
Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)

12th session
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Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Establishment or strengthening of national facilitation coordinating mechanisms¹
(Item 4a (ii) of the draft agenda)

Note by UNESCAP

1. As countries actively promote programmes and measures to eliminate barriers to international trade and transport, there is greater awareness of the need to coordinate such activities through multi-agency oversight and coordinating mechanisms.
2. The 11th session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing held at Almaty, Kazakhstan on 29-30 March 2006, recognized the importance of the effective cooperation and coordination among all relevant government agencies and authorities and good collaboration between the public and private sector for the formulation and implementation of international transport facilitation measures. The Working Group thus requested the SPECA member countries to consider establishing and strengthening national transport facilitation committees/commissions at a national level. The Working Group also recommended the organization of a sub-regional/regional workshop of national trade and transport committees.²
3. Since then the UNESCAP secretariat has completed a comprehensive study on national coordination mechanisms for trade and transport facilitation in the UNESCAP region. The study reviewed regional and international developments in facilitation coordination mechanisms. Based on the experiences and lessons of national facilitation coordination mechanisms in different countries and recommendations of some international organizations and institutions, the study makes recommendations on establishment or strengthening of facilitation coordination mechanisms in member countries.
4. In 2006, the UNESCAP secretariat introduced the findings and recommendations from the study on national facilitation coordinating mechanisms at UNESCAP national workshops and advisory services on trade and transport facilitation in Kazakhstan (24-26 July 2006), Kyrgyzstan (24-26 May 2006) and Tajikistan (29-31 May 2006). These findings were also introduced in Azerbaijan (11-12 May 2006) at the UNECE-UNESCAP national workshop and advisory services on the facilitation of interregional transport along the Euro-

¹ This document has been issued without formal editing.

² Report of the 10th session of the Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC), Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, 24 March 2005, Annex 5.

Asian transport links. The recommendations were further considered at the Regional Meeting on Trade and Transport Facilitation for Landlocked and Transit Countries held in Bangkok from 30 October to 1 November 2006. Participants included delegates from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

5. At the request of Kyrgyzstan, the UNESCAP secretariat undertook a specific study and prepared detailed recommendations and guidelines on the establishment of national facilitation coordinating mechanism in Kyrgyzstan. These recommendations were discussed at the UNECE-UNESCAP national workshop and advisory services on the facilitation of interregional transport along the Euro-Asian transport links in December 2006 in Kyrgyzstan. The workshop recommended the establishment of a national trade and transport facilitation committee and its purpose, structure, membership, chair (vice chairs), office, functions, work programme, meeting structure and financing arrangements. During the workshop, the representative of GTZ offered further technical and financial assistance to initiate the committee and possibly support some activities of the committee.

6. As mandated by the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia the Pacific (2007-2011), endorsed by the Ministerial Conference on Transport held at Busan, Republic of Korea, on 6-11 November 2006, the UNESCAP secretariat will prepare detailed guidelines that could be easily utilized by countries in establishing or strengthening national facilitation coordinating mechanisms and organize workshops/seminars and provide advisory services to assist member countries where required. It is envisaged that these workshops can be organized in SPECA countries. UNESCAP will also assist member countries in establishing a regional forum and sub-regional fora of national facilitation coordinating mechanisms to promote cooperation and experience sharing of the national mechanisms.

7. Taking into account the importance of the national facilitation coordinating mechanisms and the status of such mechanisms in the SPECA countries, the Project Working Group may wish to discuss and consider the following:

- a) Need for specific study on establishment or strengthening of national facilitation coordinating mechanism for each of the SPECA member countries (except Kyrgyzstan) to help establish appropriate coordination mechanism or improve functioning of the existing coordination mechanism; and
 - b) Need for assistance in initial arrangements for establishment of new coordinating mechanisms or strengthening of existing coordinating mechanisms.
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