

## Project Concept Note

**2012**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Technical Assistance for Afghanistan on Border Crossing facilitation</b>	
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Concrete implementation of the TIR Convention and adhesion to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods by Afghanistan</b>	
<b>Indicative Funding Requirements</b>	Total estimated budget:	578,600 US\$
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	[Donor(s): [Development Bank(s): Other Resources:	World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Islamic Development Bank (IDB) USAID, IRU
<b>Expected start date</b>	May, 2012	
<b>Expected Duration</b>	18 months	
<b>Implementing Organisation(s)</b>	UNECE,	
<b>Country/Countries</b>	Afghanistan and neighbouring countries	
<b>Submitted by</b>	UNECE Transport	
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### 1 Background

The Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975) is one of the most successful international transport conventions and is so far the only universal Customs transit system in existence. To date, it has 68 Contracting Parties, including the European Community. It covers the whole of Europe and reaches out to North Africa and the near and middle East. More than 40,000 operators are authorized to use the TIR system and around 3 millions TIR transports are carried out per year.

Afghanistan is about to start the TIR system very soon, whereas all its neighbour countries except Pakistan already are parties.

In November 2011, a Conference was held on Central Asia entitled, "Central Asia, Afghanistan and the New Silk Road: Political, Economic and Security Challenges" at the University Club in Washington, DC. The event, attended by more than 200 participants, featured a keynote speech by Ambassador Robert O. Blake, US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, as well as opening remarks by S. Frederick Starr, Chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University and author of the defining report outlining a "New Silk Road" strategy for the region.

The conference highlighted the challenges to Central Asia, US strategic interests in the region, the state of regional cooperation, and the need for a long-term strategy for regional security, economic development, and conflict resolution. Participants exchanged views on security and economic development problems, including the threats that stem from the situation in Afghanistan and the impact of the US military withdrawal; potential political instability and ethnic tensions; water management and energy security; unstable, weak and fractured states; and insufficient transportation and infrastructure development.

Professor Starr advocated for the creation of transit corridors on selected routes in Afghanistan, where all modern technologies and procedures would be available and experimented.

Afghanistan is perfectly suitable for launching and testing a new method of bringing together the International Transport of Goods under cover of TIR Carnets and the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods. This technical assistance could prove also 318600useful for all Central Asian countries.

## **2 Expected Output(s)**

- A TIR instruction manual for customs officer in home language (Dari);
- TIR handbook to be translated in Dari;
- IT material for data exchange;
- Workshops in understanding and implementing the TIR system of the methodology.
- Awareness campaigns on TIR and Harmonization Conventions.

## **3 Proposed Approach & Strategy, including Capacity Development Response**

A kick-off Seminar (high political level + private + customs) should be organized in Afghanistan as soon as possible, with a view of setting up a working group with several TIR expert and Afghans customs in order to:

- write a short practical instruction for the customs officers involved (in their language);
- define the Authority competent for approval certificates;
- define a procedure to authorized transporters;
- draft a list of authorized TIR customs offices;
- write and organize a training cycle for the officers involved.

Meanwhile the TIR Handbook could be translated in Dari.

The working group needs to be able to make some study visits to neighboring countries in order to detect "best practices". They need also to have some funding for printing training material, computers and other training material.

IRU experts should assist the national association. It may be needed to help the national association with some guarantee to arrive at "sound financial standing" ==> this can be expensive.

