Stakeholders’ Consultation Meeting:
Promoting cross-border electronic information exchange for efficient railway transport and transit in East and North-East Asia

31 July – 1 August 2024, Hybrid (UNCC and Zoom)

Background

During the 8th meeting of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (14-15 September 2023)\(^1\), the Working Group adopted a new annex (Annex III) to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network entitled “General principles on electronic information exchange/data interchange among railways and between railways and control agencies along the Trans-Asian Railway Network”. It noted that the annex laid the groundwork for the further digitalization of railway transport through electronic data exchange.

During the ad-hoc session of the Standing Committee of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA) (23-24 January 2024)\(^2\), findings on national studies of the status of cross-border paperless trade, including in China and Mongolia, were presented. The meeting recognized that these studies may have important implications for exploring pilot projects in other countries as well.

The above developments provide renewed momentum for the project on promoting cross-border electronic information exchange for efficient railway transport and transit in East and North-East Asia. The three-year project (2022-2024) aims to enhance railway efficiency to increase its use for sustainable transport connectivity along the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor through cross-border electronic information exchange. Funded under the China-ESCAP Cooperation Programme (CECP), the project engages with customs and railway officials and other stakeholders involved in rail transport and transit along the corridor.

Project Milestones

To date, a comprehensive readiness assessment study and an action plan have been completed under the project. These two documents assessed the state of electronic information exchange among railways and between railways and control agencies for China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation. The key findings and recommendations

\(^1\) [https://www.unescap.org/events/2023/eighth-meeting-working-group-trans-asian-railway-network](https://www.unescap.org/events/2023/eighth-meeting-working-group-trans-asian-railway-network)

\(^2\) [https://www.unescap.org/events/2024/ad-hoc-session-standing-committee-framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border](https://www.unescap.org/events/2024/ad-hoc-session-standing-committee-framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border)
were presented to project focal points from railway and customs authorities from the three countries during two focal points’ meetings held in August 2023 and April 2024.\(^3\)

During the second focal points’ meeting in April 2024, participants agreed to consider several follow up actions, including: (1) developing options to help streamline electronic data interchange among railways and between railways and customs of the three countries; (2) developing an exploratory study on electronic database of rolling stock for facilitation of international traffic along the Trans-Asian Railway network; and (3) undertaking a business process analysis for transport and customs processes involved along the rail corridor with focus on import, export, and transit by rail from Mongolia to identify gaps to undertake capacity building activities.

**Stakeholders’ Consultation Meeting**

Building from project milestones, the stakeholders’ meeting is organized to broaden the consultation and engagements on the project outputs. The meeting aims to:

a. consult with participants on options to help streamline electronic data interchange among railways and between railways and customs of the three countries (e.g., draft framework Memorandum of Understanding; joint task force involving customs and railway authorities, etc.)

b. update on preliminary findings of the exploratory study on electronic database of rolling stock for facilitation of international traffic along the Trans-Asian Railway network

c. update on preliminary findings of the business process analysis report for transport and customs processes involved along the rail corridor with focus on import, export, and transit by rail from Mongolia

d. identify focus areas for capacity building activities to be held in the second half of 2024 (i.e., national workshop in Mongolia; study-tour/workshop in China)

e. inform on key outcomes from the third session of the Standing Committee of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (3-5 June 2024)\(^4\) and developments in preparation for the eighth session of the Committee on Transport\(^5\)

The meeting will be conducted in English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided (Chinese, Mongolian and Russian).

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\(^4\) [https://unescap.org/events/2024/third-session-standing-committee-framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border](https://unescap.org/events/2024/third-session-standing-committee-framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border)

\(^5\) [https://unescap.org/events/2024/committee-transport-eighth-session](https://unescap.org/events/2024/committee-transport-eighth-session)
## Indicative Programme

### 31 July (Wednesday)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>13:00-13:15 [15 mins]</td>
<td><strong>Tour de Table</strong></td>
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<td>13:15-14:00 [45 mins]</td>
<td><strong>Context: Project Overview and Related Developments</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Project overview <em>Presentation by ESCAP secretariat</em>&lt;br&gt;• Outcomes and follow-up actions from the third session of the Standing Committee of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (3-5 June 2024) <em>Presentation by ESCAP secretariat</em></td>
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<td>14:00-15:30 [90 mins]</td>
<td><strong>Discussions on Project Outputs</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Business process analysis report for transport and customs processes involved along the rail corridor with focus on import, export, and transit by rail from Mongolia <em>Presentation by Mr. Jargalsaikhan Aldar, Head of IT, Shunkhlai LLC / Project Consultant, ESCAP</em>&lt;br&gt;• Comments and interventions from Mongolian and other stakeholders (moderated by ESCAP)&lt;br&gt;• Consultation on possible scope/areas of focus of national workshop in Mongolia to strengthens readiness to undertake paperless transit transport operations (indicative schedule: Q4 2024) <em>Presentation by ESCAP secretariat</em></td>
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### 1 August (Thursday)

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-12:45 [15 mins]</td>
<td>• Promoting electronic information exchange among railways – recent developments&lt;br&gt;<em>Presentation by ESCAP secretariat</em></td>
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| 12:45-13:15     | • Assessment study on electronic information exchange among railways and between railways and Customs along China-Mongolia-Russian Federation and beyond - latest updates  
Presentation by Ms. Ekaterina Kozyreva, President, IEC International, Project Consultant, ESCAP |
| 13:15-14:15     | • Proposed MOU as per recommendation of previous meeting for streamlining electronic data interchange among railways and between railways and customs of the three countries  
Presentation by ESCAP secretariat  
• Country interventions  
China, Mongolia and Russian Federation  
• Open discussion on way forward (Moderated by ESCAP)  
Issues for discussion  
  - Draft MOU  
  - Pilot application/trial with paperless technologies  
  - Other suggestions |
| 14:15-14:30     | Break                                                                     |
| 14:30-15:20     | • Developing electronic database for rolling stock along the Trans-Asian Railway network - challenges and opportunities  
Presentation by Ms. Ekaterina Kozyreva, President, IEC International, Project Consultant, ESCAP  
• Discussion on next steps for the proposed database |
| 15:20-15:45     | • Update by WCO on work on harmonization of transit datasets (tbc)       |
| 15:45-16:05     | • Presentation by OSJD on work related to electronic information exchange among railways |
| 16:05-16:20     | • Project activities for Q3 and Q4  
Presentation by ESCAP secretariat |
| 16:20-16:30     | • Meeting conclusions and recommendations                                |