



Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics****Thirty-seventh session**

Geneva, 25–27 September 2024

Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

Development of transport networks and links:**Euro-Asian Transport Links****2024 progress report - Operationalization efforts in the framework of the Economic Commission for Europe/
Economic Cooperation Organization Coordination Committee for the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors*****Submitted by the Chair and the Governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan with the support of the secretariat****I. Background**

1. At the thirty-fifth annual session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), in September 2022, a joint Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)/Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors has been established as an informal Group of Friends of the WP.5 Chair, hereinafter referred to as Coordination Committee (or CC). The following eight countries have to date been participating in the CC work represented by senior level representatives from railway companies, ministries in charge of transport and customs authorities: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. With the 2024 joining of Turkmenistan and the 2023 joining of Kyrgyz Republic the membership of the CC has been growing for two subsequent years with other countries indicating their interest to join in the future.

2. The CC is conducting its work as per its agreed Terms of Reference and its 2023–2025 biennial programme of work which are contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/1 (annexes I and II) and consist of five thematic areas of work, focusing on:

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



- For Cluster 1: Evaluation of transport infrastructure and renewal requirements as well as identification of missing links;
- For Cluster 2: Digitalization, harmonization, and standardization of transport documents in use on the corridors;
- For Cluster 3: En-route border crossing efficiency and identification, prioritization, and implementation of border crossing facilitation initiatives;
- For Cluster 4: Availability of reliable corridor-wide agreed timetables and tariffs and other issues hampering regular rail freight services on both corridors; and
- For Cluster 5: Strengthening the economic viability and resilience of the corridors as well as their environmental performance.

3. At its thirty-sixth annual session in September 2023, the Working Party appreciated the fact that the CC had developed and adopted its Terms of Reference and a detailed 2023–2025 programme of work and encouraged the countries to implement it effectively (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/74, paras. 21–23). The ECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its annual session in February 2024 “Took note of the information provided by the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics on operationalization efforts of the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL), including through the Trans-Caspian region, and encouraged countries involved to continue their coordination efforts aimed at enhancing the interoperability and facilitation of border crossings enabling fast and seamless transit of goods and requested that a further progress report be provided at its next session” (ECE/TRANS/344, para. 73). The present document prepared by the WP.5 Chair and the governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan, with the support of the secretariat, provides an overview of achievements of the CC over the past year.

II. Coordination Committee convenings in 2023 and 2024

4. During the reporting period, the Coordination Committee convened on multiple occasions, either in regular sessions, through bilateral calls, or in the format of designated capacity-building workshops.

A. Fourth session of the Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors – online – 11 December 2023

5. The fourth session of the Coordination Committee (CC) was held on 11 December 2023 from 10:00 to 13:00 CET in a virtual format using the Zoom Web platform with English/Russian interpretation. During the session, CC members from the eight participating countries conducted a tour-de-table and provided updates on recent national, bilateral, and regional developments supporting the operationalization of both corridors. Document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2024/2 includes a Corridor Coordination table outlining ongoing and planned operationalization activities.

B. Bilateral consultations with Coordination Committee members on a per country basis – online – March and April 2024

6. In March and April 2024, bilateral consultations between the WP.5 Chair and Vice-Chair, the ECE and ECO secretariats and CC members from each of the eight participating countries were held separately. On these occasions, clarifications were provided on the role and responsibilities of individual member countries and agreement was reached on a list of follow-up actions as well as specific types of information that need to be provided by member countries for the CC to be able to deliver on its mandate and programme of work.

7. With regard to thematic cluster A “Evaluation of transport infrastructure and renewal requirements as well as identification of missing links” for which the Geographic Information System (GIS) based International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO-GIS.org)

provides a useful online platform all eight countries indicated that they would wish to benefit from a capacity building workshop.

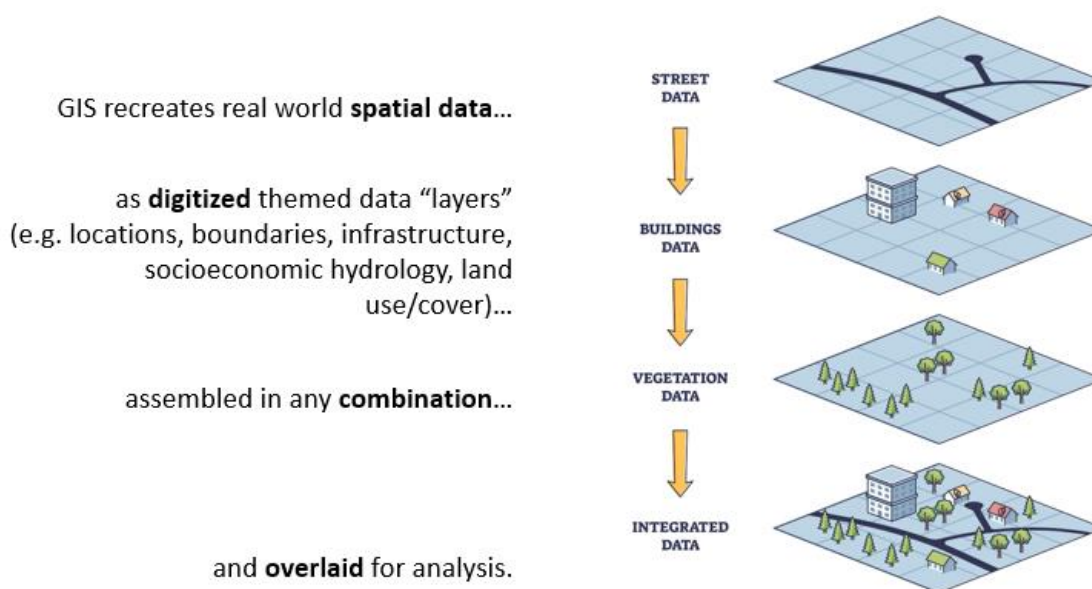
C. Geographic Information System Awareness Raising Workshop – 2 May 2024

8. On 2 May 2024 from 10:00 to 13:00 CET a GIS Awareness Raising Workshop was held on the Zoom Web platform in English and Russian. CC members from the eight countries, joint by technical/ GIS focal points from within their respective administrations, participated online for a 3-hour hands-on training session held by the ECE secretariat.

9. Participants were introduced to GIS, a technology for capturing, storing, integrating, manipulating, analysing, and displaying spatial data. They learned how GIS can digitize real-world spatial data into themed layers, such as locations, boundaries, infrastructure, and socioeconomic data, which can be overlaid for comprehensive analysis. The focus was on GIS applications in transport network management, including congestion hotspot identification, infrastructure inventory maintenance, real-time traffic monitoring, network planning, emergency response coordination, and public engagement through interactive maps.

Figure I

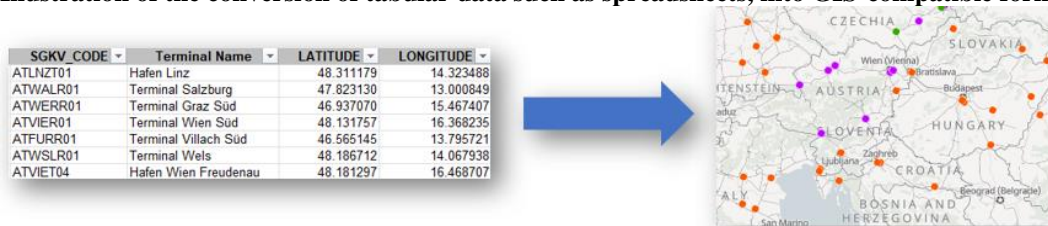
Geographic Information System layers illustrated



Source: ECE, Illustration: Stock.adobe.com

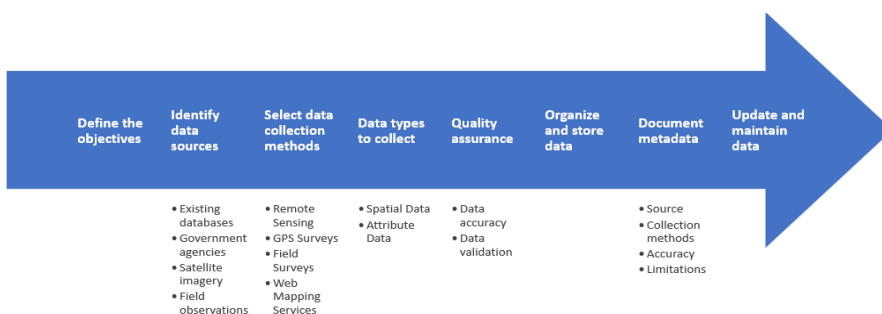
10. Participants were also informed about the possibility to convert tabular data, such as spreadsheets, into GIS-compatible formats if they contain geospatial information like unique identifiers, latitude/longitude coordinates, or addresses. GIS software in such cases can read common tabular data formats and, if geographic information is included, transform the data table into a shapefile using GIS tools. The latter was deemed particularly useful for CC countries that do not yet have geocoded data or GIS shapefiles available but are interested to start using GIS technology for their transport network and infrastructure management.

Figure II
Illustration of the conversion of tabular data such as spreadsheets, into GIS-compatible formats



Source: ECE

Figure III
Visualization of the data collection process preceding its use for GIS analytical purposes



Source: ECE

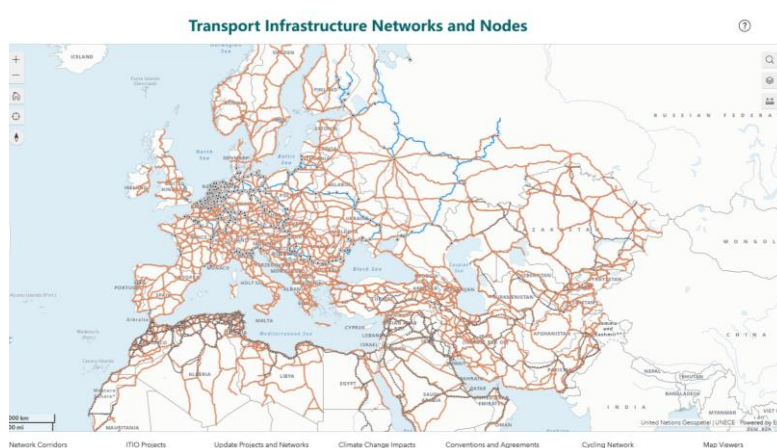
Figure IV
International Transport Infrastructure Observatory



11. Finally, participants were introduced to ITIO-GIS.org, an advanced GIS tool for planning, monitoring, and developing international transport infrastructure. This ECE hosted online platform consolidates various data sources, providing insights into the current state and planned expansions of transport networks across multiple countries. The ITIO interactive maps display layers of transport infrastructure data, including roads, railways, ports, and airports, allowing users to visualize current infrastructure, ongoing projects, and planned developments to identify gaps and prioritize investments. All maps are customizable, enabling overlay of different data sets for specific analyses.

12. Moreover, ITIO integrates transport infrastructure information from various countries, allowing users to assess the impact of their projects on regional connectivity. It also supports evaluating infrastructure resilience and sustainability, ensuring networks can withstand future challenges like climate change and increasing demand. ITIO offers tools for scenario analysis and simulation, aiding strategic planning and policy development. Policymakers, planners, and researchers can model the effects of various investments and policy changes, optimizing resource allocation and enhancing transport network efficiency.

Figure V
ITIO generated transport infrastructure map



Source: ITIO-GIS.org¹

13. Recognizing the significant benefits the use of ITIO-GIS.org can have for the work of the CC, the participating countries committed to start sharing their transport infrastructure data with ECE secretariat either as CSV or Excel files (with geographic coordinates) or preferably as shapefiles. Furthermore, CC members also committed to provide ahead of its fifth session information on seven AGTC infrastructure parameters for uploading onto ITIO-GIS.org.

D. Fifth session of the Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors – Astana – 3-5 June 2024

14. The fifth session of the CC took place in Astana, hosted by the Ministry of Transport of Kazakhstan, and was attended by some 30 participants, members of the Coordination Committee and upon invitation by the Chair representatives of the International Federation of Freight Forwarders (FIATA) and Deutsche Bahn (DB) Cargo Eurasia GmbH. It was instrumental in making progress under several of the thematic clusters which are part of its agreed biennial 2023–2025 programme of work.

15. Under Cluster 1, CC members were analysing the rail infrastructure on the respective corridors aimed at identifying missing links or sections in need of upgrade. To be ready for the analysis, Committee members had been requested to submit complete information on the rail infrastructure and their parameters, in line with decisions made at the previous meetings. Under Cluster 2 Committee members were taking stock of the different types of transport documents (uni or multi-modal and digital or paper-based) currently in use on the corridors and identified opportunities for harmonization and simplification.

16. Still under cluster 2, on 5 June 2024, Coordination Committee members were discussing the benefits of accession to and implementation of the first Convention of the Unified Railway Law, that is the Convention on the Contract for International Carriage of Goods by Rail which has been adopted and is open for accession. CC members noted that this new Convention simplifies and improves rail transport efficiency by allowing a unified legal regime between the Uniform Rules concerning the Contract for International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM) and the Agreement on International Railway Freight Communications (SMGS) regions, eliminating the need for reconsignment, and reducing administrative barriers with a single integrated consignment note. It was also stated that this Convention has the potential to offer greater legal certainty and liability, supports negotiable transport documents, and retains the best elements of both CIM and SMGS systems. It was stressed that by streamlining operations and lowering costs, the unified system boosts railway competitiveness and supports multimodal journeys where rail is the primary mode, making

¹ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this and following maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Euro-Asian rail freight transportation more viable for diverse and longer routes. Whereas several of the CC countries expressed interest it was suggested that to support the accession, a document should be prepared by the secretariat highlighting opportunities but also efforts needed to make the new Convention fully work. The document should also answer all questions that countries agreed to send over to the secretariat ahead of the next CC session.

17. Under Cluster 5: “Strengthening the economic viability and resilience of the corridors as well as their environmental performance” Committee members participated in a thematic round table discussion on the importance of climate change adaptation of transport infrastructure and its relevance for the Trans-Caspian region.

18. Substantive progress made under paragraphs 14–17 above is elaborated in more detail as part of section III of this document.

III. Progress up-date by thematic cluster for 2023–2024

A. Cluster 1: Evaluation of transport infrastructure and renewal requirements as well as identification of missing links

19. Building on the existing European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC), and European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) infrastructure agreements, the CC as part of its biennial 2023–2025 programme of work (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/1 (annex II) committed to undertake a comprehensive corridor-wide mapping exercise to identify missing infrastructure links and assess existing technical parameters for seamless transport on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul routes.

20. As per its deliberations at its fourth and fifth sessions (December 2023 and June 2024) CC members decided to collect data on 7 parameters covered in the AGTC Agreement, see Table 1 and Box 1 below).

Table 1
Infrastructure parameters for the network of important international combined transport lines

		A				B	
		<i>Existing lines which meet the infrastructure requirements and lines to be improved or reconstructed</i>				<i>New lines</i>	
		<i>at present</i>		<i>target values</i>			
1.	Number of tracks	(not specified)		(not specified)		2	
2.	Vehicle loading gauge			UIC B ^b		UIC C ^b	
3.	Minimum distance between track centres ^a			4,0 m		4,2 m	
4.	Nominal minimum speed ^c			Line category	Speed	Line category	Speed
				F1	120	F1	120
				F2	120	F2	120
				F3	100	F3	100
				F4	n.a.	F4	n.a.
				F1520	120	F1520	120
		100 km/h		F1600	100	F1600	100
5.	Authorized mass per axle:						
	Wagons ≤ 100 km/h	20 t		22,5 t		22,5 t	
	≤ 120 km/h	20 t		20 t		20 t	
6.	Maximum gradient ^a	(not specified)		(not specified)		12.5 mm/m	
7.	Minimum useful siding length	600 m		750 m		750 m	

^a Not of immediate relevance for combined transport, but recommended for efficient international combined transport

^b UIC: International Union of Railways

^c Minimum standards for combined transport trains (see annex IV)

Explanation of the parameters contained in the table above as per the AGTC agreement

Explanation of the parameters contained in the table above

(1) Number of tracks

International combined transport lines must provide high capacity and allow for precise timing of operation.

It is generally possible to meet both requirements only on lines with at least two tracks; however, single track lines would be allowed if the other parameters of the Agreement are complied with.

(2) Vehicle loading gauge

This is the minimum loading gauge for international combined transport lines.

On new lines, only a small marginal investment cost is normally incurred by adopting a high loading gauge, and the UIC C gauge has therefore been chosen.

The C gauge allows, for instance:

- The transport of road goods vehicles and road trains (lorry with trailer, articulated vehicle, tractor and semitrailer) conforming to the European road loading gauge (height 4 m, width 2.5 m) on special wagons with a loading height of 60 cm above rail level;
- The transport of ordinary road semi-trailers 2.5 m wide and 4 m high on recess wagons with normal bogies;
- The transport of ISO containers 2.44 m wide and 2.9 m high on ordinary flat wagons;
- The transport of swap bodies 2.5 m wide on ordinary flat wagons;
- The transport of containers/swap bodies 2.6 m wide and 2.9 m high on suitable wagons.

The existing lines across mountainous regions (such as the Pyrenees, Massif Central, Alps, Jura, Appenines, Carpathians) have many tunnels conforming to the Technical Unit loading gauge, or gauges of slightly greater height at the centre of the track. Increasing this to conform to the UIC C gauge is in almost all cases impossible from the economic and financial standpoints.

The UIC B gauge has therefore been chosen for these lines, as it allows, for instance:

- The transport of ISO containers, 2.44 m wide and 2.90 m high, on flat container-wagons with a loading height 1.18 m above rail level;
- The transport of swap bodies, 2.5 m wide and 2.6 m, high on ordinary flat wagons (loading height 1.246 m);
- The transport of semi-trailers on recess wagons;
- The transport of containers/swap bodies, 2.6 m wide and 2.9 m high, on special low-loader wagons.

Most of the existing international combined transport lines offer at least the UIC B gauge. In the case of the others, improvement to this standard does not normally require major investments.

(4) Nominal minimum speed

The nominal minimum speed determines the geometrical characteristics of the section (radius of curves and cant), the safety installations (braking distances) and the braking coefficient of the rolling stock.

(5) Authorized mass per axle

This is the authorized mass per axle which international combined transport lines should be able to bear.

International combined transport lines should be capable of taking the most modern existing and future vehicle traffic, in particular:

Wagons with a mass per axle of 20 tonnes, which corresponds to UIC class C; a wagon mass per axle of 22.5 tonnes up to 100 km/h has been adopted, in conformity with recent UIC decisions. The mass per axle limits of 20 tonnes for a speed of 120 km/h are those set by the UIC regulations.

The mass per axle values shown are for a wheel diameter of not less than 840 mm, in accordance with the UIC regulations.

(7) Minimum useful siding length

The minimum useful siding length on international combined transport lines is significant for combined transport trains (see annex IV).

Source: AGTC

21. The results of this data collection exercise is visualized in the below maps 1-6.

Map 1

Network (orange: other rail network of interest – not AGC/AGTC)



Source: ECE, ITIO-GIS.org

Map 2

Number of tracks (green: parameter data received – at least 1 track - dotted grey: no data received)



Source: ECE, ITIO-GIS.org

Map 3

Authorized mass per axle tonnes (green: > 20, orange: < 20, dotted grey: no data received)



Source: ECE, ITIO-GIS.org

Map 4
Maximum Gradient (dotted grey: no parameters data received, blue: data received but under analysis, green: gradient < 12.5, orange: gradient > 12.5)



Source: ECE, ITIO-GIS.org

Map 5
Minimum useful siding length meter (dotted grey: no parameters data received, blue: data received but under analysis, green: 750 m minimum)



Source: ECE, ITIO-GIS.org

Map 6

Nominal minimum speed km/h (blue: data received but under analysis, green: 100 minimum, dotted grey: no data received)



Source: ECE, ITIO-GIS.org

22. As shown in the above maps, the data collection on the lines will need to continue in 2024. Following the data collection, bottlenecks on the lines will be identified taking into account the parameters, so that adequate recommendations can be formulated, and a list of priority transport infrastructure projects can be established that could be matched with national funding programmes. At a later stage CC members with the support of the secretariat will be in a position to develop funding proposals to secure additional financing for these projects and include them in ITIO. Outreach efforts will be made to Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), Regional Cooperation Organizations (RCOs), and other relevant stakeholders.

B. Clusters 2 and 3: Digitalization, harmonization, and standardization of transport documents in use on the corridors and en-route border crossing efficiency

23. As part of the CC biennial programme of work, under its clusters 2 and 3, the CC agreed to review the use of different types of multi- or uni- modal transport documents and digital platforms on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors and match them against the requirements by enforcement bodies in all countries along the corridors, including customs as well as other state control agencies. At its fifth session, the CC identified a set of thirteen most used documents on the corridor, as included in table 2 below.

Table 2:

Typical transport accompanying documents used for international (inter-modal) freight movements

Documents	Explanations ^a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consignment notes: Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (CIM); Agreement on International Goods Transport by Rail (SMGS) and CIM-SMGS as well as the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) 	<p>A consignment note is considered a crucial document in the transport and logistics industry, acting as a contract of carriage between the consignor (the party sending the goods) and the carrier (the party transporting the goods). This document serves several purposes, including providing details about the shipment, specifying the terms and conditions of the transport, and serving as a receipt upon delivery.</p>

<i>Documents</i>	<i>Explanations^a</i>
• Container list/ packing list	A container list or packing list is a document used in shipping and logistics to provide detailed information about the contents of a shipment. This document is essential for both the shipper and the consignee, as well as for customs authorities and other parties involved in the transportation process.
• Commercial invoice	Commercial invoice is a legal document provided by a seller to a buyer in an international transaction. The document serves as a contract and proof of sales between the two parties. It details the number of goods sold, the prices and their value. For the clearance of imported goods, commercial invoice must be presented to the customs authority who uses the document to assess the amount due on taxes.
• Wagon list	Wagon list is a term primarily used in the context of railways, particularly in Europe and other regions with extensive railway systems. It refers to a detailed list or document that provides information about the wagons (railcars) that are part of a train. This list may include wagon numbers (unique identifiers for each wagon); Information on types of wagons; Information on cargo (weight, volume, cargo handling requirements); Destinations (intermediate and final); as well as ownership (information about the owner of each wagon, especially in cases where wagons from different railway companies are part of the same train).
• Customs declaration (import/ export)	Any statement or action, in any form prescribed or accepted by the Customs, giving information or particulars required by the Customs. This term includes declarations made through electronic means.
• Certificate of origin	A specific form identifying the goods, in which the authority or body empowered to issue it certifies expressly that the goods to which the certificate relates originate in a specific country. This certificate may also include a declaration by the manufacturer, producer, supplier, exporter or other competent person. ^b
• Letter of credit	A Letter of Credit (LC), also known as a documentary credit, is a financial document issued by a bank at the request of a buyer (importer) in favour of a seller (exporter). It guarantees that the seller will receive payment for goods or services once certain conditions specified in the letter of credit are fulfilled.
• Certificates for specific types of goods	This may include documents accompanying life stock, food, and perishables such as phytosanitary/ medico-sanitary and veterinary inspection documents, e.g as defined in the UNECE International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods.
• Transit documents for shipments in transit (including both international and national transit regimes)	Transit procedures involve a formal declaration to customs authorities outlining the goods' nature, quantity, and value, confirming they are passing through a country or customs area without incurring import duties. This declaration proves the goods are not for domestic use but

Documents	Explanations ^a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dangerous goods accompanying documents and certification. 	<p>destined for another country. Some jurisdictions may require a Transit Accompanying Document (TAD), detailing goods specifics like origin, destination, and route. In international road transport, the TIR Carnet streamlines customs procedures, removing the need for separate guarantees at each border crossing within TIR Convention member countries.</p> <p>Dangerous goods accompanying documents and certifications are essential for the safe transport of hazardous materials. The Dangerous Goods Declaration (DGD) provides detailed information such as UN numbers, hazard classifications, and quantities, ensuring proper handling and emergency response readiness. Transport documents must accompany shipments, offering vital details to carriers and emergency responders. Packaging and labelling must adhere to international regulations, ensuring materials are securely contained and clearly identified.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic Rights and Road Transport Permits 	<p>Traffic rights and transport permits are crucial regulatory mechanisms in rail transport, defining the permissions granted to operators by regulatory authorities to conduct specific train services on designated routes. Traffic rights outline operational parameters such as service types (passenger or freight), frequency, and sections of railway lines available for use. Transport permits, akin to those in road transport, authorize operators to utilize railway infrastructure while ensuring compliance with safety, operational, and environmental standards. These permits apply to both domestic and international operations, governing aspects like track access fees and technical requirements.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle registration and periodical technical inspection documents 	<p>Vehicle registration and periodical technical inspection (PTI) documents are essential in both rail and road freight transport for ensuring safety, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency. In rail freight, vehicle registration involves registering freight wagons and locomotives with authorities, providing ownership details and technical specifications necessary for legal operation on railway networks. Periodical technical inspections are conducted to assess the safety and compliance of these vehicles with structural integrity, braking systems, and onboard equipment. Similarly, in road freight, vehicle registration includes trucks and trailers being registered with authorities, ensuring compliance with roadworthiness standards for legal operation on public roads. PTI inspections for road vehicles verify roadworthiness, covering aspects like brakes, lights, and emissions. Compliance with these requirements is crucial to prevent accidents and maintain operational reliability.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance documents (for vehicle and cargo) 	<p>Insurance documents in rail and road transport operations encompass vehicle insurance, which covers risks such as third-party liability and damage to the vehicle itself, and cargo insurance, which protects against theft, damage, or loss of goods during transit. These policies provide</p>

financial protection against unforeseen events and ensure the security of both vehicles and cargo throughout transportation. Depending on jurisdictional requirements and contractual agreements, specific types of insurance such as goods in transit, marine cargo, carrier's liability, and freight forwarder's liability insurance may be mandated or recommended to manage risks effectively and comply with legal obligations.

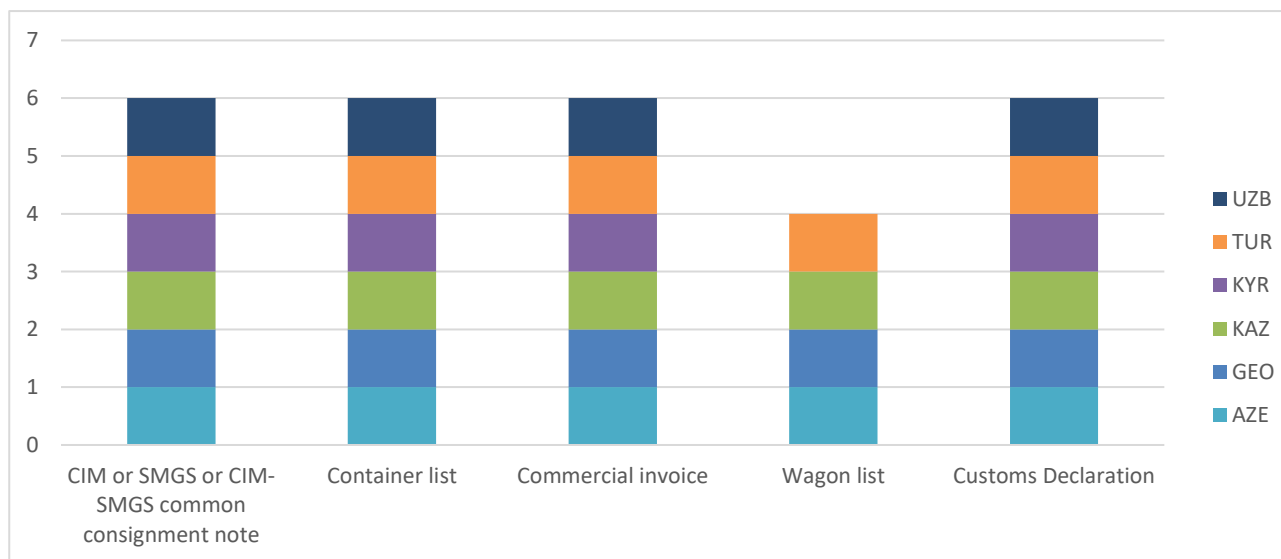
^a These explanations are based on research conducted by the secretariat, are not exhaustive definitions, and are intended solely for informational purposes to aid in understanding the terminology used in the subsequent analysis.

^b World Customs Organization (WCO), Glossary of International Customs Terms, December 2018 available [here](#).

1. Transport documents most commonly used on the corridors

24. Building on table 1 above, figures VI–VIII below provide an overview of the mandatory transport documents for rail freight operations across different countries on both corridors. CC members from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan filled out a designated questionnaire prepared by the secretariat and provided the required data (in full or partially). CC members Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkmenistan committed to provide the required information at a later stage, possibly ahead of the next CC session in autumn 2024.

Figure VI
Mandatory transport documents by country



Source: Data provided by participating governments

25. In all six countries that provided data, the use of the CIM, SMGS, or CIM-SMGS common consignment note is mandatory. These consignment notes can be submitted in physical form or as scanned copies. On the territory of Azerbaijan, the organization of cargo transportation by rail is possible in accordance with the legal norms regulated by OTIF and OSJD. The transportation of cargo must be formalized using SMGS or CIM-SMGS railway consignment notes, and in agreed cases, the use of CIM is possible. In Türkiye, the use of CIM and CIM-SMGS is regulated by customs law and monitored by the relevant authorities. Similarly, customs and border management authorities in all seven countries require a container/packing list, a wagon list, and a commercial invoice.

26. In Türkiye, the container list is replaced by the delivery voucher at rail border crossings. In Kazakhstan, the container number is indicated in the consignment note and one shipping document is issued for each shipment. If a shipment consists of several containers,

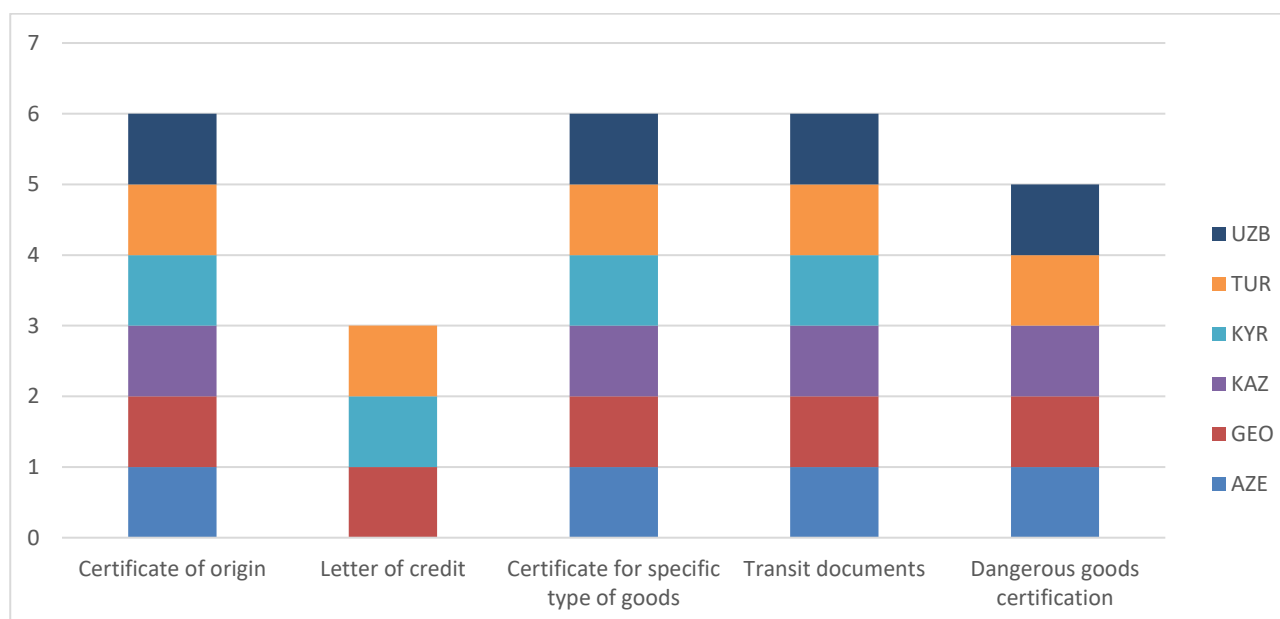
a list of containers is drawn up which is an integral part of the consignment note (as per clause 7.5 of Annex 1 to SMGS). For Uzbekistan the container list is a necessary document to obtain data on the number of pieces and weight of goods, it is however not required separately if these data are indicated in the invoice.

27. In Türkiye, the commercial invoice is used for transit movements to calculate the guarantee and is checked by customs to confirm the value of the transported goods. In Kazakhstan the commercial invoice, import, export and customs documents as well as certificate of origin should be attached by the consignor only if it is necessary to complete administrative formalities en route (and not in transit). For Uzbek Customs the commercial invoice is the main document for customs clearance of goods, as it provides information on the name of the goods, cost, consigner, and consignee as well as bank details and other required data. In Georgia, the customs declaration acts as a customs supervision document if an advance declaration is submitted and the goods are assigned to the yellow corridor (requiring documentary checks) or the red corridor (requiring physical inspection). If no advance declaration is made, the registration certificate (T1) applicable under the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) is used for transporting goods from one customs territory to another under the external transit procedure. This procedure allows non-European Union goods to move within the European Union customs territory without incurring import duties or other charges until they reach their destination.

28. In Türkiye, the requirement for a wagon list depends on the transit movement and the goods being transported. Each wagon is declared by a single transit declaration. If the invoice includes goods in different wagons, a wagon list may be required. This official document is issued at the railway border crossings and exchanged between railway administrations on both sides of the border. For Uzbekistan this is an optional document at least for customs clearance processes.

Figure VII

Mandatory transport documents by country (continued)



Source: Data provided by participating governments

29. In Georgia, a certificate of origin is required to claim customs duty preferences. It is needed when the declarant seeks tax relief for imported goods or to confirm the origin of the goods. This certificate can be presented physically or as an electronically scanned version of the physical document. A letter of credit in Georgia is relevant only for customs fines, with proof of payment acceptable in both physical and electronic forms. The Georgian Revenue Service has improved its services by partnering with banking institutions to receive payment information electronically. In Türkiye, the issuance of a letter of credit is a requirement under NCTS and is regulated by the Common Transit Convention and the customs authority. The T1 form in Georgia (required under NCTS) is filled out and registered electronically, while

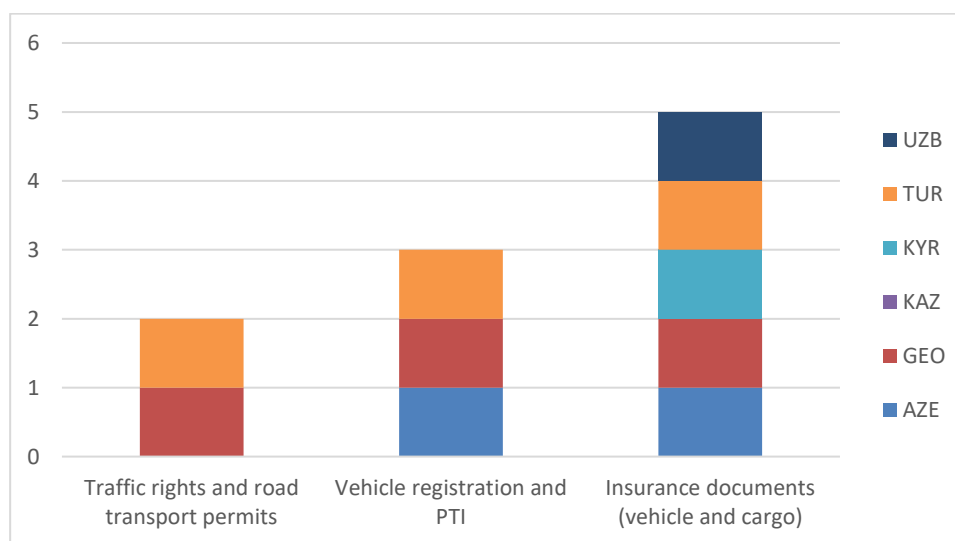
other documents are submitted physically. In all six countries, documents accompanying life stock, food, and perishables such as phytosanitary/ medico-sanitary and veterinary inspection documents are a requirement. Typically, such documents are issued by the Ministries in charge of agriculture, forestry or health and are verified by the customs administration or other border control agencies.

30. For Türkiye, in terms of transit requirements, the TIR Carnet is regulated by the TIR Convention, while the Transit Accompanying Document (TAD) is governed by Turkish Customs regulation and the Common Transit Convention (CTC). Railway simplification is also based on the CTC. The TAD remains in the country, and its information must match the details in the CIM transport document issued by the Customs Authorities. The CIM transport document, along with its annexes (certificate of origin, invoice for the goods, and any other certificates), is provided to the country across the border. In terms of transit documents for shipments in transit, Georgia uses CMR, TIR and T1.

31. For transporting dangerous goods in Azerbaijan, Georgia and several other countries by motorized vehicle, the following documents are required: an ADR certificate for the driver's special training or an equivalent document from the vehicle's country of registration, a certificate of acceptance for international transportation of dangerous goods, a document confirming a positive result of the vehicle's periodic technical inspection, and the necessary licenses or permits issued by Georgia or by recognized foreign authorities. For traffic rights and road transport permits, Georgia mandates that foreign-registered road freight transport submit an authorization for international road freight transport, issued by the competent authorities of the partner country, to the Revenue Service.

Figure VIII

Mandatory transport documents by country



Source: Data provided by participating governments

32. A vehicle registration certificate for road transport is mandatory in Georgia and must be presented when crossing the border during passport control and customs formalities. The mandatory civil liability insurance policy for a motor vehicle registered in a foreign state can be submitted in physical form. If a physical form is not available, the existence of the insurance policy can be verified electronically on a designated website. For Uzbekistan, the required certificates include a certificate of registration of a motor vehicle in accordance with the Convention on Road Traffic (Vienna, November 8, 1968) and for international road transport a certificate of approval for international transportation of goods under customs seals and stamps according to the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnet (Geneva, November 14, 1975). As is the case for the other countries as well a certificate of approval for transporting perishable products when transporting perishables, and a certificate of approval for transporting dangerous goods when transporting dangerous goods are required too.

33. In summary, the analysis of transport and customs documentation requirements across Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, and other countries reveals a complex and varied regulatory landscape. The use of consignment notes (CIM, SMGS, CIM-SMGS) is mandatory in all surveyed countries, with Türkiye and others also mandating specific documents like container lists, commercial invoices, and certificates of origin for customs clearance. Each country has its unique requirements: Türkiye replaces the container list with a delivery voucher at rail borders, while Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have specific regulations for container and commercial invoice documentation. Across all countries, phytosanitary, medico-sanitary, and veterinary documents are essential for transporting livestock, food, and perishables. While the types of documents used across the corridors are largely similar, notable differences exist in their formats (digital or paper-based), the methods and authorities responsible for checking and enforcing them, and whether their submission is mandatory or voluntary. Some documents can also be combined with others, varying by country. Certain distinctions are observed between countries that are members of customs unions, such as Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and those that are not.

2. Availability of transport facilitation measures

Table 3

Availability of transport facilitation measures on a per country basis

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Explanation/ commonalities</i>
1	Reduction of requirements for multiple submission of same documents; For example, documents could be submitted and inspected only once (e.g. only when first introduced in the electronic system of the competent authorities).	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan	<p>Azerbaijan customs services operate electronically, allowing for documents to be lodged once without the need for resubmission.</p> <p>The Georgia Revenue Service considers permits (excluding CITES) that are submitted with the general declaration and uploaded into the Unified Electronic System of Licenses, Permits, and Certificates as compliant.</p> <p>In Türkiye, The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MTI) utilizes the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) permits system (UBAK) to facilitate international road transport permits and manage border crossing activities. UBAK is integrated with the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS), enabling bidirectional information flow between MTI and the Ministry of Trade (MT). Furthermore, plans have been announced for the development of a Single Window for Railways aimed at enhancing efficiency in railway logistics.</p> <p>In Kazakhstan “Keden IS” (Integrated Customs Information System of Kazakhstan) is being implemented. It is designed to facilitate and streamline the management and processing of customs data and procedures. Keden IS helps in automating various customs processes, including declarations, inspections, and risk management, thus supporting the country’s efforts to modernize its customs administration and align with international standards. In Uzbekistan, in the transit declaration system the transport document and invoice are submitted only once in electronic form. The Kyrgyz Republic launched the</p>

Item no.	Facilitation measure	Countries	Explanation/ commonalities
2	Reduction of the number of supporting documents in applications for permits and transit customs clearance (e.g. only essential commercial documents such as invoice to be required without regular requirements for submission of other contracts and foreign payment documents).	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic	<p>"Sanarip Tamga" project at key customs checkpoints to optimize business processes and improve information exchange between state regulatory authorities. This pilot project introduces a new portal for advance information submission and. It aims to expedite the checkpoint process by enabling pre-arrival risk assessments and control decisions, utilizing a "Single Window" mechanism and "One Stop Shop" principle to streamline and eliminate redundant border control procedures.</p> <p>In Azerbaijan and Georgia, for cargo in transit, only the consignment notes and commercial invoices are submitted to customs.</p> <p>In Türkiye, for permits, certain documents, such as authorization documents, are no longer required, and most can now be submitted online. A comprehensive guarantee system is in place for transit movements, and if you are eligible and have this type of guarantee, no document submission is necessary. Everything is managed online through a registration number called Guarantee Reference Number (GRN). depending on the type of goods. In the case of Kazakhstan, the provision of contracts and foreign payment documents is not required. In Uzbekistan, the documents required for transit customs clearance are provided along with the preliminary transit declaration. The Kyrgyz Republic performs customs clearance in accordance with the Customs Code of the EAEU and national legislation.</p>
3	Merging documents (e.g. one document that can serve as invoice and packing list).	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic	<p>In Azerbaijan, all customs-required information can be consolidated into a single document. In Türkiye, the CIM serves as a transit declaration, and a railway simplification system is operational among the parties to the Common Transit Convention (CTC). In Kazakhstan each type of transport has its own documentary requirements so merging of documents is not allowed. In Uzbekistan a packing list is used to clarify the weight of a product and the number of packages. If these details are included on the invoice, no packing list is required. In the Kyrgyz Republic the invoice, if it contains information about the number and type of packages, is used for customs clearance purposes and there is in such cases no need for a separate packing list.</p>
4	Use of electronic documents and reuse of data (or scanned documents e.g. scanned invoice).	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic	<p>In Azerbaijan, documents are usually submitted in scanned form and attached to the customs declaration, facilitating electronic data exchange with other agencies. In Georgia, declarations filed via the electronic customs clearance zone "eGEZ" or directly through the eCustoms system require</p>

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Explanation/ commonalities</i>
			electronic document submission. In Türkiye, a Single Window system is being implemented (see under item 5 in this table). In the case of Kazakhstan only original/ paper-based documents are allowed. In Uzbekistan electronically submitted data can be reused. Kyrgyz Republic follows the applicable Customs Code of EAEU.
5	Introduction of single window facility as a single-entry point for submission of documentary requirements.	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic	In Azerbaijan efforts are underway to develop a unified platform for streamlined inter-agency collaboration. In Türkiye, the Ministry of Trade has been mandated to coordinate activities with other public institutions. In this capacity, it leads an initiative involving 18 public agencies from sectors including culture, tourism, health, agriculture, environment, and finance. The goal is to streamline operations across Türkiye and its transportation partners through a unified entry point and single window approach. In Kazakhstan a Single Window pilot project is under implementation in the Port of Aktau and has been launched in the Port of Kuryk. Kyrgyz Republic as well uses a Single Window system whereas in Uzbekistan an interdepartmental "Single Window" has been operational since 2020. Still in Uzbekistan, a customs information system "E-archive" is used to store documents required for customs clearance, for the purpose of their further reuse.
6	Single window inspection of documents (e.g. one competent authority to inspect the documents on behalf of other competent authority).	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic	In Azerbaijan, customs is the primary border organization responsible for verification, which includes oversight on behalf of other agencies. In Georgia, the Revenue Service has access to permits, licenses, and certificates issued by various agencies, and electronic data sharing among these agencies is also facilitated. In Türkiye, the coordination between the government agencies participating in the Single Window is managed by the Ministry of Trade/ Directorate of Customs. In Kazakhstan, at the external border of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) customs authorities carry out customs, transport, phytosanitary, veterinary and transport controls. In the Kyrgyz Republic too transport controls are done by the Customs service.
7	Submission of import/export customs clearance documents at inland customs offices instead at border crossing points.	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic	In Azerbaijan, Georgia and Türkiye, customs clearance is primarily conducted at inland customs offices, whenever feasible. In Kazakhstan, customs clearance of export cargo occurs at the departure station, while imported cargo can be cleared either at the border or at an internal customs office near the destination station, based on the cargo owner's request. If cleared internally, the cargo undergoes customs transit at the border to the destination station. In the Kyrgyz Republic submission of documents for customs clearance of import/ export

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Explanation/ commonalities</i>
			is carried out only at customs clearance points, not at the actual border.
8	Simplified documentary requirements for authorized economic operators (e.g. authorized consignor, authorized consignee simplifications).	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic	Authorized operators enjoy specific privileges in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye. In Türkiye, Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) can submit declarations without original documents but must provide them within a specified period afterwards. These documents include invoices, ATR (Temporary Admission) movement certificates, certificates of origin, insurance documents, consignment notes, and conformity documents for processed agricultural goods at border crossings. In Kazakhstan cargo operators are exempted from payment of customs securities. In the case of Kyrgyz Republic this is regulated by the EAEU Customs Code.

3. Recommendations for simplification and harmonization of customs regulatory formalities at railway border crossings based on the World Customs Organization Revised Kyoto Convention²

Table 4

Recommendations as per the General Annex of the World Customs Organization Revised Kyoto Convention

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>National specifics or commonalities</i>
1	The format of the electronically lodged Goods declarations should be based on recommended international standards for electronic information exchange (Standard 3.11)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Uzbekistan	<p>Georgia uses the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) which is a computerized customs management system developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to automate and streamline customs procedures, making trade processes more efficient and transparent/ Türkiye participates in CTC using NCTS which complies with electronic information exchange standards.</p> <p>In Kazakhstan the formats of customs declarations (DT) issued electronically are standardized and approved by a decision of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC).</p> <p>In Uzbekistan, the electronic declaration of goods is regulated by the Customs Code, the laws "On Electronic Document Flow" and "On Electronic Digital Signature" and other relevant resolutions and declarations.</p>

² International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (Revised Kyoto Convention, World Customs Organization (WCO), April 2008

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>National specifics or commonalities</i>
2	Limit the data required in the Goods declaration only to such particulars deemed necessary (e.g. for assessment of duties and taxes) (Standard 3.12)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan	While such a measure is not yet in place in Türkiye, there is a new type of declaration under the CTC and NCTS Phase 5, which limits the data required for lodging the transit declaration. The list of documents required for export-import operations was approved by Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 197 on July 20, 2015. For goods under “import” and “export” customs regimes, transport documents must be submitted along with the cargo customs declaration, referred to as "shipping documents".
3	Limit requirements for supporting documents to the Goods declaration only to those necessary (e.g. to permit control of the operations) (Standard 3.16)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye	Only documents necessary for declaration and customs control are required
4	Permit lodgment of supporting documents by electronic means (Transitional Standard 3.21)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan	In Türkiye, a railway Single Window project has been approved and will commence shortly. In Kazakhstan submission of the declaration and accompanying documents is done in electronic form.
5	Do not require a translation of the particulars of supporting documents except when necessary to permit processing of the goods Declaration (Standard 3.19)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye	Türkiye utilizes NCTS, which provides standardized transit declarations with clear standard boxes to assist customs officers during document review. In Kazakhstan, documents submitted in a language other than Kazakh or Russian may need to be translated according to the customs regulations.
6	Permit the lodging of the Goods declaration by electronic means (Transitional standard 3.21)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan	Türkiye is a member of the CTC and utilizes NCTS for transit operations, allowing railway companies to lodge declarations electronically. In Kazakhstan submission of the declaration and accompanying documents is done in electronic form.
7	Provide lodging and registering or checking of the Goods declaration and supporting documents prior to arrival of the goods (Standard 3.25)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan	According to customs legislation in Georgia it is possible to declare the goods in advance (not later than 45 days before arrival of goods). In Türkiye, if goods originate from a CTC territory, their data is available in NCTS upon declaration, before the train arrives. For goods not from CTC countries, TCDD re-consigns upon the train's arrival at the border. In Kazakhstan advance declaration for goods is possible before the import of goods into the territory of the EAEU

Table 5
Recommendations as per specific Annex A of the World Customs Organization Revised Kyoto Convention – Arrival of goods in a Customs territory

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Explanation/ commonalities</i>
1	The carrier is responsible to ensure that all goods are included in the cargo declaration or brought to the attention of the Customs (Specific Annex A, Chapter 1, Standard 4)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye	In Georgia, when goods are imported into the customs territory, a general declaration is required for customs supervision, control, and formalities. This declaration can be submitted by the importer, the owner or receiver of the goods, their representative, or anyone presenting the goods in Georgia's customs territory. In Türkiye, the carrier bears primary responsibility, which is shared with the procedure holder, another participant in the transit process governed by the Common Transit Convention and Turkish Customs Regulations.
2	Limit information requirements to that available in carriers 'normal documentation (based on relevant international transport agreements) (Specific Annex A, Ch. 1-Recommended practice 9)	Azerbaijan, Georgia	The information of the carrier mentioned on the consignment notes is sufficient for customs control in Azerbaijan.
3	Accept the cargo declaration as the only required documentation for the production of the goods (Specific Annex A; Chapter 1 Recommended practice 10)	Azerbaijan	In the case of Azerbaijan, the SMGS and TIR carnet are accepted as documents replacing the transit declaration.
4	Do not require regular translation of the particulars from other languages given in the documents produced to the Customs (Specific Annex A, Chapter 1, Recommended practice 12)	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye	In Azerbaijan and Georgia, documents in an international language are not required to be translated, however it can be requested under the Customs code.

Table 6
Recommendations as per specific Annex E of the World Customs Organization Revised Kyoto Convention – Customs transit/ transshipment

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Explanation/ commonalities</i>
1	Accept any commercial or transport document setting out clearly the necessary particulars as the descriptive part of the Goods declaration for Customs transit (Specific Annex E; Chapter 1, standard 6)	Azerbaijan	In Azerbaijan, the railway consignment note and TIR carnet are accepted as documents replacing the customs declaration for transit transport of goods whereas in Türkiye, only the CIM and CIM/SMGS consignment notes are accepted by customs.

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Explanation/ commonalities</i>
2	Accept adequate commercial or transport documents as the Goods declaration for Customs transit (e.g. road transport consignment note) (Specific Annex E; Chapter 1, recommended practice 7)	Azerbaijan, Türkiye	Railway Simplification enables Turkish Railways to utilize the paper CIM/CIM-SMGS Consignment Note as a transit declaration in NCTS member countries. This involves data exchange between Customs and TCDD to facilitate the process.

Table 7
Recommendations as per specific Annex G of the World Customs Organization Revised Kyoto Convention – Temporary admission

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Facilitation measure</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Explanation/ commonalities</i>
1	Grant temporary admission without a written Goods declaration when there is no doubt about the subsequent re-exportation of the Goods (Specific Annex G: Chapter 1 Recommended practice 9)	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan	In the case of Azerbaijan there is no written declaration requirement for temporarily imported containers used for the transport of goods. In Kazakhstan, if a vehicle of international transport is subject to loading/ unloading or transit, registration of a customs declaration for vehicles in electronic form is allowed.

4. Availability of digital solutions on the corridors

34. In Azerbaijan, the Unified Automated Management System (UAMS) of the State Customs Committee (SCC), established in 2009, integrates in a single network Customs and other trade control agencies. Currently, SCC is introducing several e-services that are available via customs and government e-services web portals. The electronic systems of 13 agencies involved in cross-border trade operations, which, are responsible for the issuance of permits and licenses are electronically integrated with the customs Single Window. Additionally, the Automated Risk Analysis System (ARAS) was developed by the experts of the State Customs Committee and started to be implemented in January 2024. ARAS, which works with artificial intelligence-based machine learning algorithms, enables quick border crossing of goods and vehicles, flexible customs clearance, and reduces operational costs of business entities due to data pre-processing. Moreover, Azerbaijan participates in the pilot phase implementation of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Customs Automated Transit System (CATS) and Information Common Exchange (ICE) systems. Also, in Azerbaijan the development of a National Digital Trade Platform is starting. The future system aims to digitize, centralize, and optimize all operational and business processes in cargo transportation, both for internal and external operations.

35. In Georgia, the RAFL system serves as a domestic cargo operating system that integrates with the country's customs system to efficiently manage and record full freight operations. Additionally, Georgia employs the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS), which is a regional transit system primarily used within the European Union to streamline customs transit procedures across multiple regions. Moreover, Georgia utilizes the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Customs Automated Transit System (CATS) and Information Common Exchange (ICE) systems. These CAREC systems, which are still under development, aim at facilitating the movement of goods across borders within the region by automating customs transit processes and enhancing the exchange of information among member countries, thereby promoting efficient and coordinated cross-border trade. Pilots are being held with the involvement of other countries in the region including Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. Moreover, Georgia is also implementing a maritime Single Window System in its ports. The electronic system has been piloted since January 2024 and is planned to be fully rolled out by the end of the year.

36. In Türkiye, the Single Window System, established in 2012, streamlines trade by reducing paperwork and enhancing import and export inspections. It consolidates document acquisition and inspection results, allowing traders to submit applications via the E-Government Gateway and receive a 23-digit e-document number for customs declarations. Managing 180 documents from 24 institutions, the system simplifies customs procedures. Starting in 2024, the Single Window Application for Railway Transport will further streamline border crossings for rail transport. Additionally, the Port Single Window System, in place since 2018, integrates ship agency notifications into a unified database for efficient port operations. Various ministries and port authorities can access and manage necessary information and transactions through this system.

37. Kazakhstan is implementing several digitalization initiatives to enhance its customs and trade operations. The national Astana-1 system focuses on customs and tax administration, while the E-permit System, a bilateral initiative with Uzbekistan, manages permits for third-country transactions. Additionally, the Tez Customs system, a regional project by Global DTC, aims to streamline customs processes along the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR). Furthermore, the national IS "Keden" system is already operational, providing comprehensive customs administration. These initiatives reflect Kazakhstan's commitment to leveraging digital solutions for more efficient and effective trade management.

38. Kyrgyz Republic is undertaking several digitalization initiatives to enhance its customs and trade operations. The Unified Automated Information System of the State Customs Service is a national system that facilitates customs clearance, processes customs documents, and enables data exchange with EAEU member States and Kyrgyz government bodies. The Portal for Submitting Preliminary Information is a regional system that expedites customs clearance by allowing the submission of preliminary information about goods and vehicles entering the EAEU. The Automated Workplace "Broker" is national software designed to generate prototype documents for transfer to the Unified Automated Information System, aiding in customs declaration filing. Additionally, the "Single Window" Information System, managed by the Single Window Centre under the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, supports electronic data exchange and the issuance of permits by regulatory authorities. Moreover, the State Customs Service is developing the "Smart Bazhi" information system. This is a modern digital platform based on web technologies, designed to optimize and modernize customs operations. It manages various subsystems and connects participants in customs operations into a single system. The implementation of "Smart Bazhi" is aimed at speeding up customs operations, increasing efficiency and standardizing data formats for the seamless exchange of information with customs guarantees. This initiative marks an important step towards creating a more efficient and transparent customs service in the Kyrgyz Republic. The platform supports three key interactions: Customs- Business (C2B) (aimed at increasing the efficiency of business interaction with customs); Customs-Government (C2G) (aimed at improving interactions between customs and government agencies); and Customs-Customs (C2C) (aimed at promoting coordination between customs services). Key features and benefits include: High-quality service enabling faster and more reliable customs processes for all users; Enhanced risk management by offering advanced tools for more efficient risk management and mitigation; Electronic declarations by enabling full electronic filing of customs declarations; Transparency, by offering clear and accountable tracking and control of goods; and International cooperation through enabling uninterrupted electronic exchange of information with various partners. At present, the "Registration of goods and vehicles at the border" component of the "Smart Bazhy" system has been fully developed and pilots are underway at the "Torugart", "Irkeshdam", "Dostuk" and "Kyzyl-Kiya" checkpoints. All of the above initiatives highlight the Kyrgyz Republic's commitment to leveraging digital solutions for more efficient trade management.

39. Conclusion: Digitalization initiatives are underway in almost all countries along the corridors, but these efforts are scattered and fragmented. Many systems operate solely at the national level and often lack the involvement of other domestic or bilateral agencies. Furthermore, none of these systems function across the entire corridors, underscoring a significant gap in cross-border interoperability. Recognizing these challenges, the countries have decided to seek specialized United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) training to be held in conjunction with the next session of the

Coordination Committee. This training aims to enhance the integration and efficiency of their digital customs and trade systems, fostering better coordination and interoperability across borders.

5. Identifying commonalities and differences and suggestions on the way forward

(a) Commonalities

- Reduction of document submissions:

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic: All these countries are working towards reducing the requirement for multiple submissions of the same documents by allowing documents to be lodged once electronically.

- Use of electronic documents:

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic: These countries utilize electronic submission and reuse of data for customs procedures, with systems in place to handle scanned documents.

- Single Window systems:

Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic: These countries are implementing or have implemented Single Window systems to streamline submission and inspection processes for various documents and permits.

- Simplified documentation for transit:

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic: Efforts to simplify documentation requirements, such as merging invoices and packing lists or reducing the number of supporting documents needed, are evident across these countries.

- Adoption of international standards:

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan: Most countries have aligned their electronic goods declaration formats with international standards, specifically those recommended by bodies like ECE, the World Customs Organization (WCO) or the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC).

- Advance declaration:

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, Kazakhstan: These countries permit the advance lodging of goods declarations prior to the arrival of goods, which helps expedite the customs clearance process.

(b) Differences

- Implementation levels:

Kazakhstan: Utilizes the “Keden IS” system and is in the process of implementing Single Window systems in ports.

Türkiye: Has advanced with a comprehensive Single Window system and plans for a Single Window for Railways.

Georgia: Uses systems like RAFL and NCTS and is integrating CAREC systems.

Uzbekistan: relies on its automated information system for filing and processing transit declarations.

Kyrgyz Republic: Employs the Unified Automated Information System and has launched the "Sanarip Tamga" project as well as various other digitalization initiatives.

- Document handling:

Kazakhstan: Prefers original/paper-based documents in some cases, while other countries like Azerbaijan and Georgia allow for scanned or electronic submissions.

- Integration and interoperability:

Georgia: Uses CAREC systems to enhance cross-border trade while other countries rely on different systems.

Türkiye: Has been working with a fully integrated system with national stakeholders since 2017 and this system is also fully integrated with the international systems to which it is a contracting party.

- Specific legislative frameworks:

Uzbekistan: Electronic declarations are governed by the Customs Code, laws on electronic document flow, and digital signatures providing the necessary legal basis.

Azerbaijan and Georgia: Do not require regular translation of documents in international languages unless necessary.

(c) Preliminary Recommendations for Simplification and Harmonization

40. CC countries agreed on the following concrete measures:

- Standardize electronic document formats:

Efforts should be made to adopt international standards for electronic document formats and ensure compatibility across different national systems to facilitate smoother cross-border exchanges.

- Expand Single Window systems:

Implement or enhance Single Window systems to cover all relevant agencies and include both national and regional requirements. Ensure that these systems are interoperable with those of neighbouring countries.

- Reduce redundant document requirements:

Further minimize the number of required documents for customs and transit processes by consolidating documents where possible and focusing only on essential information.

- Promote data reuse and electronic submission:

Encourage the reuse of electronic data and scanned documents to avoid repeated submissions and streamline customs procedures.

- Conduct joint training and workshops:

Organize specialized training sessions, such as the proposed UN/CEFACT training, to align practices and enhance cooperation among customs authorities and other relevant agencies.

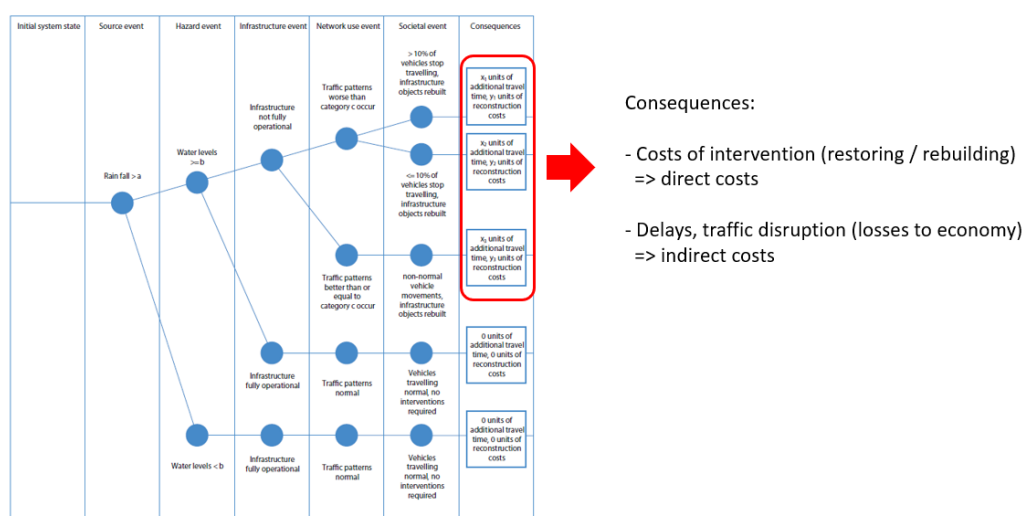
- Pilot cross-border interoperability projects:

Launch pilot projects to test and refine the interoperability of customs systems across borders, using corridors like the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway as testing grounds.

D. Cluster 5: Strengthening the economic viability and resilience of the corridors as well as their environmental performance

41. As part of the fifth session of the Coordination Committee held in Astana in June 2024, a designated round table discussion was held under Cluster 5 of the CC's biennial programme of work addressing the importance of climate change adaptation for transport infrastructure and its relevance for the Trans-Caspian region. It was highlighted that recent incidents like landslides and weather-related disruptions have caused significant damage and service interruptions, underscoring the direct and indirect costs associated with such events.

Figure IX
Consequences of incidents, direct and indirect costs



Source: ECE Stress test framework for evaluation of the resilience of transport systems

42. Participants agreed on the importance of assessing infrastructure vulnerabilities, implementing actions to mitigate these weaknesses, and planning for future conditions, especially concerning high temperatures, extensive precipitation or other extreme weather events.

43. A number of key steps for improving resilience were identified, including:

- Identifying weak points in the infrastructure;
- Understanding the impact of various climate scenarios and preparing detailed case studies with comprehensive data on assets, historical incidents, and weather-related disruptions.

44. CC members agreed on the importance of capacity building workshops to train stakeholders on navigating future uncertainties and designing effective responses using adaptation pathways. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that transport infrastructure can withstand and quickly recover from climate-related hazards, minimizing economic losses and maintaining service reliability.

45. CC agreed on the conduct of a climate change resilience assessment as well as on verifying ways for potential increasing of the resilience using the adaptation pathways approach on a specific stretch of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway line to be undertaken as part of an ongoing Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation project the results of which could be presented at COP29 in Baku. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Türkiye indicated their interest to be part of this project.

46. In order to launch the preparatory work for the development of a detailed case study Azerbaijan, Georgia and Türkiye committed to provide:

- Information on track diagrams for the related section;
- Topological information (the lay of the land and measurements to give a general overview of the site and assets);
- Information on assets at and adjacent to the site. e.g. track type, structures, earthworks, drainage, power, any OLE if present and signalling (asset register, with conditions and information on maintenance activity/regime);
- Information on historic incidents at the same site and repair work undertaken;
- Information on extreme weather planning and preparation of the site (if relevant);

- (f) Information relating to speed restrictions enforced and track closures (reasons and duration);
- (g) Information on train service disruption e.g. delays and cancelations; and
- (h) Data on incidents at other sections of BTK.

47. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Türkiye agreed to gather again in the course of autumn 2024 in the framework of a designated workshop to do further work on the case study and assess how climate change resilient the BTK line is. They also committed to up-date the CC at its next session.

IV. Next steps

48. The WP.5 Chair and Vice Chair, as well as all eight Coordination Committee members, committed to continue convening periodically in the further course of 2024 and 2025 to make progress on its agreed priority areas of work and to report back to WP.5 at its thirty-eight annual session in September 2025.
