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Technical assistance to countries with transition economies

2015 Technical Assistance activities in the field of Transport

Note by the secretariat

1. Nowadays, transport systems have become more and more complex and in order to improve system sustainability, safety and efficiency one has to apply a holistic approach and to tackle all relevant system components. Having that in mind, the spectrum of the activities performed by the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division is grouped into the three pillars: regulatory work, analytical work and technical assistance, capacity building activities and policy dialogue (TA activities).

2. TA activities are an important complement to the Sustainable Transport Division regulatory and analytical work. Specialized TA activities delivered by the secretariat help build both institutional and human capacity in countries for efficient implementation of UN legal instruments and sustainable transport policies. Furthermore, the secretariat analytical work often helps identify areas in which TA activities can have the biggest impact. In view of these linkages, achieving greater integration between TA activities, regulatory and analytical work is a key priority for the secretariat.

3. The primary focus of TA activities is to improve the capacities of member States to accede to UN inland transport legal instruments, norms and standards. As a high level of accession has been achieved in the UNECE region, attention has shifted further towards supporting implementation, both at national and local levels. In this regard, transport policy dialogue, workshops and the transfer of transport know-how and best practices are the main forms of the advisory services that the secretariat carries out. These activities are focused on, but not limited to, the countries of Eastern and South – Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Special attention is given to landlocked countries.

4. TA activities benefit many member States and building human and institutional capacity within a country helps the government to put in place or enhance legal framework and policies to promote the development of a sustainable transport system. Sometimes, TA activities have both technical assistance and institutional capacity building component and

allow experts in member States and the secretariat to have in-depth exchange of views on particular aspects of policy dialogue and legal instruments' implementation.

5. In general, TA activities have been carried out successfully by both the Regional Advisor and secretariat professional staff who have been engaged primarily for their specialized knowledge. By operating in this way it has been possible for the secretariat to cover a broad spectrum of transport topics.

6. Seminars, workshops, conferences or field visits require careful planning of both human and financial resources. One of the major prerequisites for efficient TA activities preparation is financial coverage, which has to go hand in hand with TA scale and goals. Furthermore, TA activities are demand-driven, and they warrant consultations with the recipient governments to set TA activities and efficiently use available resources. Consultations should enable commitment for full implementation of the TA activities. Lack of continuity in policies developed and partner-professionals involved should be avoided in order to sustain capacity-building efforts.

Funding of Technical Assistance Activities

7. An important prerequisite for UNECE Sustainable Transport Division TA activities implementation are funding and sources of funding. In this paper the most common sources of TA activities funding are described, with the latest development in activities implementation.

8. In general, UNECE Sustainable Transport Division TA activities are funded from the United Nations regular budget (sections "Economic Development in Europe", "Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation" (RPTC) and "United Nations Development Account"), and by extra-budgetary resources.

9. The United Nations Development Account (UNDA) objective is to fund capacity development projects in the priority areas of the United Nations Development Agenda that benefit developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The projects serve as a natural extension to the normative and policy activities of the implementing entities in their follow-up to the United Nations conferences and summits in economic and social affairs. The UNDA encourages close collaboration of entities of the United Nations Secretariat on innovative, cross-sectoral regional or interregional projects which draw mainly on the technical, human and other resources available in beneficiary countries. The Account was originally established in 1997 and since then has programmed 302 projects for a total budget of \$181.3 million. UNDA is funded from the United Nations regular budget. The UNECE has been actively involved in the implementation of the UNDA projects since the year 2000.

10. The "ForFITS project" was funded from the 7th UNDA tranche and completed in 2013. As a project follow-up, on the basis of the implemented national and local pilot projects, preparatory work on development of new modules (non-road mobile machinery, road safety) and national pilot projects for additional countries is on-going.

11. The on-going UNDA 8th tranche global project "Strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to facilitate legitimate border crossing, regional cooperation and integration" will result in increased national capacity to utilize international standard electronic messages in the field of transit procedures, in particular business-to-customs electronic information and increased capacity to exchange secure electronic transit information between customs of different countries. Two countries in the ECE and ESCAP region have volunteered to take part in this project: Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. The first Customs-to-Customs data exchange workshop under this project was organized in Tbilisi (Georgia) on 22–23 June 2015. The participants concluded that internationally standardized Business-to-Customs (B2C) electronic messages for transit

not only facilitate the submission of information by the business community but also the exchange of data among customs administrations. They stressed the importance of exchanging best practices and of organizing events that provide opportunities to learn, in more detail, how data exchange issues related to transit are dealt with in other countries.

12. The 9th UNDA tranche project “Strengthening the national road safety management capacities of selected developing countries and countries with economies in transition” started in August 2015. The project will seek to assist four low- or middle- income countries (Albania, Georgia, the Dominican Republic and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic) to address their priority road safety needs by undertaking Road Safety Performance Reviews. The reviews will be followed by capacity-building workshops on relevant priority areas (road safety management systems, collection and evaluation of accurate road safety statistics, identifying and setting road safety targets and monitoring their achievement).

13. The good example of synergies between the substantive focal point for road safety and the Regional Advisor in terms of financing of the activities was a regional road safety workshop organized in Belgrade on 15–16 October 2014. Regular budget financing was blended with extra-budgetary resources (The World Bank Global Road Safety Facility) for meeting participation and RPTC supported activity by financing two background studies on road safety management systems, prepared for Eastern and Central European and CIS countries.

14. There are several more examples of effective intra-secretariat cooperation between substantive focal point and Regional Advisor in activity preparation, implementation and funding. (e.g. A special one-day round table on exploring the use of UN road safety legal instruments to address powered two-wheeled vehicles safety policies in low and middle income countries (Geneva, March 2015) and Road-Rail Transport Corridors along Europe and Asia capacity building workshop (Geneva, September 2015)). Furthermore, the capacity building workshop on the main UN Inland Transport legal instruments (Geneva, February 2015) which targeted representatives of the SPECA countries was organized by Regional Advisor and supported by all Sustainable Transport Division senior staff.

15. A large number of TA activities, which are supporting regulatory and analytical work, require additional financing and, consequently, regular budget resources are used to leverage extra-budgetary resources. The importance of these resources for funding the secretariat TA activities has increased in the last few years. The extra-budgetary contributions can originate from a variety of bilateral and multilateral sources: UNECE member States, the private sector, inter-governmental and non-governmental entities (the World Bank, IDB, ADB, OSCE, UNDP, IRU, etc.) and the European Commission.

16. The participating Governments have developed specific mechanisms for financing the Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) projects, which are financed through Trust Fund Agreements regularly approved by TEM and TER Steering Committees. In 2015 project activities were implemented based on adopted action plans and more information you can find in WP.5 documents (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2015/5 and ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2015/4).

17. Annual grants from the Russian Federation allowed the implementation of the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) project phase III. Phase III of the EATL project aims to make the EATL overland links operational and is focused on both the coordination and facilitation of financing of infrastructural projects, as well as removing physical and administrative bottlenecks in inland transport between Europe and Asia.

18. The SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation (PWG-TBC) is one of the permanent areas of TA activities. Part of the activities within SPECA PWG-TBC was supported by annual grant from Kazakhstan to facilitate the preparation of SPECA PWG-TBC and provide participation of some SPECA delegates in

UNECE transport activities. In 2015 regular PWG-TBC meeting will be held in September in Almaty, back-to-back with SPECA road safety capacity building workshop.

19. One of the examples of TA activity financed by a member State is that the Government of Belarus financed the evaluation of the existing potential of its transport and logistics system. The report “Review of the Transport and Logistics system of the Republic of Belarus” was published in February 2014 and it served as the basis for a national capacity building round table held in Minsk.

20. Two specific activities on expanding the scope of the UNDA financed project ForFITS began in 2014. The first aimed at filling a gap in the coverage of the ForFITS tool. It had been noted that emissions from agricultural tractors and mobile construction machinery were not within the scope of the model. At the request of and on funds from Environment Canada, a study was launched by UNECE to investigate the feasibility of adding a module to ForFITS to include non-road mobile machinery (NRMM).

21. The second is SafeFITS, an extra-budgetary project benefiting from financial and in-kind support, primarily from the International Road Transport Union (IRU). A highly sophisticated supportive tool for road safety decision makers, “SafeFITS” will be developed, with the primary objective of assisting Governments and decision makers to improve road safety and to assess and choose the most appropriate policies and measures to reach defined road safety targets. Model outputs will show the effects of different national road safety policies and allow decision makers to select suitable targets in national road safety strategy. The project started at the end of 2014 and is expected to bear results by 2016.

22. In cooperation with the EU-financed EuroMed Road, Rail and Urban Transport regional programme, the Sustainable Transport Division was involved in the preparation and delivery of several capacity building trainings related to UN legal instruments in several Mediterranean countries during 2014.

23. Finally, there is another form of funding, which although not designed exclusively for providing capacity building and technical assistance, includes some such activities. The Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention have decided, and included provisions in the Convention to this effect, that a portion of the funds raised through the distribution of TIR Carnets to is transferred once annually into a UN Trust Fund (The TIR Trust Fund). The trust fund is used to finance the TIR secretariat and the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) activities. UNECE, alongside the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme (AIT), the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU), organized the workshop “Border Crossing Facilitation: the facilitation potential of the Carnet Conventions” in Vienna in November 2014. The aim was to present to governmental decision makers UN legal instruments in border crossing facilitation and the benefits of their full implementation. Furthermore, the Secretariat organized a regional seminar on the application of the TIR Convention at OSCE Border Staff Management College in Dushanbe (Tajikistan), in May 2015.

24. Capacity building, technical assistance and exchange of best practices are of utmost importance for countries with economies in transition to build both human and institutional capacities. Therefore, the Sustainable Transport Division is making every effort to provide adequate expert and financial capacities to support such TA activities. In all TA activities one of the key challenges for the Secretariat is to enhance stability and predictability in financing, as well as ensuring the timely receipt of funds.

25. Questions related to accession to and efficient implementation of UN legal instruments and, on the other hand, topics related to transport planning, new technologies, transport externalities, safety and security are potential TA topics to be chosen by member States. Each of them requires close and frequent contacts and advisory work with beneficiary countries.

26. Alongside careful planning and preparation of TA activities, adequate funding and monitoring of results are a prerequisite for successful building of capacities. It is worthwhile to mention that all UNDA financed projects have mandatory peer-review at the end to verify project results and impact.

27. Financial (e.g. through earmarked funding) and in-kind support (e.g. by provision of experts) by developed countries could significantly increase Sustainable Transport Division potential for undertaking the new TA activities.
