



*UN Development Account Capacity Building Project on Interregional Transport
Linkages (2003-2006)*

1st Expert Group Meeting on the ESCWA-ECE -ESCAP Project component

INFORMATION NOTE ON THE MEETING

United Nations

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

(30 May –1 June 2005)

Radisson SAS Hotel

Amman -Jordan

A. INTRODUCTION

The project “Capacity building through cooperation in developing inter-regional land and land-sea transport linkages” was approved by the UN General Assembly in December 2001, and is jointly executed by the five UN regional commissions over a five-year period 2002-2006 with a total budget of US\$1.25 million. ESCWA has been designated by the five regional commissions to be the coordinator of the project.

The objective of this project is to assist member countries of the five regional commissions in strengthening their national capacities for developing interregional land and land-sea transport linkages and to promote interregional cooperation to facilitate interregional trade and tourism. The implementation of the project should result in enabling the countries to identify potential interregional transport linkages, strengthen national capacities with regards to identification of the physical and non-physical impediments to the movement of goods and passengers in all its stages, and operationalizing an interregional network of transport linkages. In addition the project will provide advisory services for interested member countries and establish e-mail contacts among the concerned institutions.

Within this overall framework, ESCWA, ECE and ESCAP are jointly implementing a project component which focuses specifically on developing interregional transport linkages connecting ECE and ESCAP to the ESCWA region.

National experts from concerned members of the regions have prepared studies/reports that provided information on the data related to existing road infrastructure, railways lines and border crossing formalities. Each regional commission has identified countries, which collectively make up the central part of the ESCWA, ECE and ESCAP project component. For the respective commissions, these countries are:

ESCWA: Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Palestine (OPT) and Egypt.

ESCAP: Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.

ECE: Turkey.

The national experts have identified within their respective countries those routes (roads, railways, sea routes) that have the prospect of serving as part of the interregional linkages connecting ECE and ESCAP to the ESCWA region. Their technical specifications, operating conditions and other characteristics in general were prepared. Based on these reports the services of regional consultants were retained. The suggestions regarding the potential interregional linkages were prepared from the point of view of the three concerned regional commissions, and the results of these proposals will be presented in this meeting.

B. MAJOR THEMES OF THE MEETING

The overall objective of this meeting is to conduct consultations among the officials of the concerned countries¹ about the identified regional transport linkages in order to reach a mutual agreement and approval for such. The meeting will benefit from the national and regional reports that were prepared for this project in each of the three regions. Specifically, the meeting will strive to tackle the following issues:

1. The transport linkages connecting ECE and ESCAP to the ESCWA region, from the point of view of relevant ESCWA, ECE and ESCAP studies and reports (including alternate land and land- sea routes other than those currently used).
2. The meeting will consider the alternate proposals and thoroughly discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each proposed linkage in order to reach a consensus regarding the major interregional road, rail and combined transport routes.
3. Since the transport linkages connecting ECE and ESCAP to the ESCWA region should be seen in an intermodal perspective, major sea ports, transport interchange and cargo storage points, including container depots, dray ports/logistic centers and border crossing facilities, should be considered integral parts of the routes.
4. The meeting will agree on the common data and information that should be collected on these major routes that should be adopted; and later prepare detailed graphical representation for such.
5. The meeting will address improvements to existing border crossing procedures and formalities based on the regional report findings.
6. Based on the deliberations, the meeting will discuss follow-up actions for the secretariats and countries to take.

C. PARTICIPANTS

This meeting is intended primarily to be attended by the focal points of the project that were officially nominated by their respective countries in ESCWA, ECE and ESCAP regions. Other transport officials from both the public and the private sectors will also be invited, as well as regional and national consultants from the three regions. The meeting will also invite international funding institutions and agencies.

D. PAPERS AND INTERVENTIONS

The meeting will discuss the papers prepared by each regional commission on the proposed linkages.

- Transport linkages within the ESCWA region (ESCWA)

- Transport linkages between ESCWA and Europe (Two papers will be presented by ESCWA and ECE)
- Transport linkages between ESCWA and Asia (Two papers will be presented by ESCWA and ESCAP)

In addition, ECE and ESCAP will present the results of the ongoing project on Developing Euro- Asian Transport Linkages, which is also being implemented as part of the project “capacity building through cooperation in developing interregional land and land-sea transport linkages”.

The meeting will give due consideration on the possible interconnections between the major interregional routes identified in the framework of the current ESCWA, ECE and ESCAP project and those adopted under the ECE-ESCAP Euro-Asian transport linkages project.

E. OUTCOME

Formulation of proposals for adopting the major interregional land and land-sea transport linkages/routes connecting the ECE and ESCAP to the ESCWA region will be a major output of the meeting. Detailed maps containing the proposed linkages/routes (from all modes of transport) shall be produced in due course.

F. LANGUAGE

Contributions would be in either Arabic or English. Simultaneous translation, from Arabic to English and vice versa, will be provided during the sessions.

G. DATE AND VENUE

The Conference will be held from 30 May to 1 June 2005 at Radisson SAS Hotel, Al-Hussein Bin Ali Street, Amman, 11118, Jordan.

H. CORRESPONDENCE

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