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Review and monitoring of emerging issues and sustainable development goals

The ITC Capacity Development Action Plan – initial experiences and future plans

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The 81st session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) (held on 19–22 February 2019) adopted the “Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030” (hereafter the Strategy) as a basic document for future directions of the ITC development. The mission for ITC is defined as “to contribute to sustainable inland transport and mobility for achieving the sustainable development goals in the ECE and UN Member States through policy dialogue, harmonizing regulatory frameworks, as appropriate, promoting new technologies, assisting in enhancing connectivity and supporting the implementation of legal instruments”.

2. The first pillar of the Strategy integrates several groups of activities, where a support to member States to facilitate accession to and efficient implementation of United Nations transport-related legal instruments plays an important role. For that purpose, the Secretariat is mandated to offer support to all United Nations Member States through technical assistance and capacity development activities.

3. The Strategy mandated the Secretariat to develop new or adjust/update existing capacity-building programme, training manuals, guidelines, standards and competency criteria in cooperation with other organizations and institutions, to assist in enhancing capacity in the accession and implementation of the legal instruments and organize training courses [Timeline: Short-, Medium- and Long-term] and to develop indicators for Contracting parties to evaluate status and progress in the implementation of the legal instruments [Timeline: Short-, and Medium-term]¹.

4. To date, ITC haven't had a comprehensive programme of work on capacity development. Therefore, the Strategy defined as the first priority preparation of a comprehensive programme of work which will define, integrate and frame all capacity development activities done by the Sustainable Transport Division. The ITC Capacity

¹ ITC Strategy until 2030, page 5, 2019.

Development Action Plan was presented and adopted at the 82nd session of ITC held in February 2020.

II. ITC Capacity Development Action Plan

5. The ITC Capacity Development Action Plan (the Plan) incorporated capacity development general principles² and activities to “Enhance the role of ITC as the United Nations platform for inland transport conventions”. All activities are grouped into four strategic areas:

(a) **Awareness-raising** - Inform Member States on United Nations transport legal instruments and on benefits of its efficient implementation;

(b) **Capacity enhancement** - Assist member States in developing capacities for efficient implementation of United Nations inland transport legal instruments;

(c) **Seek synergies** - Develop standards and competence criteria for accreditation of entities (academia, training centres, etc.) to promote United Nations inland transport legal instruments;

(d) **Monitor and evaluate results** and effectiveness of applied actions/methods.

6. Proposed strategic areas are further connected with detailed actions and expected outcomes, fields of action, required resources (both human and financial) and beneficiaries. In that sense, the Plan implementation will be easy to monitor and the Plan easy to amend if ITC Strategy-defined priorities will be changed.

² www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2019/wp5/id-19_08e.pdf

Table 1
The ITC Capacity Development Action Plan

<i>Strategic goal</i>	<i>Strategic area</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Outcomes/products</i>	<i>Fields of action</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Funding</i>	
Enhance role of ITC as the United Nations platform for inland transport Conventions	Awareness Raising: Inform member States on United Nations transport legal instruments and on benefits of its efficient implementation	Develop and update web page and leaflets	ECE webpage, news and leaflets	e.g. Vehicle standards	ECE staff Consultants	Member States institutions and organizations	RB including RPTC	
		Update Division's profile including all transport-related instruments	e-learning and knowledge sharing platform	Road signs and signals		International organizations	UNDA XB (National budgets,	
		Develop and update sets of presentations	Sustainable Transport Division intranet	Border Crossing Facilitation		General public	International and regional organizations,	
			Missions and presentations (organized by other entities)	Transport of dangerous goods		Media	IFIs)	
			Develop "how to accede/road map for implementation" guides	How to accede/road map for implementation publication				
			Prepare official and informal documents on capacity development	Presentations and discussion during ITC and its subsidiary bodies meetings				
Assist member States in developing capacities for efficient implementation of United Nations inland transport legal	Capacity enhancement:	Develop comprehensive plan on capacity development	ITC Capacity Development Action Plan	All Sustainable Transport Division activities	ECE staff	Member States institutions and organizations NGOs	RB including RPTC XB (projects, member States and other organization contribution)	
		Develop/update training manuals, and guidelines	Publications, training manuals, guidelines, webinars		ECE staff		UNDA	

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	instruments (ECE - catalyst of changes)	Develop web-based platform for e-learning and knowledge sharing	e-learning and knowledge sharing platform (including archive of national case studies, examples, etc.		International and regional organizations Academia and training centres		
		Develop a methodology for preparation of the national capacity development framework (NCDF)	Common methodology for preparation of the national capacity development framework		Experts and consultants Other United Nations agencies		
		Identify five beneficiary countries for preparation of the NCDF	Five beneficiary countries committed to implement NCDF		NGOs		
		Elaborate a NCDF/concrete action plan in cooperation with the beneficiary country that includes commonly agreed goals/objectives, time schedules, resources	National capacity development framework for beneficiary countries				
		Establish a coalition for implementation of national capacity development framework	National coalition for implementation				
		Organize capacity development events (seminars, workshops, etc.) and national capacity reviews	Capacity development workshops and events, training courses, peer learning missions, performance reviews (RSPR, EPR, etc.),				
		Assist member State to update national legislation to efficiently implement United Nations inland transport legal instruments	advisory services and presentations and discussion during ITC and its subsidiary bodies meetings				

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		Develop indicators to evaluate status in implementation of United Nations legal instruments	SITCIN indicators				
	Seek synergies: Develop standards and competence criteria for accreditation of entities (academia, training centres, etc.) to promote United Nations inland transport legal instruments	Develop standards and competence criteria	Training curricula, manuals, guidelines and accreditation criteria	All Sustainable Transport Division activities.	ECE staff	International and regional organizations	RB including RPTC
		Develop a network of “knowledge sharing/promotion” ambassadors (NGOs, academia, business sector)	MoU’s and cooperation agreements	In the phase I, the secretariat should identify and promote inland transport areas that are most suitable for cooperation.		Academia and training centres Experts and consultants NGOs	XB (National budgets, International and regional organizations, IFIs, PPP cooperation, accreditation fees, ...)
		Develop cooperation/synergies with transport stakeholders	MoU’s and cooperation agreements				
	Monitor and evaluate results and effectiveness of applied actions/methods	Update of training materials and guidelines	Mid-term review of methodologies, web-based platform content and manuals		ECE staff Experts and consultants	International and regional organizations Academia and training centres Experts and consultants NGOs	RB including RPTC XB (projects)
		Preparation of a mechanism to monitor implementation and evaluate results					
		Preparation of the national reports on implementation	Annual national reports (“before and after”) to communicate results; Case studies/good practices				
		Short-term (2020)		Mid-term (2021-2023)			Long-term (2024-2030)

III. Initial experiences with ITC Capacity Development Plan and future plans

7. Immediately after adoption of the Strategy, the Secretariat initiated work on capacity development general principles which were agreed in fall 2019. General principles proposed massive change in a way how capacity development activities should be implemented, therefore the Secretariat decided to pilot new “A to Z” approach before final adoption. UNECE-led Georgia Road Safety Performance Review (RSPR) was completed in 2018. One of the RSPR recommendations stressed the necessity to update national legislation on safe vehicles. UNECE in cooperation with the Georgian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD) organized a workshop “The 1958 Agreement – a road map for implementation” on United Nations legal instruments and technical regulations on safe vehicles (Tbilisi, Georgia, 20–21 May 2019). The workshop addressed the safety and environmental performance of wheeled vehicles and allowed exchange of international and national best practices on efficient implementation of the 1958 Agreement. Furthermore, discussion identified gaps in Georgian national legislation on safe vehicles and MoESD asked for assistance in this matter. An UNECE expert worked hand-in-hand with the Georgian stakeholders on preparation of updates on national legislation on safe vehicles. Amendments on the Law on Motor Transport, draft Technical Regulation on procedures for granting Type Approval and designation of Technical Service provider pursuant to the 1958 Agreement and Action plan for efficient implementation of the 1958 Agreement in Georgia were completed in December 2019 and are now in the process of adoption by the Georgian Government.

8. In 2020 planning and implementation of activities defined by the Plan was seriously affected by COVID-19 pandemics. Possibility to organize capacity development events in-person and to offer advisory mission was excluded, therefore the Secretariat decided to focus on relatively small number of demand-driven capacity development activities to be implemented via videoconference or by engaging of regional consultants: (i) assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in preparation of the draft Framework Road Safety Strategy (ii) assistance to Turkmenistan to accede and efficiently implement six UN transport-related legal instruments and (iii) substantial support to SPECA countries on regional transport connectivity.

9. Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were initiated with sub-regional capacity building event (Sarajevo, 4-5 March 2020) organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport and Communications and UNDP BiH and will continue with advisory services and preparation of the draft Framework Road Safety Strategy (FRSS) by external consultants guided by UNECE staff. Final draft FRSS will be presented to national stakeholders on joint capacity development seminar.

10. Assistance to Turkmenistan was initiated by two capacity development events (online 14 April 2020 and 15 May 2020) and after successful accession of Turkmenistan to six UN Legal Instruments (The European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries, The European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines, The European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations, The European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic, The European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals, and The Protocol on Road Markings to the European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals) tailor-made capacity development events for Turkmenistan national stakeholders will be held in October-November.

11. Assistance to SPECA countries will be directed towards: (i) organization of the Regional Dialogue “Strengthening transport connectivity in the SPECA region and beyond in the era of COVID-19” and (ii) continuation of activities in the SPECA WG on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity. The overall objective of the Dialogue is to facilitate an inclusive discussion and coordinate actions and plans on harmonization of international transport procedures to enhance connectivity in the SPECA region and beyond, especially at times of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event will geographically cover countries that are part of the SPECA Programme, and beyond, including Georgia and Turkey. The regional

dialogues more specifically will: (i) Facilitate the exchange of information on progress and challenges faced by the participating countries in promoting development of regional transport system, and agree on the future steps to enhance regional connectivity and maintain uninterrupted supply-chains particularly in the era of COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) Provide the platform to discuss the benefits of joining the UN transport-related conventions for enhancing the harmonization of regulations, use of digital solutions such e-TIRs, enhancing connectivity and efficiency, removing non-physical barriers to transport, including at times of emergencies like COVID-19 pandemic; (iii) Provide update and share experiences in developing multimodal transport systems (especially railways), completing missing infrastructure links connecting SPECA countries and regional networks, also touching upon challenges and opportunities; and (iv) Provide a platform to discuss the issues of safety and security of trade and transit corridors.

12. The largest funding required for implementation of the Plan is development of training platform including manuals and guidelines on acceding to and efficient implementation of UN transport-related legal instruments. Currently, the Secretariat is preparing project proposal to be financed by the United Nations Development Account and in case of success, the project will be deployed in 2021.
