

**1st ESCAP-GTI Seminar on Transport Issues
in North-East Asia**
*Transport Corridors:
Challenges and Opportunities for North-East Asia*
10 October 2019, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Background

The importance of transport as an enabler to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is widely recognized. Transport connectivity has played an influential role in shaping and further deepening regional integration in Asia and the Pacific—bringing people together, opening economic opportunities and widening the reach of socio-economic services. Through the years, various initiatives have been undertaken in several fronts to further optimize the benefits gained from transport connectivity, including those facilitated by ESCAP. ESCAP regards regional connectivity both in terms of physical infrastructure as well as its non-physical dimension (also known as “soft” infrastructure), which includes rules and procedures as well as policy and institutional frameworks. ESCAP’s experience has shown that there are various mechanisms of cooperation which can be used to advance the region’s connectivity agenda, ranging from formal intergovernmental agreements to voluntary commitments.

Notwithstanding the progress achieved through the years, work continues to further increase the efficiency of transport connectivity in light of emerging technologies and shifting configurations of production networks. Also, faced with intensifying environmental-related challenges, there is an urgent call to ensure that physical infrastructures are resilient and designed to address adverse environmental and social impacts. In addition, developments in the transport sector are not insulated from broader developments in the global macroeconomic environment which have implications on the sector’s development priorities, policy directions and available resources.

Work on transport connectivity is an evolving process, hence, the importance for policy makers and practitioners to sustain the progress of work through regular policy dialogues and knowledge sharing. The North-East Asia subregion is well-positioned to enrich the policy discourse, given the presence of economies who are major investors in transport infrastructure as well as leaders in technological innovations which can find applications in the transport sector. To this end, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office together with the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Secretariat are co-organizing the **ESCAP-GTI Seminar on Transport Issues in North-East Asia**. The Seminar will bring together senior government officials as well as other practitioners involved in transport to share policy perspectives and have informed discussions

on strategic and topical issues related to transport. To be held annually in conjunction with the GTI Transport Board Meeting, the Seminar also responds to the call for ESCAP to further strengthen partnerships with subregional organizations. ESCAP and GTI have had longstanding development cooperation in areas of mutual interests, including transport, trade and energy.

Objectives

The overall theme for the Seminar's inaugural year is **"Transport Corridors: Challenges and Opportunities in North-East Asia"**. The corridors-based approach to enhance integrated regional transport network finds much relevance in North-East Asia, with identified nine major transport corridors. Transport corridors provide focused areas where countries can channel resources and develop practical strategies to optimize the use of these corridors to increase cross-border activities, largely expediting the movement of goods.

GTI conducted a study on trans-Greater Tumen Region transport corridors in 2013 while ESCAP has assisted economies to optimize the use of existing transport infrastructure through the establishment of regional facilitation frameworks, assistance in formulating and implementing facilitation agreements, and development of models and standards. Building on existing work and cognizant of emerging developments, the main objective of the seminar is to strengthen policymaking capacities to optimize the use of transport corridors in North-East Asia. To achieve this, the Seminar will:

1. identify the challenges and opportunities in North-East Asian transport corridors in the areas of demand (cargo volume) analysis, use of technology, corridor management, cross-border information exchange, and transit;
2. exchange country information on transport-related policy developments and its impact on relevant transport corridors; and
3. discuss the GTI project proposal on the *"Evolution of Regional Value Chains and Logistics Networks in the GTR"*.

Intended Participants

Participation is by invitation and participants will consist of GTI Transport Board members. Local participants working on transport issues will be invited as observers, including relevant government units, business groups, and policy think tanks in the host country (i.e. Mongolia).

Organization

The Seminar will be conducted in English and all documentation will be in English. The Seminar will consist of three main parts. Session 1 will be issues-based, with invited experts sharing their perspectives on issues in line with the overall theme. Session 2 will be country-focused with information sharing among GTI member countries (i.e. China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation) on transport-related policy developments. Session 3 will serve as a platform to discuss specific GTI project proposals under the purview of the GTI Transport Board.

Expected Outcomes

The envisaged outcomes from the Seminar are:

1. proposed ESCAP-GTI activities on transport for 2020 (for consideration of the GTI Transport Board and ESCAP SRO-ENEA);
2. suggested themes/areas of policy interest for the 2nd ESCAP-GTI Seminar on Transport Issues in 2020; and
3. summary of recommendations/inputs to the GTI study on the “Evolution of Regional Value Chains and Logistics Networks in the GTR”.

Relevant seminar materials, including presentations and summary of discussions, will be made available on the ESCAP SRO-ENEA and GTI websites.

Provisional Programme

Opening

Session 1: Issues in Focus

- Demand (cargo volume) analysis in transport corridors
- Use of technology in transport corridors
- Transport corridor management
- Cross-border information exchange practices and approaches
- Border-crossing transport and trade facilitation issues related to transit

Session 2: Countries in Focus

- Transport-related policy developments and its impact on relevant transport corridors (China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation)

Session 3: Project in Focus

- GTI project proposal on the “Evolution of Regional Value Chains and Logistics Networks in the GTR”

Way Forward and Closing

Further details on the seminar, including the annotated programme, are available from the ESCAP SRO-ENEA website (<https://www.unescap.org/subregional-office/east-north-east-asia>) and the GTI Secretariat website (<http://www.tumenprogramme.org/>).

Contacts

Ms. Ma. Fideles SADICON, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP

ma.fideles.sadicon@un.org

+82 32 458 6620

Mr. Sergey KHIDIROV, Senior Programme Officer, GTI Secretariat

sergey.khidirov@undp.org

Tel: +86-10-6532-5543 ext.15