
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network

6th meeting

Bangkok, 10 and 11 December 2019

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the 6th meeting of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (section I) and the annotations to the provisional agenda (section II).

I. Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Status of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network.
4. Matters arising from the 5th meeting of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network.
5. Policies and issues related to the development and operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network.
6. Inspection and monitoring of railway infrastructure using aerial drones.
7. Consideration of proposals for amending the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report of the Working Group on its 6th meeting.

II. Annotations

1. Election of officers

In accordance with rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Working Group will elect a chair and two vice-chairs, who shall hold office until their successors are elected.

2. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/TARN/WG/2019/L.1)

Annotation

In accordance with the rules of procedure of ESCAP, the Working Group will be invited by the Chair to consider and adopt the provisional agenda, subject to such changes as may be necessary.¹

3. Status of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network

Documentation

Status of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (ESCAP/TARN/WG/2019/1)

Annotation

At its 5th meeting, the Working Group considered and adopted amendments to annex I to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (see E/ESCAP/TARN/WG(5)/6). Under this agenda item, the Working Group will be informed about depositary notifications issued and the entry into force of amendments to annex I since its 5th meeting and about changes in the number of parties, if any.

Member States that have not yet become parties to the Agreement may also wish to update the Working Group on their progress towards ratifying, accepting, acceding to or approving the Agreement.

4. Matters arising from the 5th meeting of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network

Documentation

Update on the matters arising from the 5th meeting of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (ESCAP/TARN/WG/2019/2)

Annotation

At its 5th meeting, the Working Group requested the secretariat to develop a framework governing movement of freight across borders (E/ESCAP/TARN/WG(5)/6, para. 16). Against this background and under this agenda item, the Working Group will be informed about the activities of the secretariat in response to this request.

The secretariat, working jointly with the Organisation for Co-operation between Railways developed a framework for enhancing the efficiency of railway border crossings along the Trans-Asian Railway network and beyond. The framework was reviewed at the Regional Meeting on Harmonization of Rules and Regulations for Facilitation of International Railway Transport, held

¹ The tentative programme, list of participants and documents of the meeting will be available online at www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/sixth-meeting-working-group-trans-asian-railway.

in Nur-Sultan in December 2017 and at two Expert Group Meetings on the Harmonization of the Rules and Regulations for Facilitation of International Railway Transport, held in Bangkok in September 2017 and Ankara in May 2018.

The Committee on Transport at its fifth session in November 2018 welcomed the development of the draft framework in addressing inefficiencies in railway border crossing procedures along the Trans-Asian Railway network and beyond (ESCAP/CTR/2018/8, para. 28).

Against this background, the Working Group will be invited to consider the framework for enhancing the efficiency of railway border crossings along the Trans-Asian Railway network and beyond and provide further guidance to the secretariat on future activities.

5. Policies and issues related to the development and operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network

Documentation

Policies and issues related to the development and operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network (ESCAP/TARN/WG/2019/3)

Annotation

The Working Group will be informed of activities and emerging issues relating to the development and efficient operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network. These will include, inter alia, commercialization of railway corridors, railway safety regulations and international passenger transport. Parties to the Agreement may wish to inform the Working Group about national, bilateral or subregional plans, activities and issues relevant to the continued development and efficient operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network.

The Working Group may also share and consider policy approaches for: (1) enhancing the efficiency of international railway transport between Asia and Europe along the Trans-Asian Railway network; (2) strengthening linkages of the Trans-Asian Railway network with maritime ports and dry ports; (3) prioritizing investments in the Trans-Asian Railway network; and (4) keeping the secretariat informed of priority projects on railway transport.

Based on these discussions, the Working Group may wish to provide additional perspectives regarding efficient operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network as well as guidance to the secretariat on its future activities to support the efforts to implement the Agreement and further strengthen railway transport along the Trans-Asian Railway network.

6. Inspection and monitoring of railway infrastructure using aerial drones

Documentation

Inspection and monitoring of railway infrastructure using aerial drones (ESCAP/TARN/WG/2019/4)

Annotation

Within the mandate of the secretariat to undertake activities to enhance the planning, design, implementation and operationalization of policies,

systems, programmes and measures on transport-related technologies, the secretariat initiated research collaboration with the Institute of Railway Technology of Monash University, Australia, in September 2018. The objective was to explore the applications of aerial drones, a rapidly expanding technology sector, for the inspection and monitoring of railway infrastructure, with a view to developing a better understanding of the long-term sustainability benefits of this technology for the railways, its regulatory and technical implications, as well as any identifiable prospects for a regional approach that would serve the operationalization and further development of the Trans-Asian Railway network.

Against this background, the Working Group may wish to consider the ways that the use of aerial drones can provide cost-effective and sustainable solutions for the maintenance of the Trans-Asian Railway network and provide further guidance to the secretariat on the matter.

7. Consideration of proposals for amending the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network

Documentation

Proposals for amending the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (ESCAP/TARN/WG/2019/5)

Annotation

On 11 July 2019, a note verbale was sent to the parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network in which they were invited to submit to the secretariat proposals for amending the Agreement. In accordance with article 7, paragraph 3, article 8, paragraph 5 and article 9, paragraph 3, of the Agreement, the secretariat circulated the proposals to be considered at the 6th meeting of the Working Group 45 days before the opening of the meeting.

Against this background, the Working Group will be invited to consider the amendment proposals as contained in document ESCAP/TARN/WG/2019/5.

8. Other matters

The Working Group may wish to consider other matters brought to its attention.

9. Adoption of the report of the Working Group on its 6th meeting

Documentation

Draft report (ESCAP/TARN/WG/2019/L.2)

Annotation

The Working Group will consider and adopt the report on its 6th meeting.
