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Review and monitoring of emerging issues and sustainable development goals:

Technical assistance to countries with economies in transition:

Regional Adviser technical assistance

The ITC Capacity Development Action Plan – second year of implementation

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The eighty-first 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 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and United Nations 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 UN 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.

¹ ITC Strategy until 2030, page 5, 2019.

4. 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 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.

7. In the Table 1 a list of activities implemented in the last year are presented.

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

Table 1
The ITC Capacity Development Action Plan (September 2020- September 2021)

<i>Strategic goal</i>	<i>Strategic area</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Outcomes/products</i>	<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Current status</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	ECE staff Consultants	Member States institutions and organizations	Updated TD webpage launched in December 2020
		Update Division’s profile including all transport-related instruments	e-learning and knowledge sharing platform		International organizations	SCCELP project (development of e-learning platform) launched end 2020
		Develop and update sets of presentations	Sustainable Transport Division intranet Missions and presentations (organized by other entities)		General public Media	-
		Develop “how to accede/road map for implementation” guides	How to accede/road map for implementation publication			Road Map for Accession to and Implementation of the United Nations 1998 Agreement - May 2021;
		Prepare official and informal documents on capacity development	Presentations and discussion during ITC and its subsidiary bodies meetings			WP.5 document prepared in September 2020; UNECE Technical Assistance report prepared 1Qt 2021
	Capacity enhancement: Assist member States in developing capacities for efficient implementation of	Develop comprehensive plan on capacity development	ITC Capacity Development Action Plan	ECE staff	Member States institutions and organizations NGOs	ITC Capacity Development Action Plan adopted on at the 82nd session of ITC – February 2020

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	United Nations inland transport legal instruments (ECE - catalyst of changes)	Develop/update training manuals, and guidelines	Publications, training manuals, guidelines, webinars	ECE staff International and regional organizations Academia and training centres Experts and consultants Other United Nations agencies NGOs		Handbook for national master plans for freight transport and logistics – May 2021; The development of international passenger rail transport – March 2021; Intermodal Transport in the Age of COVID-19: Practices, Initiatives and Responses – February 2021; Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels – September 2020 SCCELP project (development of e-learning platform) launched end 2020
		Develop web-based platform for e-learning and knowledge sharing	e-learning and knowledge sharing platform (including archive of national case studies, examples, etc.			
		Develop a methodology for preparation of the national capacity development framework (NCDF)	Common methodology for preparation of the national capacity development framework			-
		Identify five beneficiary countries for preparation of the NCDF	Five beneficiary countries committed to implement NCDF			-
		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			-

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		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.), advisory services and presentations and discussion during ITC and its subsidiary bodies meetings			Road safety CD workshops/Seminars (How Road Safety Performance Review can accelerate efficient implementation of UN legal instruments on safe vehicles - October 2020; 15th International Conference Road Safety in Local Communities, SRB – June 2020; and 9 th International Conference Road Safety in Local Communities, BiH - October 2020); UN Legal instruments CD workshops/Seminars (Two tailor-made capacity development events on six UN Legal Instruments for Turkmenistan national stakeholders are delivered in November 2020; The Regional Dialogue “Strengthening transport connectivity in the SPECA region and beyond in the era of COVID-19” - September 2020; 25th SPECA online Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit Connectivity (TWG-STTC) - October 2020 and Expert meeting between the UN and Turkmenistan on discussion of freight transport issues at times of Covid-19 pandemic - February 2021); Urban transport and mobility CD workshops/seminars (83.92.A roundtable on the economic analysis of the transformation of urban transport systems - September 2020; and Sustainable Mobility and the Danube macro-region workshop - December 2020).

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		Assist member State to update national legislation to efficiently implement United Nations inland transport legal instruments				In 2021 UNECE in cooperation with UNDP BiH prepared the draft BiH Framework Road Safety Strategy; RPTC funding supported connection of national systems of Azerbaijan and Georgia to eTIR International; RPTC funded project Improving capacity of the Government of Ukraine to develop infrastructure for production and use of hydrogen to support green post-Covid-19 recovery developed the Roadmap for use of hydrogen in Ukraine in road transport, with emphasis on the urban transport in February 2021.
		Develop indicators to evaluate status in implementation of United Nations legal instruments	SITCIN indicators			SITCIN project developed set of indicators and draft national reports in 3Qt 2021.
	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	ECE staff	International and regional organizations Academia and training centres Experts and consultants NGOs	Postponed due to COVID-19 Pandemics - MoU with EIB signed in July 2021
		Develop a network of “knowledge sharing/promotion” ambassadors (NGOs, academia, business sector)	MoU’s and cooperation agreements			
		Develop cooperation/synergies with transport stakeholders	MoU’s and cooperation agreements			
	Monitor and evaluate results and effectiveness of	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	Mid-term review scheduled for 2024

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	applied actions/methods	Preparation of a mechanism to monitor implementation and evaluate results			Academia and training centres Experts and consultants	-
		Preparation of the national reports on implementation	Annual national reports (“before and after”) to communicate results Case studies/good practices		NGOs	-

III. Final remarks

8. Unfortunately, situation with planning and implementation of capacity development activities in 2021 remained the same, if not worse, than in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemics. Possibility to organize capacity development events in-person and to offer advisory mission was excluded, therefore the Secretariat kept focus on demand-driven capacity development activities which already commenced in 2020: (i) assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in preparation of the draft Framework Road Safety Strategy (ii) assistance to countries to connect with eTIR International and (iii) substantial support to SPECA countries on regional transport connectivity.

9. Cooperation with the BiH Ministry of Communications and Transport (MCT) and UNDP BiH resulted with preparation of the draft Framework Road Safety Strategy (FRSS) and two reports: Roadmap for accession to and implementation of the 1997 Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Analysis on establishment of the roadside technical inspection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Final draft FRSS was handed over to MCT for national consultations and national policy dialogue on FRSS is planned for 3-4 Q4 2021. Furthermore, UNECE is continuing cooperation with MCT on implementation of FRSS recommendations by hiring external consultant to prepare the Roadmap for roadside technical inspection and organizing joint capacity development seminars.

10. A RPTC-financed field project “Interconnection of Customs Information System of Georgia with the eTIR International System” and “Interconnection of Customs Information System of Azerbaijan with the eTIR International System” (November - December 2020) provided two Member States with a tool to connect their national customs systems with eTIR International and share all relevant information to support border crossing facilitation. After entering into force of the Annex 11 of the TIR Convention which describes the eTIR procedure in May 2021 electronic exchange of data become reality which will significantly reduce border crossing waiting times. The eTIR specifications, which describe how the eTIR international system communicates with the information systems of the other stakeholders, are being finalized and national custom systems connected with eTIR International. In 2021 Turkmenistan requested capacity development to strengthen capacity of national specialist in road transport and border crossing facilitation. UNECE responded with policy dialogue on 05 March 2021 where the Secretariat presented aim and benefits of acceding eTIR International system, how to efficiently implement agreement and initial steps to join the system.

11. Assistance to SPECA countries was 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. On 29 September 2020, more than 90 participants, including nine Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Transport from Central Asia and the Caucasus, members of United Nations system, Multi Development Banks and international organizations joined the Regional Dialogue. The UNECE-led Regional Dialogue facilitated an inclusive discussion and coordinated actions and plans on harmonization of international inland transport procedures to enhance connectivity in the SPECA region. The 25th session of the SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (WG-STTC) was held on 23-24 October 2020. Member States shared the experiences and information on latest developments in the improvement of regional connectivity (infrastructure development, removing of bottlenecks), international transit (border crossing facilitation and corridor management) as well as road safety. Furthermore, countries shared information on COVID-19 measures and responses and discussed operationalization of the conclusions of the SPECA Regional Dialogue.
