COVID-19 Response and Recovery Guidelines for Resilient and Sustainable International Road Freight Transport Connectivity in ASEAN

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ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan

- ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) serves as the region’s consolidated exit strategy from the COVID-19 crisis.

- The ACRF and its Implementation Plan were adopted at the 37th ASEAN Summit on 12 November 2020.

- **Strengthening supply chain connectivity and resilience** is one the key priorities of the Implementation Plan.
The Webinar was held on 9 July 2020

- **Objective**: to exchange information on transport response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis with focus on cross-border road freight transport operations in ASEAN.

- **Key Discussion Outputs**
  - The need for more strengthened regional cooperation to respond to pandemic.
  - Discussion on development of specific regional initiatives, e.g. (i) setting up information exchange mechanisms; (ii) promoting harmonized approach to transport pandemic response and (iii) identifying key nodes or corridors to be preserved during future disruptions.
  - Consideration to develop regional and national transport connectivity recovery plans with a focus on resilience and sustainability, and
  - ASEAN to develop a regional COVID-19 recovery guidelines on cross-border transport, with support from ESCAP and ITF.

**ESCAP-ASEAN-ITF Joint Webinar**

“Preserving Transport Connectivity and Building Freight Transport Resilience in ASEAN”
COVID-19 Response and Recovery Guidelines for Resilient and Sustainable International Road Freight Transport Connectivity in ASEAN

- Measure under Implementation Plan of ACRF pillar on strengthening supply chain connectivity and resilience.

- Support AMS in establishing regional and national transport connectivity recovery, focusing on cross-border road freight transport.

- Recovery measures should build greater resilience, increase efficiency and ensure sustainability in the long run.

- The Guidelines serve to (i) categorise policy responses to COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) propose principles policies and measures; (iii) recommend timely exchange of relevant information, and (iv) provide insights for the creation of a real-time monitoring tool of pandemic situation.
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Findings

- Disruptions on road freight transport are relatively moderate. Policy measures were implemented to mitigate the disruptions.
- Cross-border freight operations have become more costly/time consuming, due to shipping container shortage and surging shipping rate.
- Need to develop regional communication platform.
- Need to maximise load factor.
Main guiding principles and policy actions

- Focusing on 3 priorities: (i) Ensuring Transport Workers’ Safety and Training; (ii) Preserving Connectivity for Efficient and Resilient Supply Chain; (iii) Building Back Better through Digital, Resilient and Decarbonised Transport Connectivity.

- Timeframe for implementation of policy actions: (i) immediate or current; (ii) medium-term; (iii) long-term.

Example of Policy Actions:

- Ensuring Road Transport Worker’s Safety and Health by following international standards.

- Preserving Connectivity for Efficient and Resilient Supply Chain by balancing transport connectivity and protecting workers’ safety.

- Building Back Better through digitalization, transport resilience, decarbonisation.
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**Recommendations for Post-pandemic Policy Adjustments**

- Policy measures with positive impact on digitalization and decarbonization should be retained as new normal for freight transport operations.
- Regularly review the remaining restrictions and remove them along with the phasing out of pandemic.
- Ensure transparency and necessary flow of information in easing up transport restrictions in order to benefit transport operators on these positive changes.
- Revisit current transport agreements to guarantee the resilience during future pandemic.

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**Table 2. Timeline of Policy Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate/Curative Response</th>
<th>Medium-term response</th>
<th>Long-term response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declare and implement preparedness contingency plans and protocols between countries to ensure road freight service continuity and crossing procedures during emergency situations</td>
<td>Develop and implement standard practices in cross-border logistics, including visa facilitation measures for international truck drivers</td>
<td>Identify appropriate and relevant capacity building and training needs, including the establishment of training and licensing standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide clear, real-time and transparent information to enable truck drivers and crew members to carry out the necessary planning and follow protocols and recommendations</td>
<td>Adapt an international standard vaccination certificate or implement a mutually recognized arrangement for international truck drivers</td>
<td>Provide specific support for formalization, reskilling and vocational training for those most affected by the immediate crisis and long-term digitalization and decarbonization of the sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen occupational safety and health measures</td>
<td>Improve gender equality for women workers with gender responsive policies and programs</td>
<td>Synergize regional courses with existing programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide good quality personal protective equipment to workers and training on utilization</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage cross-sectoral integration, e.g. with customs and immigration, labor and police inspection, through integrated training programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide access to health care and testing, including mental health, for all</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide education and training to women and girls to prepare them for careers in the transport connectivity sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve occupational measures, including access to decent sanitation facilities and safe parking infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve working conditions and facilities to increase the hiring and retention of women workers in the transport sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prioritize driver fatigue management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Implement national policies that are aligned with the best practices on gender equality and eliminating workplace violence and harassment</td>
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**Box 1. Sample Digital Catalogue of Measures applicable to cross-border transport in ASEAN during and post the pandemic situation. To facilitate the maintenance and exchange of information and help disseminate best practices, ASEAN Member States may share the searchable digital catalogue of measures applied to cross-border freight transport.**

- **Searchable Keys:**
  - Country: ASEAN Member States
  - Category: infrastructure/vehicles/crew/cargo/financial support/mixed
  - Mode: air/rail/road/waterborne
  - Target: freight/passenger
  - Scope: international/domestic
  - Priority Area: Priority 1/2/3
  - Link to digitalization: yes/no
  - Link to decarbonization efforts: yes/no
  - Time of Introduction: Quarters, Years
  - Duration: short-, medium-, or long-term

- **Policy Response Records**
  - (Pilot Version: The compilation of the policy responses in eight ASEAN meetings in 2020 and 2021)

- **Customized Query Reports**
Suggested Actions for Post-Pandemic responses

- Capacity building could be considered to support implementation of the Guidelines, particularly on recommendations for post-pandemic adjustments in transport policy responses.

- Exchange of information is required among countries to ensure (i) coordinated actions in opening land border and (ii) transparency of cross-border policy measures between adjacent countries.

- Building competency based on lessons learnt from the pandemic, e.g. set up database of policy responses during pandemic, analysis of the mitigated actions to the pandemic, sharing of best practices, etc.

- More coordinated approach to anticipate supply chain disruptions (e.g. due to pandemic, natural disasters, etc) in the future.
THANK YOU