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

Associated Events at the 11ᵗʰ Asia-Pacific Forum Trade Facilitation Forum
1-5 April 2024
Silk Road by Minyoun, Rowing Canal, Konigil Massi, Samarkand, Uzbekistan / online

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.

Project Description

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.

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

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[1] 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

information exchange among railways and between railways and control agencies for China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation. The key findings and recommendations were presented during the first focal points' meeting held on 23-24 August 2023 (https://www.unescap.org/events/2023/first-focal-points-meeting-promoting-cross-border-electronic-information-exchange).

Associated Events at the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF)

The 11th Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2024[3] will be held on 1-5 April 2024 and will focus on how digitalization can be leveraged to enable sustainable supply chains in the Asia-Pacific region. The Forum will provide an opportunity for the focal points of the project to engage with other member States, sharing experiences and perspectives on different aspects of trade facilitation and digitalization, including cross-border paperless trade and transport. To this end, the following associated events will be organized:

1. **Outreach Event: Promoting cross-border paperless trade and lessons from Northeast Asia (open meeting)**
   (3 April 2024, 14.00-16.00)
   a. Participants:
      - APTFF participants
      - All participants from second focal points' meeting
      - Facilitators: ESCAP
   b. Scope:
      - Disseminate project outputs: (i) comprehensive readiness assessment study and an action plan (ii) country reports on trade facilitation

2. **Second Focal Points' Meeting: Promoting cross-border electronic information exchange for efficient railway transport and transit in East and North-East Asia (by invitation only)**
   (4 April 2024, 10.00-12.30)
   a. Participants:
      - China, Mongolia, Russian Federation (focal points from customs agencies and railway authorities)[4]
      - Resource persons: WCO, OSJD, other ESCAP member States
      - Facilitators: ESCAP
   b. Scope:
      - consultation on follow-up activities for 2024, following from 1st focal points' meeting

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[3] https://www.unescap.org/events/2024/asia-pacific-trade-facilitation-forum-2024
[4] Participants from the first focal points' meeting.

Indicative Programme	
1 April (Monday)	11th Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2024
2 April (Tuesday)	11th Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2024
3 April (Wednesday)	AM: 11th APTFF-related events and workshops
	PM: Outreach Event Promoting cross-border paperless trade and lessons from Northeast Asia (open meeting)
4 April (Thursday)	**AM: Second Focal Points' Meeting: Promoting cross-border electronic information exchange for efficient railway transport and transit in East and North-East Asia (by invitation only)**
	PM: 11th APTFF-related events and workshops
5 April (Friday)	11th APTFF Study Visit

3 April, Wednesday, 14.00-16.00
Outreach Event Promoting cross-border paperless trade and lessons from Northeast Asia (open meeting)

Time	Agenda
1400-1410	Opening • Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office • TIID, ESCAP
1410-1425	Presentation of the key findings of the study reports on China, Mongolia, and Republic of Korea • Mr. Tengfei Wang, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP
1425-1450	Feedback and reflections from North-East Asia • *China (tbc)* • Mongolia: Ms. Ariunaa Adiya, Counselor, Department of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mongolia • *Republic of Korea (tbc)*
1450-1540	Perspectives from other subregions in the Asia-Pacific • Azerbaijan: Mr. Fuad Aslanov, Head of General Department for Digital Management, The State Customs Committee • Bangladesh: Mr. Noor Md. Mahbubul Haq, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce

Time	Agenda
	• Thailand: Mr. Sapphasuk Wijaiworakit, Director of Strategy and International Cooperation Section Thai Customs Department
1540-1555	Open discussion • Mr. Tejo Kusuma, Technical Officer, Compliance and Facilitation Directorate, World Customs Organization • Ms. Gloria Pasadilla, Individual expert
1555-1600	Closing

4 April, Thursday, 10.00-12.30
Second Focal Points' Meeting: Promoting cross-border electronic information exchange for efficient railway transport and transit in East and North-East Asia
(by invitation only)

Time	Agenda
1000-1015	• Opening remarks *Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office* • Tour de Table
1015-1040	• Recent rail digitalization initiatives in Asia-Pacific region *Presentation by Mr. Sandeep Jain, Transport Division, ESCAP* • Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific – recent developments *Presentation by Mr. Tengfei Wang, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP*
1040-1100	• Updated recommendations of the assessment study on electronic information exchange among railways and between railways and Customs along China-Mongolia- Russian Federation and beyond *Presentation by Ms. Ekaterina Kozyreva, President, IEC International, Project Consultant, ESCAP*
1100-1120	• Country interventions on recommendations and open discussion on way forward *China (online), Mongolia, Russian Federation (online)*
1120-1140	• Progress on mapping rail consignment note to the WCO data model and on harmonizing rail transit datasets to facilitate rail border crossing *Presentation by Mr. Tejo Kusma, Technical Officer, World Customs Organization*
1140-1200	• Feasibility of an electronic database of the rolling stock for facilitation of international rail transport along the Trans-Asian Railway network *Presentation by Ms. Ekaterina Kozyreva, President, IEC International, Project Consultant, ESCAP*
1200-1215	• OSJD initiatives to support electronic data interchange among railways *Presentation by OSJD representative*

Time	Agenda
1215-1225	• Next steps in project implementation *Presentation by Ms. Fideles Sadicon, Sustainable Development Officer, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office*
1225-1230	• Concluding remarks