

Distr.: General  
6 September 2016

English only

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## **Economic Commission for Europe**

### **Inland Transport Committee**

#### **Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics**

##### **Twenty-eight session**

Geneva, 5–7 September 2016

Item 12 of the provisional agenda

##### **Technical assistance to countries with transition economies**

### **UNDA financed Technical Assistance activities**

#### **Note by the secretariat**

1. The primary focus of technical assistance and capacity building activities (TA activities) is to improve the capacities of member States to accede to and implement the United Nations inland transport legal instruments, norms and standards. Having in mind complexity of transport systems of today, strengthening of institutional capacities and policy dialogue have to go hand in hand with implementation of legal instruments, in order to improve system sustainability, safety and efficiency. Therefore, TA activities have both technical assistance and institutional capacity building component and allow experts in member States and the secretariat to have in-depth exchange of views on sustainable transport development aspects.
2. TA activities are an important complement to the Sustainable Transport Division regulatory and analytical work. There are many cases that strengthening of institutional and human capacity in member States for efficient implementation of UN legal instruments and SDG's achievement was supported by specialized TA activities. In the same time, the secretariat analytical work often helps identify areas in which TA activities can have the biggest impact.
3. TA activities benefit many member States and tailor-made assistance helps the government to put in place or enhance legal frameworks and policies to promote the development of a sustainable transport system. Many TA activities are focused on, but not limited to, the countries of Eastern and South – Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Special attention is given to landlocked countries, parties of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).
4. UNECE Sustainable Transport Division TA activities are funded from the United Nations regular budget (sections "Economic Development in Europe", "Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation" (RPTC) and "United Nations Development Account"), and by extrabudgetary resources.

5. The United Nations Development Account (UNDA) objective is to fund capacity development projects in the priority areas of the United Nations Development Agenda that benefit developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The projects serve as a natural extension to the normative and policy activities of the implementing entities and represents a perfect match with the Sustainable Transport Division TA activities.

6. The UNDA encourages close collaboration of entities of the United Nations Secretariat on innovative, cross-sectoral regional or interregional projects which draw mainly on the technical and human resources available in beneficiary countries. The Account was originally established in 1997 and since then has programmed 335 projects for a total budget of approx. \$210 million. The UNECE has been actively involved in the implementation of the UNDA projects since the year 2000.

7. One of the Sustainable Transport Division flagship projects - "ForFITS project" - was funded from the 7<sup>th</sup> UNDA tranche and completed in 2013. On the basis of the pilot implementation projects, the follow-up of this UNDA project is foreseen through further use of ForFITS tool and development of additional project modules (non-road mobile machinery and road safety).

### **"Strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to facilitate legitimate border crossing, regional cooperation and integration" Project**

8. In December 2011, the General Assembly approved the 8<sup>th</sup> Tranche project "Strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to facilitate legitimate border crossing, regional cooperation and integration" for funding under the UNDA.

9. On the basis of the work already done in the framework of the eTIR Project, this UNDA project aims at implementing and strengthening the capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to use a versatile C2C information exchange platform, developed to ensure a secure exchange of information related to goods in transit, in particular, for goods travelling under cover of TIR Carnets. The exchange platform will be designed to facilitate, in the long term, the exchange of C2C and Business-to-Customs (B2C) information globally. The sustainability of the exchange platform will be ensured through a minimal fee-for-use. Ultimately, the secure electronic exchange of C2C information will lead to increased security and reduced border-crossing delays.

10. The following project activities were foreseen:

A1.1 Delivering a first interregional Expert Group Meeting, aimed at the assessment of the legal and technical needs of candidate developing countries and countries with economies in transition to extend the exchange of electronic information with other countries.

A1.2 Development and deployment of a secure C2C versatile electronic exchange platform, taking due account of the specific challenges faced by developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

A1.3 Provision of technical assistance to national experts in at least five pilot countries to link national or regional customs Information Technology (IT) systems (e.g. ASYCUDA<sup>1</sup>) to the C2C exchange platform or development of an Action Plan, setting out

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<sup>1</sup> Automated SYstem for CUstoms DAta

the steps needed to introduce a new C2C platform to exchange information and ensure its sustainability over time.

A1.4 Deliverance of five technical workshops to build the capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition and maximize the benefits offered by the C2C exchange platform, to increase their electronic exchange of customs information with neighbouring countries as well as to adopt international standards when it comes to electronic messages (the project will provide funding for twenty participants at each workshop).

A2.1 Delivering a second interregional Expert Group Meeting at the end of the project, to present and evaluate the results achieved in the five pilot countries.

A2.2 Delivering a seminar to promote the electronic exchange of customs information and the adoption of standard electronic messages, with special focus on the specific requirement of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, on the basis of the results from the five pilot countries.

11. At the first interregional Expert Group meeting (Geneva, 8 December 2014), experts from each Regional Commission, on the basis of the results of the gap analyses, selected the pilot countries and determined whether it was possible to achieve, within the framework of the project, an actual C2C electronic exchange of transit-related information.

12. UNECE executes the project globally, in cooperation with the other Regional Commissions. The project website is regularly updated to allow for the efficient and fast dissemination of the project documentation and outputs. Georgia was selected as pilot country.

- Turkey agreed to carry out an eTIR Pilot Project with Georgia.
- Two technical meetings for this Pilot Project have been organized in Tbilisi (5 March 2015 and 3–4 November 2015).
- A C2C data exchange workshops was successfully organized on 22–23 June 2015 in Tbilisi (Georgia).
- A company has been hired to develop and deploy the C2C exchange platform. A consultant has been hired to provide technical assistance to Georgia Revenue Service to connect their IT system to the exchange platform.

13. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Kyrgyzstan was selected as pilot country.

- A C2C data exchange workshop was successfully organized on 7–8 September 2015 in Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan). The Workshop aimed at building the capacity in electronic transit data exchange between the customs authorities of the countries of Central Asia. The workshop brought together the representatives of customs authorities and international road transport industry of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which shared the current technical and legal conditions for electronic transit data exchange between Customs authorities of these countries and discussed the recommendations on the measures for enhancing Customs-to-Customs cooperation on these matters.

14. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Morocco was selected as pilot country.

- A C2C data exchange workshops, organized in collaboration with ESCWA, took place on 2–4 December 2015 in Casablanca (Morocco).

15. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). Tunisia was selected as pilot country.

- A Customs-to-Customs data exchange workshops, organized in collaboration with UNECA, will take place on 2–4 December 2015 in Casablanca (Morocco)

16. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Costa Rica was selected as pilot country.

- On 16–17 June 2015, a workshop was organized in San Jose (Costa Rica) for customs officials of all six countries in Central America on Business Intelligence applied to customs' risks and valuation and the WCO Data Model.
- In the second semester of 2015, further technical assistance was provided to Costa Rica customs on risk analysis and the use electronic invoices.

17. The second interregional Expert Group meeting and Seminar on Customs-to-Customs Electronic Exchange of Transit Data and the Adoption of Standard Electronic Messages took place in Geneva (20–21 June 2016).

18. First version of the Central Exchange Platform (CEP) was deployed at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) data centre. The CEP was developed to allow customs administrations to securely exchange transit related data electronically. Finally, technical assistance was provided to all participating pilot countries, e.g. in Georgia the technical assistance which allowed the successful connection of the Georgian IT system with the CEP.

19. The project, which was planned to be finalized by the end of 2015, was extended until June 2016 (30 September 2016 for the evaluation) by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) to allow for the completion of the remaining activities. The external evaluation of the project was carried out from July to September 2016.

### **“Strengthening the national road safety management capacities of selected developing countries and countries with economies in transition”**

20. The 9<sup>th</sup> UNDA Tranche project, approved by the Review Group in December 2015, aims to assist four developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen the road safety management capacities and effectively address and improve national road safety records. The project is under implementation by three United Nations Regional Commissions: UNECE, ECLAC and ESCAP. The UNECE Sustainable Transport Division is leading and coordinating the proposed interregional project.

21. The Project builds on the results of the UNDA 5<sup>th</sup> tranche project, “Improving Global Road Safety: Setting Regional and National Road Traffic Casualty Reduction Targets”, which successfully supported governments in low- and middle-income countries from around the world in developing regional and national road safety targets and exchanging experiences on good practices for achieving these targets by 2015.

22. The project activities will be implemented in four low- or middle-income countries: Albania, the Dominican Republic, Georgia and the Viet Nam. They have very high mortality and motorisation growth rates and require international assistance to improve national road safety situation and develop road safety management systems.

23. The project started with preparatory missions of an initial review team in the four target countries including a one-day policy dialogue to agree on the objectives, outline and

timeline of the Road Safety Performance Review with national authorities and other counterparts in the road safety field.

24. Following the preparatory missions, a substantive review teams are established, comprising relevant United Nations secretariat staff from UNECE, ECLAC and ESCAP, and including three national consultants with expertise in the different areas of road safety priorities identified during the preparatory missions. The teams will undertake in-depth fact-finding missions in the four target countries to meet and interview national authorities and other road safety stakeholders.

25. The next step in assessment of country's road safety situation and road safety management system will be the drafting of the Road Safety Performance Reviews. Assessments will be prepared by national experts and reviewed by relevant United Nations secretariat staff from UNECE, ECLAC or ESCAP. The Reviews will identify the most critical aspects and priority needs in road safety management system.

26. In the priority areas (e.g. establishment of effective road safety management institutional systems and legislative frameworks, collection and evaluation of accurate road safety statistics, setting and monitoring of road safety targets, better vehicle and road infrastructure safety, efficient enforcement) policy dialogue with national road safety stakeholders will be continued. Two national capacity-building workshops will be prepared and implemented to enhance national road safety management capacity. The follow-up capacity-building national workshops would take place over two days and provide further training on the relevant priority areas identified through the Road Safety Performance Reviews, including the accession and implementation of United Nations road-safety related legal instruments.

27. Through publication of Road Safety Performance Review in English and the relevant national language, and through the preparation of the dedicated web page, the project will share the good practices and raise awareness of the beneficiary countries about the critical needs to address road safety challenges. The project will emphasise the importance of the accession and implementation of the key United Nations road-safety related legal instruments, as an effective means for improving road safety management at the national level.

28. For the UNECE region, preparatory missions are already set up. Mission in Albania was held on 19–20 November and mission in Georgia on 30 November – 1 December 2015. For ESCAP region preparatory mission in Viet Nam took place on 16-17 March 2016 in Hanoi and in ECLAC region mission in the Dominican Republic was held on 4-6 June 2016. These two-day preparatory missions resulted in the agreement between the project stakeholders on the important areas to be assessed during the Review preparation. Currently, process of identification and engagement of national coordinators are on-going and it is expected that substantive review teams will be defined during September 2016. This phase also includes identification of potential country peers with an expertise in different road safety topics which could assist national consultants and UN secretariat staff in the Review preparation. Two national capacity building workshops and presentation of Road Safety Performance Review has to be finalized till September 2017 and project will be completed in December 2017.

## **Next steps**

29. The call for projects for 11<sup>th</sup> tranche of the United Nations Development Account was launched under the theme "Supporting Member States in strengthening evidence-based policy coherence, integration and participatory implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels" in September 2016. The proposals should address priority needs of member States, as identified through ongoing capacity development efforts and intergovernmental process. The projects should deliver sustained development results in the beneficiary countries and

special attention should be given to ensuring close collaboration between the UN entities and cross-sectoral approaches.

30. Knowing that capacity building, technical assistance and exchange of best practices are of utmost importance for countries with economies in transition, the Sustainable Transport Division will continue to candidate project ideas for future UNDA financing.

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