



Policy Framework for the Development of Intermodal Interfaces as part of an Integrated Transport Network in Asia

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PROMOTING INTERMODAL TRANSPORT IN THE UNESCAP REGION

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Chapter 1. Introduction

- 1.1 There is wide consensus among transport policy-makers in the UNESCAP region that modern transport networks are a condition to political stability, economic growth and social development. Efficient road and rail networks and their connection to international ports are also a concern for industry to reach worldwide markets. Access to mobility also contributes to better quality of life for Asia's growing population. It is with these principles in mind that UNESCAP and its member countries decided to identify the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks as important tools for their economic integration and future prosperity. They carried out related actions within the framework of the Asian Land transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) project launched in 1992 by the UNESCAP Commission at its 48th session. The project also comprised a transport facilitation component.
- 1.2 As the networks were taking shape through a series of corridor studies, member countries recognized the ALTID project as a flexible mechanism which stimulated joint and coordinated actions by governments of the region to improve conditions and procedures for international trade and transport across its extensive land borders. This recognition led to the formalization of the networks through two related Intergovernmental Agreements, namely: the "Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network" which entered into force in July 2005 and the "Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network" which was opened for signature in November 2006 during the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Busan, Republic of Korea.
- 1.3 At the Conference, the Ministers acknowledged the progress made by UNESCAP and its member countries since the launch of ALTID and decided to use the popularity of the project with member governments as a thrust towards new achievements. In particular, recognizing that the continuing evolution of logistics had caused transport to become an integral part of the production process of industry, the Ministers requested that the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks be used as the two building blocks for an international integrated intermodal transport and logistic system covering the region. To this effect, on 11 November 2006, they adopted the *Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific* (Annex 1).
- 1.4 The Busan declaration provides strong support for the development of dry ports and logistical activities at intermodal interfaces, by resolving that:

"...in order to meet the growing challenges of globalization effectively, respective government authorities will develop and implement transport policies at the national, sub regional and regional levels in line with the following principles:

 - a) *Formulating integrated policies and decision-making frameworks based on strategic assessments of economic, environmental, social and poverty-related aspects;*
 - (b) *Developing an **international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system** that contributes to the long-term objective of regional cooperation in support of production and distribution networks and of international trade;*

- (c) *Giving **priority to investment in the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, including intermodal interfaces** to link them with water and air transport networks;*
- (d) ***Promoting the development of economic and logistical activities at intermodal interfaces, particularly at production and consumption centres, and around seaports and dry ports;***
- (e) *Mobilizing financial resources for the development of the transport system, its maintenance and operation from all possible sources, including public private partnerships and other financial arrangements”.*

1.5 Under the title of “Intermodal Interfaces – Focus for Development in the UNESCAP Region” this study is part of a wider programme of action being carried out by UNESCAP to facilitate the development of intermodal transport and logistics in the region under the mandate provided by the Busan Declaration. It has been initiated at a time when world trade volume is at its highest ever. However, the acceleration of international trade in recent years and the globalization process has mainly benefited the coastal areas of the region, with trade to and from the landlocked countries and the more remote hinterland areas of coastal countries trailing behind, due to excessive transport and logistics costs.

1.6 The study examines the potential for alleviating the trade and transit cost disadvantages of landlocked countries and the remote hinterlands of coastal countries by promoting the wider use of intermodal transport and the development of supporting infrastructure - in the form of freight intermodal interfaces and inland ports. Similarly, it considers the advantages of intermodal interface development in terms of stimulating economic growth in regions and countries located far from seaports.

1.7 In particular, the study:

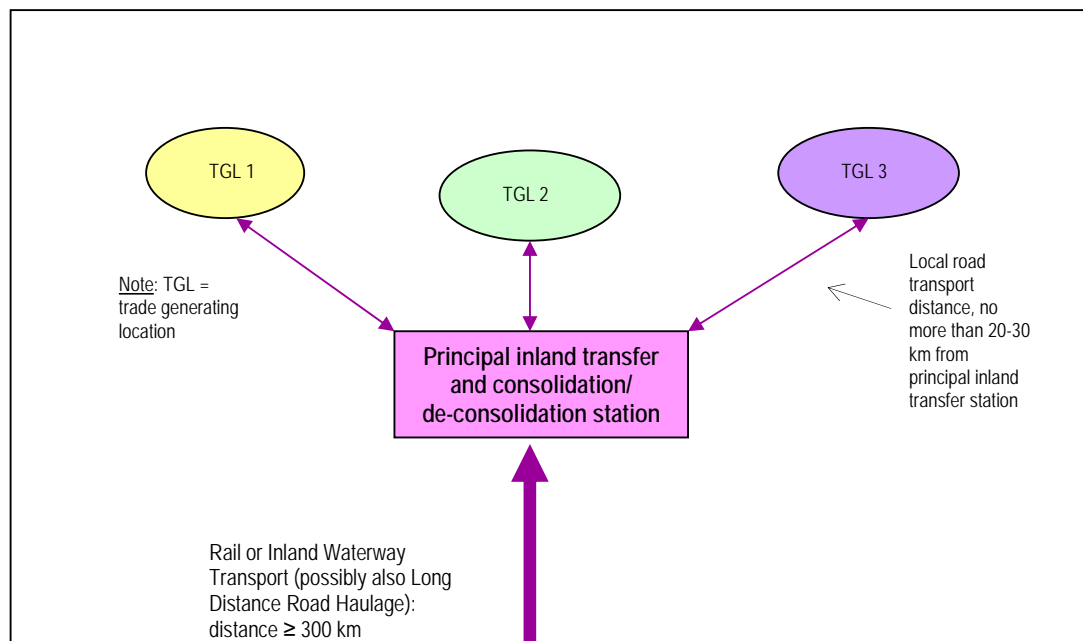
- identifies and defines the most suitable forms of infrastructure for this purpose (*Chapter 2*);
- evaluates the role of intermodal transport in optimizing supply chain costs in the region (*Chapter 3*);
- reviews progress in the development and application of intermodal transport and intermodal interfaces in the UNESCAP region (*Chapter 4*);
- reviews international best practices in the application of intermodal transport, intermodal interfaces and logistics management outside of the UNESCAP region (*Chapter 5*);
- develops and recommends guidelines for the design, financing and establishment of intermodal interfaces in inland areas (*Chapter 6*);
- recommends an approach to the measurement of the net economic benefits of intermodal interfaces (*Chapter 7*); and
- recommends policy initiatives and offers guidelines for consideration by governments of the region to formulate their own programmes of action for the expanded application of intermodal transport practices and systems (*Chapter 8*).

Chapter 2. Freight intermodal interfaces: definitions

2.1 Trade growth and development of inland trade distribution systems

Many countries within the UNESCAP region depend on their hinterlands as a source of foreign trade. Rapidly increasing foreign trade in many of these countries, especially over the past decade, has generated a requirement for long distance transport feeder services between major inland trade generating centres and the seaports. Further, the emergence of the landlocked economies of Central Asia after the break-up of the Soviet Union has generated a requirement for the connection of the sources of trade within these countries and seaports in neighbouring countries. Since the distances involved tend to be substantial, rail which can offer cost efficiency over distances greater than 300 km is assuming an increasingly important role in trade feeder transport. It is being supported in this role by truck transport which assumes a local feeder role, involving the local distribution of traded commodities between principal inland transfer stations and the trade originating and terminating locations, designated as Trade Generating Locations (TGL). Effectively these facilities operate respectively as “hub” and “spoke” facilities, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Inland trade distribution system



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