Emerging opportunities for enhancing rail connectivity among SPECA countries

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Outline

• Background

• Accelerating rail digital transformation in SPECA countries

• Strengthening rail connectivity between SEA and NCA countries
1. Intergovernmental Agreement on Trans-Asian Railway Network

Trans-Asian Railway Network was developed by ESCAP members as a coordinated plan to develop a regional railway network to meet the growing needs of intra and interregional trade and transport.

Formalized through intergovernmental agreement entered into force in 2009. Has now 21 contracting parties.

The Working Group under the agreement provides a regional platform for the member countries to discuss persistent and emerging issues in international railway transport along the network. Seven meetings—focus on operational issues.

ESCAP resolution 71/7 that adopted regional cooperation framework for facilitation on international railway transport in 2015.
ESCAP work on transport is mandated through a Regional Action Programme.

ESCAP members adopted a new Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and Pacific (2022-2026) with seven thematic areas and one of them is

**Digitalization of transport**

that calls for, among others, its promotion for shift towards smart transport networks and increase awareness of ESCAP members while highlighting role of policy making and planning practices for adopting appropriate technological solution.
Vision
Enhance sustainability of transport to support realization of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development

Outcome
Increase in freight and passenger transport by rail
Reduce green house gas emission from transport

SDG supported directly
Target 9.1; 9a quality, reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure
Target 3.6 Road traffic accident
Target 7.3 Energy efficiency
Objectives - six

✓ Provide coherence and momentum to rail digitalization initiatives

✓ Foster an ecosystem to harnesses full potential of rail digitalization

✓ Augment the operational performance, capacity, reliability, safety, and security of rail assets

✓ Enhance customer experience including ease of doing business

✓ Create synergies through partnerships to digitalize rail

✓ Ensure high level political support on rail digitalization
Priority Areas—eight

1. Digital customer services
2. Digital communication technologies for rail-
3. Digital platforms for rail operations
4. Digital rail asset management including maintenance
5. Digital traffic management including signaling
6. Digitally integrated rail services
7. Digital rail business process
8. Digital rail border crossing—Finalize suitable modality to harmonize digital exchange information practices in the region—*a new annex to intergovernmental agreement on TAR*

Simultaneously undertake pilot application of digital exchange of information such as electronic consignment note

Consider developing a digitally enabled regional transit regime for rail transport
Cross cutting issues—five

1. Enhance digital skills of rail officials: set up a regional capacity building programme on rail digital transformation supported by pool of experts

2. Increase investment in rail digitalization: establish a rail digital and innovation fund

3. Strengthen rail cyber security including data protection: develop a regional framework for rail cybersecurity

4. Use data analytics to support optimal decision making for planning and operating the rail network: prepare inventory of data analytics solutions at regional level

5. Heighten engagement with private sector: develop supportive legal and regulatory framework
Implementing and monitoring

Creating implementation mechanism/arrangements—formulate national and sub-regional strategies on rail digitalization.

Measuring progress in rail digitalization—develop a rail digitalization index and a maturity profile for railways of the region.
ESCAP-OSJD Joint document on potential of electronic information exchange to streamline customs formalities in international railway transport

3. Operationalization of Lao-China opportunity for better connectivity between SEA and NCA countries
Leveraging the Trans-Asian Railway Network for a more efficient and resilient transport connectivity and logistics in ASEAN and beyond

**Target groups:** Ministry of Transport/ Railway authorities, other officials from border agencies including customs, railway operators, other stakeholders involved in international rail transport and transit among countries in Southeast Asia, China, and the North and Central Asia.

**Duration:** August 2023 – July 2026

**Strategic partner:**
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat

**Other partners:**
Organization for Cooperation Between Railways (OSJD)
China Academy of Railway Sciences (CARS)
International Union of Railways (UIC)
European Union Agency for Railways (ERA)
Leveraging the Trans-Asian Railway Network for a more efficient and resilient transport connectivity and logistics in ASEAN and beyond

Outcome B:

B. Transport policy makers in the target countries introduce specific measure(s) to operationalize transport linkages between Southeast Asia and North and Central Asia

Outputs

1. Transport policy makers in the target countries have access to a study defining priority transport linkages between Southeast Asia and North and Central Asia and options for operationalizing them.

2. Strengthened capacity of transport policy makers of target countries to develop initiatives to operationalize transport linkages between AMS and NCA, including those that benefit women and girls.
Thank you for your attention

http://www.unescap.org/our-work/transport