers at the terminal; and
 - The cost of accessing the terminal and using its services.

10. The information identified in third bullet point above should be provided in a format that allows simple integration into a new annex of the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC). Furthermore,

based on the information that has been received and in addition to the AGTC annex, a model template document – an Intermodal Statement – will be prepared so that each intermodal terminal is to keep updated on an annual basis according to the information set out above. An online depository of this information will be kept on the UNECE website in the form of a database that can be easily consulted.

11. The study should also recommend possible ways of integrating this with the AGTC and other activities of the Sustainable Transport Division, including Euro-Asian Transport Linkages and the development of a GIS based infrastructure database.

IV. Process for the study

12. The study will initially need to gather data and information in relation to intermodal terminals. This will need to take the form of questionnaire that is sent to UNECE member States asking about intermodal terminals in their country. For the questionnaire to be successful, the first step will be a literature review of what intermodal terminals are and how they operate. This background information will ensure that the questions asked are the most appropriate to gather the necessary information.

13. In parallel to data gathering through a questionnaire it will be important to carry out desktop research to supplement the data that will not be available for some member States. This data is likely to be less accurate than questionnaire data. The combination of questionnaire and desktop data should provide a sample big enough to make the information meaningful.

14. Expert input will be needed to ensure that the information that is provided is interpreted in the most appropriate manner in order to provide a meaningful tool to users of the intermodal terminal infrastructure.

15. The output of the study itself should be structured as a policy document and, as such, should be structured in the following manner:

- Chapter 1: Introduction and purpose of the document
- Chapter 2: Policy context of the study
- Chapter 3: Current developments in intermodal transport
- Chapter 4: Categorization of intermodal terminals
- Chapter 5: Summary of data gathering process and results
- Chapter 6: Next steps and integration with the AGTC
- Annex I: List of all intermodal terminals and their characteristics
- Annex II: Template documentation

V. Guidance of the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

16. The Working should decide whether this is an appropriate structure and should decide what follow-up actions to take for the study.