

Annex 3 to the Report of the 10th session of the PWG-TBC

**GUIDELINES
to improve the efficiency of the SPECA Project
Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)**

For the six landlocked member countries of SPECA, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, transport is an important area for subregional cooperation. This cooperation is being promoted through the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC). In view of its role in the development of the Euro-Asian transport system and the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (2003), the work of the SPECA PWG-TBC has been given renewed prominence by all of the member countries as well as by its partner organizations.

As it gets ready to meet for its 10th session, the PWG-TBC has a valuable opportunity to strengthen its future work. The principal problem areas of PWG-TBC are presented below. These have been identified through an analysis of documents of its nine sessions conducted in 1998-2004, and available documents on transit/international transport development of the SPECA countries. Within each problem area, recommendations are given to improve the efficiency of the Group.

PROBLEM AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

I. Participation in the PWG should be broadened

1. Given the complexity and wide range of actors involved in transport processes, the membership of the Project Working Group should be expanded to include representatives of customs and other agencies concerned with border crossing issues. Representatives of the private sector, such as transport associations, freight forwarders may also be invited.
2. Representatives of those neighbouring to the SPECA region should be invited to attend PWG-TBC Meeting as observers and be kept informed of SPECA activities.

II. Insufficient period of time between invitations and sessions of PWG-TBC, and late submission of documents of the Groups sessions to participants

Recommendations:

3. Invitations by Kazakhstan (lead SPECA country in the field of transport) to participate in sessions of PWG-TBC should reach the SPECA countries no less than one month before the meeting.
4. Tentative agenda of the next PWG-TBC session (adopted on each session of the Group) should clearly reflect organizations and countries responsible for the presentations of relevant documents for each agenda item.
5. Documents prepared for the next session of PWG-TBC should reach the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan no less than three weeks and the SPECA countries no less than two weeks before the session. This will facilitate translation and distribution of the documents.

III. Technical support to PWG-TBC

Recommendations:

6. It is desirable that the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan has a technical support unit to perform its lead role in the PWG-TBC. A draft Terms of Reference for such a technical support unit is presented in Enclosure 1.

IV. Lack of state budget of SPECA countries to participate in the SPECA Programme, including sessions of PWG-TBC as well as relevant international meetings is a major problem affecting efficiency of SPECA

Recommendations:

7. A special UN fund of the successful realization of the SPECA Programme should be established. At the minimum, funding is required for the participation of one transport expert and one customs officer from each of the SPECA countries for every session, and for financing relevant work at the national level carried out in accordance with the PWG-TBC programme of work. It would also be helpful to provide financial assistance to SPECA countries to participate in relevant international meetings, as has been started under the UNECE.

8. The practice of hosting sessions of PWG-TBC on a rotational basis among the SPECA countries should be encouraged.

9. When sessions of PWG-TBC are held in Kazakhstan, they should be held in Almaty to reduce expenditures involved by other SPECA countries as compared with those if the session takes place in Astana.

V. SPECA Partner Organizations should step up efforts to respond to the needs of the SPECA countries as well as to support the activities in the PWG-TBC's work programme more effectively. SPECA member countries should also be actively encouraged to participate in Partner Organizations' activities

Recommendations:

10. Those organizations which are members of the Project Working Group (UNECE, UNESCAP, CIS, ECO, SCO) should identify specific activities which they are committed to supporting during the biennium, in line with their own Programmes of work. The Project Working Group may propose projects to be supported by these organizations. These organizations may also develop new projects in collaboration with the Project Working Group.

11. SPECA countries should actively participate in the UNDA funded Euro-Asian Transport Linkages project and its follow-up actions, which is jointly implemented by UNECE-UNESCAP over the period 2003-2006.

12. SPECA countries should support the new UNECE-UNESCAP joint project proposal for Capacity Building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia aimed at strengthening their national capacities and fostering cooperation to develop efficient, safe, sustainable and secure transit transport systems in the region.

13. In order to improve coordination amongst agencies, a database of projects (of international and subregional (SPECA) importance) completed or being implemented from 2000 by various international and other organizations, banks etc. should be established.

14. SPECA countries should actively participate in the meetings of the UNECE Inland transport Committee and its Subsidiary Bodies, where UNECE member countries negotiate all the international legal instruments in the field of transport that are considered indispensable for the establishment of an efficient, harmonized and integrated, safe and sustainable pan-European transport system. SPECA countries should also actively participate in the meetings of the UNESCAP Committee on Managing Globalization and Subcommittee on Transport Infrastructure, Facilitation and Tourism.

15. SPECA countries should undertake national legal procedures for their accession to and implementation of all UNECE International Agreements and Conventions in the field of transport, indicated in the protocol of the second session of the SPECA PWG-TBC (see Annex 6).

16. SPECA countries should undertake to accede to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network (developed within framework of UNESCAP) in 2005. As of January 2005 only Uzbekistan had ratified the Agreement.

17. SPECA countries should participate actively in the development of the UNESCAP Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian railway network, including signing of the Agreement in 2006.

18. The SPECA countries should actively participate (from 2005) in the new joint UNESCAP – OSJD project on operationalization of Euro-Asian rail routes with particular reference to landlocked countries in Asia and Caucasus.

19. In cooperation with IGC-TRACECA the PWG-TBC should consider the possibility of a study on Euro-Asian routes in the TRACECA corridor (see also Recommendation 3). Such a proposal was considered by the 2nd and 6th Sessions of PWG-TBC, but related discussions with TRACECA were not completed. Project profile (Annex 6, Protocol of the 2nd Session of PWG-TBC) should be reviewed and revised as a project constituting a part of the UNECE-UNESCAP project on the developments of Euro-Asian transport linkages.

20. The SPECA countries, which are also members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, should actively participate in the development of the intergovernmental SCO Agreement on facilitation of road transport. As currently envisaged other SPECA and non-SPECA countries could join the Agreement thereby creating a single harmonized legal instrument for road transport in Asia.

21. Resume the practice of joint SPECA-IRU seminars etc. on problems and issues of road transport in the SPECA subregion, as well as between the subregion and countries in Europe and other countries in Asia. Amongst others these could include implementation of the TIR convention.

B. PERIODICAL EVALUATION OF PWG-TBC

VI. To date no analysis on the effectiveness of the PWG-TBC has been carried. The recommendations suggested here are the result of the first such analysis

Recommendations:

22. Periodical analysis of the PWG-TBC effectiveness should be introduced and carried out at the end of every biennium, and the results taken into consideration when designing the next programme of work.

C. SUBSTANTIVE WORK OF THE PWG-TBC

Recommendations:

23. The SPECA Programme of Action on Transit Transport Cooperation, adopted by the 8th Session of PWG-TBC (27-29 March 2003, Baku) is an important initiative relating to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (2003). However the SPECA Programme has a large number of components. It therefore appears reasonable to identify priority elements of the Programme and implement the Programme in phases or steps according to their assigned priorities. The following areas of work are suggested for ongoing consideration by the PWG-TBC.

24. Formulation of the agreed SPECA road and rail networks of international and subregional importance based on the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, AGR, AGC and AGTC with the publication of maps: (a) SPECA road network, (b) SPECA railway network.

25. Establishment of database of the two networks, including intermodal connections, break-of-gauge and border crossings with periodic update of data.

26. Identify the main transport routes between the SPECA countries and their major trade partners in Europe and Asia, as well as to nearest seaports to conduct an analysis of their characteristics to establish technical, commercial, operational and other indicators of interest to shippers, freight forwarders and other users. In this exercise particular attention should be given to formulation of alternative competing routes (to reduce transport costs and improve level of services).

27. Introduce regular bilateral consultations (during sessions of PWG-TBC) on border crossing issues between the SPECA countries with the participation of UNECE and UNESCAP.

28. Complete the establishment of national interagency trade and transport facilitation committees as soon as possible. In order to facilitate this process SPECA countries should be encouraged to exchange their experiences (transport) within the framework of PWG-TBC.

29. Resume to improve the earlier practice of identifying transport projects of common and priority interest to the SPECA countries for their possible inclusion in programmes of work of transport related international organizations and possible funding by banks etc.

30. Organize demonstration runs of container block trains in the international transport corridor North-South, and from and to the SPECA subregion to seaports (taking into account such a demonstration run on the route Lianyungang, China – Almaty, Kazakhstan in 2004). Specific routes may include the following routes in cooperation with other international organizations involved:

- a. Central Asia (CA): (Tashkent – Almaty) – port of Nakhodka, Russia;
- b. CA (Almaty-Tashkent) – port of Bandar Abbas, Islamic Republic of Iran;
- c. CA (Almaty-port of Aktau) – Islamic Republic of Iran (port of Bandar Abbas);
- d. CA (Almaty-port of Aktau) – Iran – Turkey (Istanbul);
- e. Along the TRACECA corridor; and
- f. CA – port(s) on the Baltic Sea (including Estonia).

31. SPECA countries should undertake active and coordinated actions (Kazakhstan, UNECE, UNESCAP, CIS, ECO, SCO, IGC TRACECA, EURASEC) to implement the UNESCAP Resolution 48/11 “Road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures”, as well as to the other UNECE International Agreements and Conventions in the field of transport, as

indicated in the protocol of the second session of the SPECA PWG-TBC (Annex 6). SPECA countries should try to complete the accession of the SPECA countries to all the international conventions reflected in UNESCAP Resolution 48/11 in 2005. This should be followed by effective implementation of the Conventions.

Enclosure 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF ORGANIZATION/UNIT TO SUPPORT THE SPECA PROJECT WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT AND BORDER CROSSING (PWG-TBC)

The Terms of Reference include:

1. Participation in the formulation and implementation of national plan of action of Kazakhstan in line with the Almaty Programme of Action.
2. Participation in the formulation and periodic analysis of the SPECA transport network, (road, railway, intermodal) of international importance.
3. Establishing a database of the networks, including border crossings and periodical updating of data.
4. Establishing a database on projects in the field of international land transport completed and being implemented in the SPECA countries from 2000.
5. International transport routes analysis (on routes within SPECA region) using the UNESCAP methodology and establishing a related database.
6. Technical support to cooperation of the National Interagency Commissions on Transport and Border Crossing among the SPECA countries.
7. Studies in the field of land transport in the SPECA region.
8. Participation in sessions of PWG-TBC.
9. Other tasks as requested by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan (lead country in transport, SPECA).