



Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Rail Transport****Seventy-eighth session**

Geneva, 13 (pm)–15 November 2024

Item 13 of the provisional agenda

Climate Change and Rail Transport**Inclusion of the Inland Transport Committee's Climate Action Plan in the Work Programme of the Working Party on Rail Transport****Note by the secretariat****I. Introduction and Mandate**

1. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its eighty-sixth session adopted its Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport (ITC Climate Strategy). It also invited its Working Parties to report on the implementation of the Strategy biennially as per the initial ITC Climate Action Plan (ECE/TRANS/344).
2. Given the above, the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) may wish to consider how to incorporate the actions assigned to it in the ITC Climate Action Plan in its biennial work programme.
3. This document in section II lists the actions from the ITC Climate Action Plan assigned to SC.2.
4. In section III, this document lists the key activities included in the terms of reference of SC.2 and compares it to the actions in the ITC Climate Change Strategy for SC.2.
5. Section IV presents the agreed 2024–2025 programme of work, highlights where SC.2's activities are already meeting the needs highlighted in the ITC Climate Action Plan and, if and where necessary, makes suggestions for inclusion of actions from the ITC Climate Action Plan in accordance with the suggestions made in section III as specific work programme activity and accomplishment for the next review of the programme of work to be discussed and approved at the seventy-ninth session of the Working Party.
6. Section V provides next steps.

II. Inland Transport Committee's Climate Action Plan

7. Table I below contains actions from the ITC Climate Action Plan assigned to SC.2. There are altogether 10 actions which SC.2 should address. Of them, 6 actions are directly assigned to SC.2, in majority of case as one of the working parties responsible for their implementation.

Table I
ITC Climate Action Plan – activities of relevance to SC.2

<i>Action number</i>	<i>Specific action</i>	<i>Target year</i>	<i>ASI pillar addressed</i>	<i>Responsible bodies</i>
1	Assess regularly actions taken in support of implementation of this Strategy, and address climate change whenever feasible, through annual sessions or dedicated seminars or workshops and report it	From 2024, annually	Avoid/Shift/ Improve	ITC and all its subsidiary bodies
3	Assess the feasibility and potential benefits of modal shift goals, if appropriate for individual Member States when developing their own national strategies, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders (i.e. shippers and logistical companies)	2027	Shift	WP.5/WP.24/SC.1/ SC.2/SC.3
6	Enable hybrid attendance and participation, including for decision making purposes	2027	Avoid	All subsidiary bodies
9	Accelerate accession and implementation of the AGC/AGTC AGTC-Protocol so that intermodal transport infrastructure is developed enabling a shift to rail or inland waterways and monitor progress in infrastructure improvements	2040	Shift/ Improve	WP.24/SC.2/SC.3
10	Enable instruments similar to AGTC for use by United Nation Member States from outside of ECE region	2040	Shift/ Improve	WP.24/SC.2/ SC.3/WP.5
20	Elaborate policy solutions for minimizing 'empty runs' and to create incentives for transport users to make informed choices and for operators to optimize their services	2035	Avoid/ Improve	SC.1/SC.2/WP.24/ WP.5
26	Develop methodological and analytical tools to support national efforts further to and based on existing tools such as For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS), Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators (SITCIN), and the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO-GIS)	From 2024 onwards	Avoid/Shift/ Improve	ITC and all its WPs
29	Optimize infrastructure networks by better utilization of ITS or traffic management system for road, rail, intermodal transport	2030	Avoid/ Improve	SC.1/SC.2/WP.24
30	Work towards reducing pathing conflicts by elaborating solutions for equal and fair use of the railway network by freight and passenger transport	2030	Improve	SC.2/WP.24
31	Ensure the safe and secure deployment of low- and zero-carbon modes, technologies for vehicles and their charging infrastructure	Continuous	Shift/ Improve	WP.15/WP.29, with contributions from WP.1, WP.5 and other WPs

8. It should be noted that actions numbered 1 and 6 are of administrative nature and as such do not need to be included in future programmes of work.

III. Working Party terms of reference and climate actions

9. Table II presents the Terms of Reference of SC.2 and attempts to determine if the actions from the ITC Climate Action Plan can be addressed within any of the 13 main activities of the SC.2 Terms of Reference. Reference to the core pillars of the ITC Strategy to 2030 are left in the table for reference. A commentary is provided whether or not the action can be included without changes to the clusters' description.

Table II
SC.2 terms of reference and climate actions

<i>Activities in the SC.2 terms of reference</i>	<i>Relevant actions from ITC Climate Action Plan and commentary</i>
<p>(a) To update and extend the geographical scope of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) network, increase the number of contracting parties to the AGC, consider the AGC Agreement with a view to possibly implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters; upgrading review the coherence between the AGC parameters and infrastructure standards established within the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Union and other countries within the ECE region with a view to harmonizing them as appropriate. (Pillar A)</p>	<p>Action 9 [acceleration of accession] – work on accession is fully covered; key words are “promotion of accession”. (Note that Action 8 is not included in the list above but is also relevant here as updating the AGTC will also mean an equivalent update of the AGC.)</p> <p>Action 10 [availability of instruments such as AGTC to countries outside of ECE region] – this is being done with the Model Rules on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock as well as the harmonisation of passenger information in stations which are both global in nature.</p> <p>Action 6 [Hybrid participation] – fundamental for all decision making, especially for global legal instruments.</p>
<p>(b) To identify the need for new legal instruments in the rail sector for passenger and freight aimed at encouraging the further shift to rail as the most sustainable mode of transport and meeting the needs of the region's economies following the paradigm shift set in motion in the transport sector as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. (Pillar A)</p>	<p>Action 9 [acceleration of accession] – work on updating the AGC to include international railway passenger hubs; the development of the Model Rules as well as the harmonisation of passenger information in stations which are global in nature.</p> <p>Action 6 [Hybrid participation] – fundamental for all decision making, especially for global legal instruments.</p>
<p>(c) To develop, improve and maintain constantly update online tools, such as the web tool developed to monitor AGC and the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) network and its infrastructure standards and the Rail Security Observatory (Pillar B)</p>	<p>Action 26 [methodological and analytical tools in support of national efforts] – the AGC/AGTC parameters tool is fundamental here.</p>
<p>(d) To improve intermodal coordination and integration of railway with other transport modes with a view to contributing to the development of pan-European sustainable transport systems taking</p>	<p>Action 3 [assessment of benefits from modal shift goals for individual member states] – the promotion, and assessment, of</p>

<i>Activities in the SC.2 terms of reference</i>	<i>Relevant actions from ITC Climate Action Plan and commentary</i>
into account the interrelationship of the ECE E-Networks and in close cooperation with the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24). (Pillar D)	<p>modal shift is core to all the activities of SC.2, also in collaboration with WP.24.</p> <p>Action 20 [minimise empty runs] – any technical and operational measures to optimize intermodal transport are covered under this cluster; key words are “optimize logistics procedures” Minimisation of empty runs falls therefore within this activity.</p> <p>Action 29 [optimization of transport networks] – Efficiency and performance of the railway network have been core aspects of the work of SC.2 in the past and will continue to be so going forward.</p> <p>Action 30 [path conflicts] – work on efficiency remains central here.</p>
(e) To foster the development of green transport through the review of technological advancements in rail transport aimed at increasing the efficiency of transport operations. (Pillar B)	<p>Action 29 [optimization of transport networks] – Efficiency and performance of the railway network through optimal traffic management to increase reliability.</p> <p>Action 31 [safe and secure deployment of low- and zero-carbon modes] – Assessment and review of alternative fuels and technology to further increase the green credentials of the rail sector.</p>
(f) To assist in the development of harmonized safety approaches across the sector through constant discussions on rail safety issues. (Pillar C)	<p>Not specifically tied to an action in the Climate Change Strategy but tangential to Action 31, see above.</p>
(g) To drive the development of a secure rail system through the exchange of best practice in this area. (Pillar D)	<p>Not specifically tied to an action in the Climate Change Strategy but tangential to Action 31, see above.</p>
(h) To follow-up the developments of the ECE Trans European Railway (TER) Project, and explore further interaction between TER activities and that of SC.2; (Pillar D)	<p>Not specifically tied to an action in the Climate Change Strategy but note that the activities of TER are generally aligned with those of SC.2 and thus cover the same overall actions.</p>
(i) To evaluate, study and review Euro-Asian rail traffic trends, developments and opportunities and explore possibilities for further contribution to and interaction with the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL) project and the preparation of relevant conclusions and recommendations in collaboration with the Working Party on Trends and Economics; (Pillar C)	<p>Not specifically tied to an action in the Climate Change Strategy but note that the activities tied to increasing connectivity in rail are intrinsically improving the environmental performance of the transport sector and as such are related to Action 3.</p>
(j) To facilitate international rail transport in the pan-European region through improved border crossing procedures and harmonization of technical specifications of different railway systems and their operations	<p>Action 3 [assessment of benefits from modal shift goals for individual member states] – the promotion, and assessment, of</p>

<i>Activities in the SC.2 terms of reference</i>	<i>Relevant actions from ITC Climate Action Plan and commentary</i>
at borders in light of cooperation in the Contact Group between Organization for the Cooperation Between Railways (OSJD) and the European Union Agency for Railways; (Pillar A)	modal shift is core to the facilitation of rail transport and connectivity.
(k) To support the implementation of expert group programmes and task forces as established by the Working Party and the Inland Transport Committee on technical and legal rail matters and review rail market trends, needs and challenges through the establishment of ad hoc expert groups and the elaboration of studies, as appropriate; (Pillar A)	Action 6 [Hybrid participation] – fundamental for all decision making, especially for global legal instruments. Action 9 [acceleration of accession] – the work of the groups of experts have a direct link to improving existing legal instruments. Action 10 [availability of instruments such as AGTC to countries outside of ECE region] – Tied to Action 3 the Groups also consider the creation of new instruments.
(l) To monitor developments on the pan-European Rail Transport Corridors in cooperation with the European Commission; (Pillar C)	Action 3 [assessment of benefits from modal shift goals for individual member states] – the promotion, and assessment, of modal shift is core to the facilitation of rail transport and connectivity, including with activities of other railway corridors.
(m) To review general trends in rail transport developments and rail transport policy, analyse specific rail transport economic issues, assist in the collection, compilation and dissemination of rail transport statistics, in cooperation with the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6), other governmental and non-governmental organizations, expert groups and task forces and prepare reports, reviews and publications concerning rail transport development and best practices; (Pillar C)	Action 6 [Hybrid participation] – fundamental for all decision making, especially for global legal instruments. Action 20 [minimise empty runs] – any efficiency measures to optimize rail transport are covered under this cluster. Action 26 [methodological and analytical tools in support of national efforts] – such tools fall within emerging issues for which analytical outputs are prepared, key words “prepare analytical outputs”. Action 29 [optimization of transport networks] – Efficiency and performance of the railway network are key for this activity. Action 30 [path conflicts] – Key for railway reliability. Action 31 [safe and secure deployment of low- and zero-carbon modes] – see reference above

10. From the text above it can be seen that the Terms of Reference of SC.2 fully cover the actions that are identified in the ITC Climate Change Strategy. Therefore no changes are currently needed.

IV. 2024–2025 programme of work and climate actions

11. The 2024–2025 programme of work, approved at the seventy-seventh session of SC.2, is included in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2023/9. Table III presents the 2024–2025 programme of work, the expected accomplishments and the ITC Climate Action Plan actions that relate to

the individual activities. The table shows that the activities correspond with the actions, however, in the spirit of ensuring complete alignment with the Action plan, the section below the table then suggest possible areas that could be modified for the next review of the programme of work at the seventy-ninth session of the Working Party.

Table III
SC.2 2024–2025 programme of work and climate actions

<i>Description of cluster</i>	<i>Expected accomplishments from this cluster</i>	<i>ITC Climate Change Strategy Action</i>
1. Monitoring, reviewing and updating of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC).	Monitoring and updating of relevant legal instruments, introduction of new legal instruments	9, 10
2. Monitoring, reviewing and updating of the Model Rules on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock.	where relevant, as well as enhanced cooperation of ECE countries in addressing them.	9
3. Consideration of measures to promote efficiency and sustainability of rail transport as part of a sustainable transport system, including bottlenecks in rail transport services at the pan-European level and facilitating technological progression of the sector.	Better understanding of rail transport operations and policies in the region, including infrastructure and its financing, border crossing,	29, 30, 31
4. Survey passenger and goods traffic on the AGC network in order to provide support for transport planning.	interoperability, security and safety, high speed trains, climate change as well as rail productivity and rail reform issues.	20, 26, 29, 30
5. Participation in, and monitoring of, different rail projects as well as in the development of initiatives on new conventions and regional cooperation and along Euro-Asian transport corridors		9, 10, 26, 29, 30, 31
6. Facilitate international rail transport in the pan-European region through improved border crossing procedures and harmonization of technical specifications of different railway systems and their operations at borders.		3
7. Review general trends in rail transport developments and rail transport policy, analyze specific rail transport economic issues, collect, compile and disseminate rail transport statistics in cooperation with the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) and prepare reports, reviews, publications and annual workshops on topical themes in rail transport development and best practices.		3, 10, 26, 29, 30, 31
8. Report and consider utilization of results of the Trans-European Railway (TER) project and its activities and strengthen cooperation between the TER project and the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2).	Increased capacity of ECE countries participating in the TER projects.	3, 10, 26, 29, 30, 31

12. The current work programme covers all the core eight actions identified above with actions one and six applying across the board as horizontal measures. Noting, however, the importance of a number of these action it could be of interest to member States to make some minor adjustments at the next review of the work programme. These potential changes include:

- Adding specific reference in cluster 3 to aspects aimed at reducing pathing conflicts (Action 30) and the optimisation of infrastructure networks (Action 29) as well as direct reference to the ITC Climate Change Strategy in the Expected Accomplishments of cluster 3.
- Adding a reference in cluster 7 to existing tools such as the AGC/AGTC technical parameters (Action 26).
- Adding a reference in cluster 8 specifically to the ITC Climate Change Strategy.

V. Next steps

13. The Working Party may wish to consider the above information and provide guidance on next steps, if any.
