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

13th Session
12-13 March 2008
Almaty, Kazakhstan

Implementation of the Guidelines (2005) to Improve Efficiency of PWG-TBC

(Item 8 of the Agenda)

I. General

To improve efficiency of the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border-Crossing (PWG-TBC) in line with the Almaty Programme of Action (2003) the 10th Session of PWG-TBC (Issykkul, Kyrgyzstan, 24 March 2005) adopted the special Guidelines. The Guidelines are reflected in Annex 3 of the Report of the 10th Session of the Group.

With the adoption of the Guidelines the Group continued its functioning under heavy financial and other resource limitations concentrating its efforts on selected thrust areas which include (please see part II below and Annex 1): (a) Refinement of PWG-TBC policy and programming by putting more emphasis on common needs of the SPECA countries; (b) Identification/Formulation of international road and rail networks of the SPECA region; (c) Development of the SPECA transport databases; (d) Development of project proposals of common interest ; (f) Introduction of bilateral consultations on border crossing issues between the SPECA countries during the PWG-TBC sessions; (g) Improvement transport facilitation; (h) Improvement of quality of the PWG-TBC documents and their timely submission to the SPECA countries before the sessions of the Group.

II. Major achievements of PWG-TBC after the adoption of the Guidelines

A list of major achievements of PWG-TBC after the adoption of the Guidelines is reflected in Annex 1, which indicates the improving of efficiency of the Group.

The degree of the achievements, however, differs between the Group's projects/activities – from the preparation of the project proposals of common interest to the SPECA countries and their submission to possible donors for consideration, for active preparations of the establishment of the Interagency Trade and Transport facilitation committee only in Kyrgyzstan as an example.

The assignment of the Research Institute on Transport and Communications (NIITK, Almaty) as the institute of technical support (SPECA activities) to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan played an important role in the improving the PWG-TBC efficiency. Credit in the establishing of the SPECA transport databases, development of

project proposals of common interest to the SPECA countries and preparation of the Guide to roadside facilities in the SPECA region goes mainly to NIITK.

Unfortunately some projects/activities recommended by the Guidelines were not even initiated such as organization of the recommended demonstration runs of container block trains, representative of some of the SPECA countries were not able to participate in the PWG-TBC sessions etc. due to lack of financial support which is a (if not the) main problem area gravely affecting the functioning of the Group.

III. Lack of financial support – main problem in the improving of PWG-TBC efficiency

It was determined that (a) Funding of the participation of two (transport and customs) representative from each SPECA country in the sessions of PWG-TBC, (b) Financial support to NIITK in terms of about US\$ 75,000 per annum for the implementation of the Group's activities, and (c) about US\$ 3,000 to help to organize a session of PWG-TBC in a country are crucial for efficient implementation of the PWG-TBC work programmes. Also important is funding of the proposed projects of common interest to the SPECA countries. Such a financial support should be insured for the efficient functioning of PWG-TBC.

In addition the analysis of the implementation of the Guidelines gave proposal to suggest the following refined thrust area of PWG-TBC to efficiently meeting increasing challenges of globalization.

IV. Refined thrust areas of PWG-TBC

The proposal refined PWG-TBC thrust areas include:

- (a) Much needed financial support to the PWG-TBC indicated above should be secured.
- (b) Completion of the projects/activities recommended by the adopted (2005) Guidelines to improve efficiency of PWG-TBC, with particular attention to those listed in Annex 1 featuring progress in their implementation.
- (c) Special attention to be given to the identification, formulation and analysis (using UNESCAP Time/Cost-Distance methodology) of international transport routes linking the SPECA countries with countries in Asia and Europe – their main trade partners as well as with seaports of interest.. Relevant SPECA databases currently under the establishment should be expanded to include such international routes with the identification and analysis of alternative competing routes to reduce transport cost and improve level of services thus enhancing the competitiveness of foreign trade products of the SPECA countries on the international markets.
- (d) Priority attention to be given to improve cooperative arrangements at national level such as the establishment of interagency Trade and Transport Facilitation Committees as well transit countries between the SPECA region and international markets of interest.
- (e) The SPECA countries should actively participate in related UNECE as well as UNESCAP meetings, seminars, studies etc. to ensure their interests are addressed. Cooperation with EU, ECO, CIS, SCO, ADB, OSJD, UIC, IRU and other international organizations concerned should be further strengthen through sharing of information/experience and possible organization of joint

meetings. Joint meetings with IRU in the past on various aspects of road transport paved to be quite efficient.

- (f) A list of national coordinators (PWG-TBC activities) preferably at a level of Vice-Minister should be urgently updated with data and information provided to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan, UNECE, UNESCAP and other parties involved.
- (g) Organization of demonstration runs of containers block trains in the North-South corridor, from CA to the Port of Bandar Abbas, from the Port of Nakhoda to CA as well as along the right routes listed below should be organized in cooperation with OSJD. OSJD supported such a proposal during the Annual Meeting of the OSJD Commission on Freight Transport held in October 2007 in Warsaw.
 - (i) Urumqi-Dostyk-Ileetsk1-Suzemka-Zernovo-Izov-Slavkuv/Chop/Batevo (Braetislava/Budapesht);
 - (ii) Urumqi-Dostyk-Ileetsk1-Krasnoe-Brest;
 - (iii) Urumqi-Dostyk-Ozinki-Novorossisk;
 - (iv) Urumqi-Dostyk-Ileetsk1-Zernovo-Odessa;
 - (v) Lyanungan/tantzin-Alishankow-Dostyk-Saryagash;
 - (vi) Urumqi-Dostyk-Port Aktau-Baku-Poti/ports of Irans;
 - (vii) Urumqi-Dostyk-Ileetsk1(Ozinki)-Ports of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia;
 - (viii) Aksu-Tobol-Kranoe-Gudogai-Klaipeda/Kaliningrad.
- (h) Uninterrupted Assistance to NIITK by the UNESCAP Advisor on Transport should be continued for active and constructive participation of the Institute in the PWG-TBC activities.
- (i) Participation of neighboring countries should be encouraged

V. Issues for consideration

The 13th Session of PWG-TBC may wish to consider and endorse the suggested Refined Thrust areas of PWG and to provide other guidance to improve efficiency of the Group.

Annex 1

Major achievements in improving efficiency of SPECA PWG-TBC since the adoption of the Guidelines in March 2005

No.	Achievements	Remarks
	A. Achievements of direct importance to the SPECA countries	
1.	<i>Identification/Formulation of road and rail networks of international importance of the SPECA region</i>	Maps of the relevant road and rail networks developed. Published by Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan in 2007.
2.	<p><i>Establishment of the following SPECA transport databases on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Road network of international importance; (b) Rail network of international importance; (c) Intermodal infrastructure; (d) Border crossing. <p><i>Remarks:</i> It was decided to postpone the establishing a database on projects implemented or being implemented in the SPECA region since 2000, in view of resource constraints.</p>	All the databases (a,b,c,d) are being developed in close cooperation with the SPECA countries by the Research Institute on Transport and Communications (NIITK, Almaty), the institute of technical support (SPECA activities) to the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MOTC) of Kazakhstan - the lead SPECA country in the field of transport. The database formats were endorsed by PWG-TBC. The establishment of the road network database (a) completed.
3.	<p><i>Development of following project proposals of common interest to the SPECA countries;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Analysis of Euro-Asian transport routes in the TRACECA corridor; (b) Transport routes from CA/SPECA countries to the Port of Bandar Abbas; (c) Identification and analysis of transport routes from countries of Central Asia to Afghanistan and the Port of Karachi (Pakistan). <p>The identification of the routes (including alternative competing routes), and their analysis to determine technical, commercial and operational indicators to reduce transport costs and improve level of services.</p>	The project proposals (a), (b), (c) were developed by NIITK, endorsed by PWG-TBC and submitted by MOTC on behalf of the Group to possible donors. In addition NIITK developed a project proposal on comparative analysis of China-Europe routes transiting the SPECA region with alternative routes. The document submitted to the 13th Session of the Group for consideration.

4.	<i>Preparation of the Guide to road side facilities in the SPECA region</i>	The Guide is being developed by NIITK to facilitate international road transport in the SPECA region. Part relating to Kazakhstan is completed.
5.	<i>Implementation of Phase II (from 2007, rail route Europe-Central Asia) of the joint UNESCAP-Organization for Railways Cooperation (OSJD) project on operationalization of Euro-Asian rail routes with particular reference to landlocked countries in Asia and the Caucasus.</i>	The project is under implementation with the Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (Kazakhstan Railway) as a lead railway in the implementation of Phase II of the project.
6.	<i>Implementation of the UN Development Account funded project on developing Euro Asian Transport Link (2003-2007)</i>	Implemented by UNECE and UNESCAP and 18 countries concerned, including all SPECA countries and their transit neighbors.
7.	<i>Bilateral Consultations on border crossing issues conducted during sessions of PWG-TBC.</i>	Initiated in 2006 by consultations between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan during 11 th Session of the Group held in Almaty. 12 th Session of the Group (March 2007, Dushanbe) featured consultations between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, Tajikistan-Kazakhstan, Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan..
8.	<i>Establishment of National Interagency Trade and Transport Facilitation Committees (NTTFC).</i>	NTTFC is planned to be established in Kyrgyzstan, preparatory activities in other SPECA countries continued.
B. Achievements relating to the implementation of relevant regional and subregional transport policies/initiatives		
1.	<i>Accession and implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway (AH) network.</i>	The SPECA countries (except Turkmenistan) fully acceded to the Agreement.
2.	<i>Accession to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway (TAR) network.</i>	The SPECA countries (except Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan) signed the Agreement. Preparations for full accession are under way.
3.	<i>Development of the Intergovernmental Agreement between members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on facilitation of international road transport</i>	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are actively involved in the process as members of SCO.

4.	<i>Implementation of the UNESCAP Resolution 48/11 on Road and Rail Transport modes in relation to facilitation measures and other UNECE international conventions recommended by the 2nd Session of PWG-TBC.</i>	The implementation continued with analysis being carried out on the refinement of the list of Agreements and Connections to better meet needs of the SPECA countries.
C. Organizational issues		
1.	<i>Invitations to next sessions of PWG-TBC.</i>	As recommended Kazakhstan (the lead SPECA country in the field of transport) adopted a practice to issue invitations to a next session of PWG-TBC at least one month before the session.
2.	<i>Delivery of draft PWG-TBC documents to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan (MOTC).</i>	With few exceptions the delivery of draft PWG-TBC documents to MOTC is done at least three weeks before the session of the Group as recommended.
3.	<i>Delivery of PWG-TBC documents to the SPECA countries.</i>	With few exception the delivery was done at least two weeks as recommended.
D. Major contributing factors to the achievements in line with the Guidelines		
1.	Increasing cooperation amongst the SPECA countries.	
2.	More active and constructive role of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan – the lead SPECA country in the field of transport.	
3.	Assignment (2005) of the Research Institute on Transport and Communications (NIITK, Almaty) as the Institute of technical support (SPECA activities) to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan. As seen from the above NIITK plays a crucial role in improving efficiency of PWG-TBC.	
4.	Provision of continued Advisory assistance to NIITK by UNESCAP and UNECE - particularly from May 2005 by UNESCAP Advisor on Transport (by advisory missions, e-mail, fax, etc.).	