

United Nations Development Account

Terminal Evaluation of Project 1819BA

“Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport-related SDGs in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries.”

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Evaluation conducted by: Frantz Pierre-Jerome

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Frantz Pierre-Jerome

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Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	4
Executive summary	5
1. Introduction	9
2. Description of the Project	9
2.1 Background	9
2.2 Overall Project objectives and expected accomplishments/results	11
2.3 Project strategies and key activities	12
2.4 Beneficiaries and target countries	13
3. Evaluation objectives, scope and questions	13
4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology	14
5. Findings	17
5.1 The level of stakeholders' involvement in the Implementation of the SITCIN Methodology	18
5.2 Evaluation criteria and questions	21
6. Conclusions	44
7. Recommendations	48
Annex 1: Evaluation TORs	50
Annex 2: SITCIN structure and methodology.....	56
Annex 3 – SITCIN Evaluation Matrix.....	57
Annex 4: Summary of the seven National Connectivity Reports.....	62
Annex 5: Financial Information -Project Document	68
Annex 6: Summary of interviews with key stakeholders by Group.....	70
Annex 6a: Sample of the customized questionnaires.....	85
Annex 7: Guidelines for stronger gender and human rights sensitive programming lens in the SITCIN implementation process	86
Annex 8: List of individuals interviewed	91
Annex 9: List of documents reviewed.....	93

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADR	International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
IMO	International Maritime Organization
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LDC	Less Developed Countries
LLDC	Land-locked Developing Countries
LNG	Liquified Natural Gas
NCR	National Connectivity Report
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SITCIN	Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

Executive summary

Overview

Economists draw a direct link between being landlocked and a country's level of development. They argue that landlocked countries are over-represented among the poorest countries in the world and believe that only efficient and effective transport connectivity systems would facilitate their economic growth and sustainable development.

In the field of Transport Connectivity, UNECE works mainly to promote sustainable (safe, clean and competitive) transport through the development of freight and personal mobility by inland transport modes, by improving traffic safety, environmental performance, energy efficiency, inland transport security, and by providing transport sector services efficiently.

In 2017, the UNECE's Inland Transport Committee mandated the Sustainable Transport Division to develop and implement the UNDA 11th tranche project entitled "Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport-related SDGs in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries." The Project was led by UNECE and implemented with the support of two other UN entities: the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). It aimed to enhance the national capacities of selected developing and middle-income countries to design and implement an evidence-based transport policy framework that fosters sustainable transport connectivity and the implementation of transport-related SDGs. The Project's budget was \$550,200, funded from the 11th Tranche of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA). Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Jordan, and Paraguay were selected to be part of the pilot project. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic-induced travel restrictions made additional resources available for non-travel-related activities, ESCWA decided to engage two other pilot countries from their region, Lebanon and the State of Palestine.

The project implementation process included developing a comprehensive set of 215 Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators (SITCIN), enabling interested countries to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of their respective inland transport system and the level of compliance of national administrative and legal frameworks with UN legal instruments in the field of transport. In response to the outbreak of the Pandemic, UNECE introduced two additional mitigation activities: a) the development of a set of pandemic resilience indicators for Governments to evaluate their transport system preparedness for and resilience to future pandemics, and b) the preparation of a concept note on international contingency management to increase the resilience of inland transport systems to external shocks.

Evaluation purpose, objectives, scope, users

This forward-looking evaluation aims to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the SITCIN Methodology Project implementation in the seven countries: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Paraguay, Jordan, Lebanon and State of Palestine from September 2018 to 31 December 2021.

More specifically, the purpose of this evaluation was to assess the performance of the SITCIN Methodology implementation process in enhancing the national capacities of the seven pilot land-locked or transit developing countries with a self-assessment tool to measure and monitor the performance of

their inland transport systems and their degree of interoperability with transport systems in their respective sub-regions, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. The evaluation looked at the activities carried out through data collection, policy dialogue, and capacity-building sessions to support changes during and after the implementation of the Project to address transport connectivity challenges in the seven countries.

The evaluation's primary user is UNECE, intending to help enhance capacity-building services provided to member States in transport connectivity systems and intermodality.

The overall conclusion drawn from the evaluation is that the UNECE's "Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport-related SDGs in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries." Project (SITCIN Project) has been highly relevant, coherent, effective, and efficient. Furthermore, the project results are sustainable for the short and medium terms. But, the long-term engagement of the pilot countries and possibly additional countries remains, at this point, difficult to predict. By the nature of the SITCIN project, most discussions focused on transport-related issues and challenges, contributing to the dissemination of best practices and exchanges among transports specialist and practitioners. More efforts may be needed to mainstream gender equality, human rights, and climate change throughout future SITCIN activities.

Overall, the implementation process successfully attracted a wide range of specialists from transports ministries and other relevant agencies. The SITCIN Project was highly relevant to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries regarding transport sustainability and inland and intermodal transport connectivity. SITCIN was also relevant and consistent with UNECE's global mandate and regional priorities. Implementing the SITCIN Project has proven to be highly coherent in facilitating professional collaboration and coordination internally and externally with external national stakeholders. It has created a favourable climate for constructive cooperation between the UNECE and transportation development stakeholders in Government and the private sector. With the advent of COVID-19, the UNECE quickly adjusted the scope of SITCIN's related activities, resulting in a limited impact on the Project's expected achievements and communication effectiveness among stakeholders.

Evidence demonstrates that the implementation of the SITCIN Project has been highly **relevant** and has responded to the needs and priorities of the beneficiary in transport sustainability and inland and intermodal transport connectivity.

The implementation of the SITCIN Project has proven to be highly **coherent** in facilitating a very professional collaboration and coordination internally between specific Divisions within the UNECE at every phase of the Project's design and implementation; and externally in establishing a solid working relationship between the UNECE, the United Nations regional commissions ECLAC and ESCWA, the Governments of the pilot countries and the National Consultants.

The SITCIN implementation process has demonstrated a **high level of effectiveness**. The Project has achieved its objectives, and all activities were implemented as planned. The Project's effectiveness is evidenced by the high stakeholders' satisfaction concerning the key activities delivered. SITCIN has also met its primary objective of identifying and assessing the most critical aspects of inland transport connectivity using a set of quantifiable and measurable Sustainable Inland Transport Indicators (SITCIN). The National Connectivity Reports (NCRs) from all seven pilot countries, the UNECE guidance on

measuring the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the Pandemic Resilience Indicators are evidence of those accomplishments.

In terms of efficiency, the SITCIN Project's financial planning and implementation were commensurate to its scale, implemented in 7 countries on three continents with the assistance and collaboration of ECLAC and ESCWA in the respective regions. Despite some delays caused by COVID-19 restrictions and the complexity and scope of the Project, the task was accomplished in a reasonable timeframe and within the planned budget.

The sustainability of the Project's results was considered moderate, at least for the longer term. The UNECE promoted the principle of national ownership throughout project implementation, so countries are not dependent only on UNECE funding. The UNECE delivered many concrete deliverables to facilitate the sustainability of SITCIN's key achievements, including various capacity-building sessions and exchanges of best practices involving international experts on transport-related issues, the SITCIN eLearning course and the (online) SITCIN user platform, etc. However, long-term government support and commitment to sustain the efforts of the past two years is challenging to predict as the life of any project is conditional on Government buy-in, its political will and the availability of national resources.

Cross-cutting issues of Gender equality and Climate change: The SITCIN activities were primarily oriented toward transport connectivity systems in the seven pilot countries. More efforts may be needed to mainstream gender equality, human rights, and climate change throughout future SITCIN activities.

Recommendations

After an exhaustive analysis of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the SITCIN Project in supporting Member States to strengthen their capacities in the area of transport connectivity and intermodality in the context of the SDGs, the evaluation formulated the following recommendations:

1. Given the high level of satisfaction expressed by national stakeholders complemented by the very sound relevance of the Project to the beneficiary countries and the activities' alignment with national priorities, UNECE, in collaboration with ESCWA and ECLAC, should continue to encourage more countries to facilitate and manage inland transport connectivity and implement transport-related SDGs through the use of the SITCIN methodology.
2. Acknowledging that the current informal mechanism for sharing good practices and experiences in the field of promoting inland transport needs improvement, and in light of the findings of the evaluation report and lessons learned from the National Connectivity Reports, which contribute toward wider institutional knowledge and articulate possible pathways for future similar projects:
 - a) UNECE could propose to its Member States a more structured innovative approach or mechanism to manage and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and good practices among national stakeholders, transport and other related specialists at the national, regional and global levels. Moreover, the mechanism should be inclusive enough to attract a broader civil society audience. Along with the specialists in the transport connectivity sector, members would include, for instance: more business representatives, environmental specialists, urban

- planners, gender specialists, etc. The UNECE's Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), which has a mandate to promote experience sharing, could be well-placed to take up this role.
- b) Furthermore, UNECE should identify and consolidate areas of commonality in both the current external evaluation report and the National Connectivity Reports to generate a plan of action for future SITCIN related or similar type projects.
3. Recognizing the validity and usefulness of the additional set of emergency preparedness indicators developed in the framework of the project, in response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the positive feedback received from stakeholders, UNECE in cooperation with ESCWA and ECLAC, could continue to promote these indicators' broader use among United Nations Member States, thereby strengthening inland transport sector resilience to and preparedness for possible future contingency situations, in line with UNECE's various Guidelines and Directives on the impact of COVID-19. And, recognizing that stability is critical for successful applications of the SITCIN at its beginning stage, the whole SITCIN could be updated regularly to include among others: emergency preparedness and response to future shocks like COVID-19.
 4. Capacity-building and national appropriation remain key to sustaining the SITCIN's achieved results in the long term. While UNECE continues to further develop, implement and promote SITCIN, if necessary, UNECE may devise new forms of strategic partnerships with other UN entities and other institutions depending on the circumstances.
 5. Acknowledging the insufficient focus on the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights and and climate change in the SITCIN activities, future projects should include a brief assessment on how best to mainstream and address these issues. In this regard:
 - a) Future projects of the programme should include a step-by-step planning approach to facilitate more gender and human rights-sensitive programming. This approach will provide the beneficiary countries (with guidance from an assigned gender specialist) with a concrete plan to systematically and gradually integrate gender priorities into scale-up initiatives like the SITCIN project, with desired and feasible outcomes on gender equality objectives and indicators to measure progress. For instance, workshops at country, sub-regional or regional level, as appropriate, with women groups to discuss the project approach and share experiences and best practices may be helpful.
 - b) Building further on existing programmatic activities, a similar approach than the one outlined above could be used to integrate climate change and broader environmental considerations, as appropriate.

1. Introduction

Many transport economists argue that lack of access to the sea disadvantages many landlocked countries' development potential and economic growth. Being landlocked can reduce a country's average growth by 1.5 % annually, taking, for example, landlocked developing countries twice as long as coastal developing countries to export goods; 42 days to import, in one example, and 37 days to export ¹.

Some economists draw a direct link between being landlocked and the level of development. These specialists argue that landlocked countries are over-represented among the poorest countries in the world, but not solely due to slower growth rates. Regression analysis exposes the rather dramatic effect of landlocked on a developing economy. Studies agree that the solutions be mediated predominantly through transport and variously suggest that; 1) Landlocked countries should pay special attention to this sector; 2) some landlocked countries should think about adopting development plans emphasizing industries that are not dependent on physical transport, and 3) landlocked countries should receive special protection from the international community against unfair exploitation by their coastal neighbours. In this regard, modern telecommunications and information technology advancements have made this task much more manageable².

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), set up in 1947 as one of five regional commissions of the United Nations (UN), aims to promote pan-European economic integration. As a multilateral platform, UNECE facilitates greater economic integration and cooperation among its fifty-six Member States and promotes sustainable development and economic prosperity through various means, including policy dialogue, negotiation of international legal instruments, development of regulations and norms, exchange and application of best practices, as well as economic and technical expertise, and technical cooperation for countries with economies in transition.

In the field of Transport Connectivity, UNECE works mainly to promote sustainable (safe, clean and competitive) transport through the development of freight and personal mobility by inland transport modes, by improving traffic safety, environmental performance, energy efficiency, inland transport security, and by providing transport sector services efficiently.

2. Description of the Project

2.1 Background

In 2017, the Inland Transport Committee mandated the UNECE's Sustainable Transport Division to develop and implement a project entitled "*Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport-related SDGs in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries.*" The Project is based on UNECE's extensive expertise in sustainable transport and collaboration with other Regional Commissions on transport-related issues and will

¹ Project Document Template. 11th Tranche of the Development Account. Page 6.

² Relevant articles about lockedness include the following: Economic Development Problems of Landlocked Countries. Landis MacKellar, Andreas Wörgötter, Julia Wörz. January 2000. Pages-3-6. And Improving Trade and Transport for Landlocked Developing Countries. A Ten-Year Review. World Bank Group. November 2014. Page 1-11.

build on the organization's available expertise, ongoing projects, analytical work, and technical assistance activities³.

The Project's budget was \$550,200, funded from the 11th Tranche of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA). The Economic Affairs Officer managed the Project from the Transport Facilitation and Economics section, funded from the UN regular budget (Sect.20) resources.

The Project, led by UNECE and implemented with the support of two other United Nations regional commissions namely the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)*, sought to help Member States implement and measure progress toward implementing transport-related Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). More specifically, by assisting countries in strengthening their capacity to design and implement an evidence-based transport policy framework that fosters sustainable transport connectivity and the implementation of transport-related SDGs. After broad consultations with potentially interested countries, with support from the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), these consultations set the stage for interested countries to present their current activities in achieving transport-related SDGs. As a result, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Jordan, and Paraguay, were selected to be part of the pilot. In addition, given that COVID-19 pandemic-induced travel restrictions made additional resources available for non-travel-related activities, ESCWA decided to engage two other pilot countries from their region, Lebanon and the State of Palestine. The selection of these two countries was demand-driven and based on specific criteria. All seven beneficiary countries are Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) or important transit developing countries for their landlocked neighbours. They all face specific transit and transport challenges and benefit from a strong commitment to transport connectivity at national Government level.

The project implementation process included developing a comprehensive set of 215 Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators (SITCIN) based on which any interested country around the world will be able to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of its respective inland transport system and the level of compliance of national administrative and legal frameworks with UN legal instruments in the field of transport. The indicators are structured within three pillars of sustainability and applied across the four inland transport sectors, including road, rail, inland waterways, and intermodal transport. **See Annex 1: SITCIN structure and methodology.** In addition, in response to the outbreak of the pandemic, UNECE has introduced two additional mitigation activities: 1) the development of a set of additional pandemic resilience indicators enabling Governments to evaluate their transport system preparedness for and resilience to future pandemics, and 2) the creation of a concept note on international contingency management to increase the resilience of inland transport systems to external shocks for further elaboration in the relevant UNECE Working Parties and intergovernmental formats⁴.

Following the development of the SITCIN Methodology, UNECE organized a series of validation and capacity-building events in each of the five (and later seven) beneficiary countries to present the proposed set of indicators, collect feedback and comments, and introduce and apply them in a national context. As a result, the Project has

³ Template for DA Final Reports. 11th Tranche of the Development Account. Page 3-5. January 2022

*Throughout the Evaluation report, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) are defined as UN entities because they were the other two UN entities that partnered with UNECE to implement the SITCIN Methodology.

⁴ Economic Commission for Europe. Inland Transport Committee. Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators – Overview of pandemic resilience indicators. September 2021. [Informal document WP.5 \(2021\) No. 7 \(unece.org\)](#). See also COVID-19. Project Document.

engaged a wide range of nationwide transport, trade, customs and border management policymakers, regional integration mechanisms, infrastructure managers, operators and haulers, private sector associations, academia, and relevant civil society organizations.

As previously indicated, the ESCWA and ECLAC were involved in all phases of the implementation process. The three regional commissions together hired nine consultants to support the design and implementation processes in the field, one international consultant, two national consultants in Georgia, Kazakhstan and Serbia, and one national consultant in Jordan and Paraguay.⁵

This forward-looking evaluation aims to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Project "*Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport-related SDGs in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries*" as implemented in the five countries: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Paraguay and Jordan, (and later, seven, with the addition of Lebanon and Palestine) from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2021.

The evaluation identifies achievements and shortcomings and presents evidence-based conclusions and recommendations. The overall outcomes of the review aim to inform and support the UNECE in enhancing the capacity-building services provided to the Member States through regular technical cooperation and to facilitate its Sustainable Transport Division in developing and implementing similar future projects and activities.

The evaluation report also provides information and an evidenced analysis to support policymakers in assessing their country's external economic connectivity in terms of efficiency of their inland transport, logistics, trade, customs, and border crossing facilitation processes. In addition, governments could also use the SITCIN to assess and report on their progress in implementing the transport-related SDGs (i.e. 2030 Agenda) and their commitments through the adoption of the UN Vienna Program of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the decade 2014-2024 (A/CONF.225/L.1), which are based on partnerships between landlocked developing countries, transit countries and international organizations.

2.2 Overall Project objectives and expected accomplishments/results

The DA-11 Tranche Project and the SITCIN Methodology Project aimed to enhance the national capacities of selected developing and middle-income countries to design and implement an evidence-based transport policy framework that fosters sustainable transport connectivity and the implementation of transport-related SDGs.

2.2.1 Expected accomplishments/results

The overarching DA-11 Tranche Project met expected accomplishments for the transport sub-programme (as set out in the UN Biennial Programme Plan and Priorities, 2018- 2019 (A/71/6/Rev.1), to:

- greater geographical coverage and more effective monitoring of the implementation of United Nations legal instruments and recommendations on transport administered by ECE; and

⁵ Project Document Template. 11th Tranche of the Development Account. Pages-8-15 as well as the Template for DA Final Report. January 2022

- enhancement of the capacity of ECE Member States, particularly those in landlocked developing countries, to develop Pan-European and transcontinental transport infrastructure and transport facilitation measures.

The DA-11 Tranche Project also supported Result 2 of the transport sub-programme as defined in the United Nations Programme budget for 2021 (A/75/6/Add.1). It enhanced the regulatory framework for sustainable inland transport systems that are safer, cleaner, and more efficient.

The SITCIN Methodology Project also met its project objective; it developed and validated a comprehensive set of indicators (the SITCIN), enabling countries to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of their respective inland transport system and the level of compliance of national administrative and legal frameworks with UN legal instruments in the field of transports with the following expected accomplishments:

- **EA1:** Improved understanding of national transport stakeholders in identifying and assessing the most critical aspects of inland transport connectivity using a set of quantifiable and measurable SITCIN Indicators.
- **EA2:** Enhanced national capacities for developing evidence-based policies on inland transport connectivity (based on the results of the SITCIN benchmarking exercise) to achieve transport-related SDGs.

2.3 Project strategies and key activities

To meet the objective of the SITCIN Project, UNECE's Sustainable Transport Division adopted a step-by-step strategic approach comprising multiple phases⁶:

- Development of the initial set of Sustainable Inland Transport Indicators (SITCIN) covering road, rail, inland waterway, and inter-modal transport following a meta-analysis of the Member States' sustainable inland transport connectivity literature. Preliminary desk research and interviews with public and private sector representatives facilitated the data collection process and an overview of various available methodological approaches **(January – June 2019)**;
- Fact-finding scoping missions to each of the five pilot countries to review national transport and logistics situations, resulting in five national connectivity reports based on previous desktop research, the results of the fact-finding mission based on their sustainable transport connectivity and a gap-analysis of their sustainable transport connectivity **(July 2019–February 2020)**;
- National policy dialogue meetings combined with capacity-building workshops to validate the findings and formulate integrated recommendations into the draft national connectivity reports **(March 2020-May 2021)**;
- Tailor-made national capacity-building programmes in each of the five (later seven) pilot countries, identifying and addressing the pressing issues in inland transport policy development **(April 2021-December 2021)**; and
- Organization of an inter-regional forum and two regional outreach meetings (for the Southeast Europe, Central Asia and South Caucasus regions respectively) to share lessons learned and experiences of the five pilot countries with other interested governments around the globe to promote further the use of the SITCIN beyond the beneficiary countries **(September-December 2021)**.

⁶ Informal Document No. 3. Development of Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators – 2020 Progress Report. ECE. Inland Transport Committee. Eighty-third session Geneva, 23–26 February 2021. Page 2.

2.4 Beneficiaries and target countries

The primary beneficiaries of the Project as such are the five countries: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Jordan, and Paraguay (and later seven, with the addition of Lebanon and Palestine). Throughout the DA-11 Tranche Project and the SITCIN Methodology implementation process, the UNECE and other UN regional commissions organized intensive consultations in the five (and later, seven) countries with key private and public stakeholders, including experts in the key modes of transportation: road, rail, inland waterways, and intermodality. Key government ministries or public agencies in charge of transport, trade, and finance, and those responsible for customs and border management issues, comprise the largest contingent of the national stakeholders. In addition, businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often associated with transport infrastructure management, logistics, and freight forwarding represented the private sector's interest in each country. The number of business associations involved varied between participating countries. UNECE staff together with ESCWA and ECLAC staff also conducted a series of on-site visits to rail and road border crossing points, inland customs clearance and logistics centers, and other locations of strategic importance to assess each country's external economic/transport connectivity situation. Those site visits complemented the consultation processes.

3. Evaluation objectives, scope and questions

3.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

The general purpose and objectives of the Evaluation were to assess; 1) the extent to which the UNDA 11th Tranche project achieved its stated objectives; 2) the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Project in supporting the Member States to strengthen their capacities to assess the performance of their inland transport systems and their interoperability with sub-regional transport, in the context of the SDGs; 3) the progress made in gender equality and social inclusion in the context of this engagement; and lastly 4) any activities repurposed to address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and assess, to the extent possible, the UNECE's early response to COVID-19 with this Project.

More specifically, the purpose of this evaluation was to assess the performance of the SITCIN Methodology implementation process in providing the selected pilot countries with a self-assessment tool of a universal set of measurable criteria to enable each country to monitor its degree of inland transport connectivity, both domestically and bilaterally/sub-regionally, as well as in terms of soft and hard infrastructure, including:

- the extent to which each country implements the relevant UN legal instruments, agreements, and conventions effectively; and
- the degree to which each country's inland transport system is interoperable with the systems within its respective (sub-)region (interoperable, e.g. in terms of harmonization of infrastructure standards and technical parameters, coordination and integration of administrative procedures and regulatory regimes in place).

3.2 Evaluation scope, criteria and questions

The Evaluation fulfilled its Terms of Reference (ToR) to cover, under the framework of the DA-11 Tranche Project, the full implementation of the SITCIN Project from its inception and progress in the seven landlocked and transit countries of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Paraguay, Jordan, Lebanon and State of Palestine during the period between September 2018 to December 31, 2021, inclusively. In addition, it will also track and consider the efforts

of the seven countries and the support deployed by the UNECE through the key activities; data collection, policy dialogue, and capacity-building sessions during and after the implementation of the Project.

The evaluation also explored briefly the contents of the National Connectivity Report (NCR) provided by the seven pilot countries, including each country's overall score, a SWOT analysis, and the conclusions and recommendations. **See Annex 2 for a summary of the seven NCRs.** These NCRs are structured around the key modes of transport: road transport, railway transport, inland waterways transport and intermodality.

4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

4.1 Approach

The central principles guiding and shaping the approach to this evaluation are usefulness, credibility, and transparency. To meet the specified objectives identified in ToRs, the Evaluation used mixed quantitative and qualitative methods through both primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data.

Considering the intended forward-looking use of the Evaluation findings to improve the capacity-building services provided to the Member States and for future projects and activities of the Sustainable Transport Division of UNECE, the evaluation used a utilization-focused design that ensures findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned are as useful as possible to potential users of the results.

In addition, the evaluation used an equity approach in compliance with the requirement of the ToR to assess progress on (human rights, disability inclusion) gender equality and climate change. In some countries, complex and sensitive issues arousing various responses, the Evaluation regrouped the universally recognized human rights principles, gender equality, and disability inclusion as cross-cutting issues. The resulting triangulation of data and information concerning these issues made it possible to formulate some recommendations to the UNECE on how gender and human rights can be better integrated and mainstreamed with specific reference to future SITCIN or similar type projects.

The evaluation also addressed climate change as part of the cross-cutting issues and gender equality because of their critical link to SDGs. Both issues received broad coverage in survey questionnaires and oral interviews.

Finally, the Evaluation approach also adopted a highly participatory and consultative process with the various and diverse stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the SITCIN Methodology: relevant divisions of the UNECE, the national consultants as well as government departments and agencies, business associations, NGOs, and other international or regional organizations. This unique approach collected vital information about the overall experience and conditions under which the SITCIN Project best achieved its goals and objectives; It yielded an understanding of deeper possible reasons for variations between the seven participating countries, already distinct according to their socio-political, geographic and economic contexts.

4.2 Methodology

The Evaluation rests on a Matrix that formed the building blocks of the Methodology, where information was triangulated across multiple sources and geared toward the respective evaluation questions. It applied the specified Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability criteria through mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative and qualitative sources and techniques.

Some adjustments were proposed, in the evaluation criteria of the TORs, including the focus on policy dialogue as a concept in technical development and the holistic approach to cross-cutting issues (**See Annex 3 for the Evaluation Matrix**). Those adjustments ensured a more systematic coverage of a broad range of issues, drew well-founded conclusions, and produced solid and valuable recommendations. In addition, they helped to formulate the interview guides, targeted surveys, and other enquiry instruments as required.

The integration of policy dialogue with the criteria of coherence has the effect of showing policy dialogue to be an effective instrument in development cooperation by improving coordination and harmonization of efforts to bring about changes and that it constitutes an essential means to reach objectives through training and capacity building (agent of change)⁷. Policy dialogue then is viewed as a conceptual framework for multiple actors (international, Government, private sector, and NGOs) to reach common goals, collaborate and complement each other⁸.

The evaluation collected data through the following three data collection methods:

- **Extensive desk review comprised all relevant materials** provided by the UNECE Project Manager of the Sustainable Transport Division. Additional information was collected when possible from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), leading the implementation of the Project in their respective countries.
- **Virtual key informant interviews** (verbally by telephone or video) were conducted individually with all the national consultants. The national consultants had a broad knowledge and understanding of the SITCIN Project's Methodology, processes, and related issues. Their feedback was considered critical to examining the Project's Relevance to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries, effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the SITCIN expected results and the coherence of the collaboration between the various stakeholders and partners. In addition, they liaised with key representatives of the implementing partners, ESCWA and ECLAC, which were closely involved in implementing the SITCIN Project. National consultants also organized and attended all the activities related to implementing the SITCIN project: policy dialogue, data collection, capacity-building sessions, and site visits.
- **Survey questionnaires with key stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries** sought the views and perceptions of multiple stakeholders/partners involved in implementing the SITCIN Methodology and its related activities. The stakeholders included: UN entities in each country for their perspectives on the entire implementation process, coherence, and effectiveness; and another set of questionnaires solicited National stakeholders, representing Government staff from various line Departments and Agencies and Business/NGO Associations to express their standpoint on relevance, sustainability, the inclusion of cross-cutting issues and broadly their satisfaction with the activities offered by the UNECE. The tailored questionnaires reflect the views of the

⁷ For dialogue to be successful, it should (amongst others): - be timely - ensure broad-based and meaningful participation - be complementary to project/programme support - be based on consistent key messages - be supported by committed leadership. Evaluation of Policy Dialogue as an Instrument: the case of Gender Equality. Swedish International Development Agency (2015).

⁸ Policy dialogue can be defined as an "organized deliberation between two or more actors on the allocation of values that is likely to result in new policies or modification of existing ones. In this context, policy dialogue has the possibility of transformational outcomes rather than transactional." (Source: AUSAID, Thinking and Working Politically: An Evaluation of Policy Dialogue in AUSAID, 2013).

different groups and their involvement in the process (training courses, capacity-building sessions, policy dialogue, and data collection). This approach led to a relevant set of indicators and data that proved to be very useful for assessing and identifying the specific needs of participating countries.

To facilitate the data collection processing and transparency, the Project Manager initially approved the inception note to create the survey questionnaires. Then, collaborating with the UN entities and the national consultants, the Project Manager identified 58 stakeholders for the planned interviews. **The survey questionnaires included open-ended and closed-ended questions, using a rating from 5 (excellent) to 0 (poor) scale (Annex- 4: Sample of Survey Questionnaires).** The survey questionnaires were based on the evaluation criteria, questions, and sub-questions from the ToR and the matrix. The intention was to gather as many opinions as possible from many people involved in the design and implementation processes.

Among those contacted, 43 (74%), as outlined in Table 1, provided information on their experience, level of satisfaction and lessons learned. Respondents had a maximum of two weeks to fill out the questionnaire with two extensions provided and multiple email reminders. **Table 1** below shows the disaggregation of stakeholder groups by gender and organizations through the various surveys and oral interviews. **See Annex 7** for the list of interviewed participants

The evaluation followed the UNECE Evaluation Policy, the synthesis of guidelines for UN evaluation under COVID-19 and the guidance on measuring the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on women and men. In addition, it complied with the United Nations Development Account – Terminal Evaluation of Project ID and the Office of Internal Oversight Services guideline. The evaluation also followed the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations.

Table 1: Number of stakeholders contacted through Key Informant Interview (KII)

Stakeholders Group	Number of stakeholders considered for KII and number of participants							
	Total invitees by Sex		Participated and %		Women	Men	Participation rate by Sex	
		M	F				W	M
UN Entities	7*	6*	1	5 (72%)	1	4		
National Consultants	7	6	1	6 (86%)	1	5	16%	84%
Government stakeholders***	26	19	7	17 (65.4%)	7	10	37.5%	62.5%
Business/NGO Stakeholders	15	9	6	12 (73%)	6	6	50%	50%
UNECE Staff/Consultant**	3	1	2	2 (67%)	1	1	50%	50%
Total	58*	41	17	43*** (74%)	16	26	38%	62%

*one of the UN entities represented two countries

** One of the UN staff participated partially in an oral exchange of view which was disqualified for the analysis.

*** Two questionnaires from business associations were eliminated. These stakeholders inappropriately filled out the questionnaires. **Therefore, the number to keep in mind is 43 stakeholders.**

Evaluation limitations

The Evaluation encountered some limitations; the section below describes a series of mitigation strategies designed to diminish their impact on the conclusions, recommendations, and findings:

- **Time limit:** It is generally difficult to estimate the time needed to review projects in the DA-11 Tranche Project and the SITCIN Project. Being implemented in seven different countries with different cultures and languages, geographic zones, and administrative structures, the Evaluation required a rather complex program-level assessment that proved challenging and needed more time. The scope of the evaluation was broadened from the initially foreseen 5 pilots to 7 which led to an extension of the time needed to complete the assignment.
- **Weak evidence on impact:** Considering that the SITCIN project was a pilot, the lack of field visits, face-to-face interviews, workshops, or round table sessions with participants potentially reduced opportunities for collecting evidence of impact. However, open-ended questions in the survey allowed for some comments and suggestions, providing a platform for participants and beneficiaries to share their experiences and perspectives. In addition, the evaluation attempted to mitigate potential bias by triangulating data from open-ended questions with Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and the National Connectivity Reports.
- **Challenges around measurement:** The absence of robust baseline data regarding the will and capacities of the pilot countries to fully implement the SITCIN Methodology in the medium and long term influenced the extent to which the evaluator could measure achieved results. However, as it is common for initiatives to have limited baseline data, the evaluator used a mixed-methods evaluation methodology to compensate for the lack of such data.
- **Lack of face-to-face interaction:** Ideally, an evaluation of that scope involving seven countries required a site visit to at least one of the project countries; however, since budget limitations and COVID-19 restrictions did not permit face-to-face interaction with focal points, national stakeholders or UN entities, all interactions had to be carried out via video and emails.

5. Findings

This section examined the overall performance of the SITCIN Methodology implementation process in the seven selected pilot countries.

Firstly, it assessed stakeholders' involvement and satisfaction with the SITCIN Project's three main activities: policy dialogue, capacity-building sessions, and data collection. Secondly, it answered the evaluation questions by applying the criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and the Cross-cutting issues of gender equality and climate.

5.1 The level of stakeholders' involvement in the Implementation of the SITCIN Methodology

Assessing the level of involvement was not part of the criteria set by the Evaluation's TORs; however, oral interviews with National Consultants influenced the decision to add it and to document how national stakeholders benefited from the SITCIN Project, and to inform project effectiveness, coherence of the collaboration and dialogue (internal and external) between stakeholders, and project sustainability assessments.⁹ The level of stakeholders' involvement was rated from 5 to 0 (5 for being well involved and 0 for not being involved)

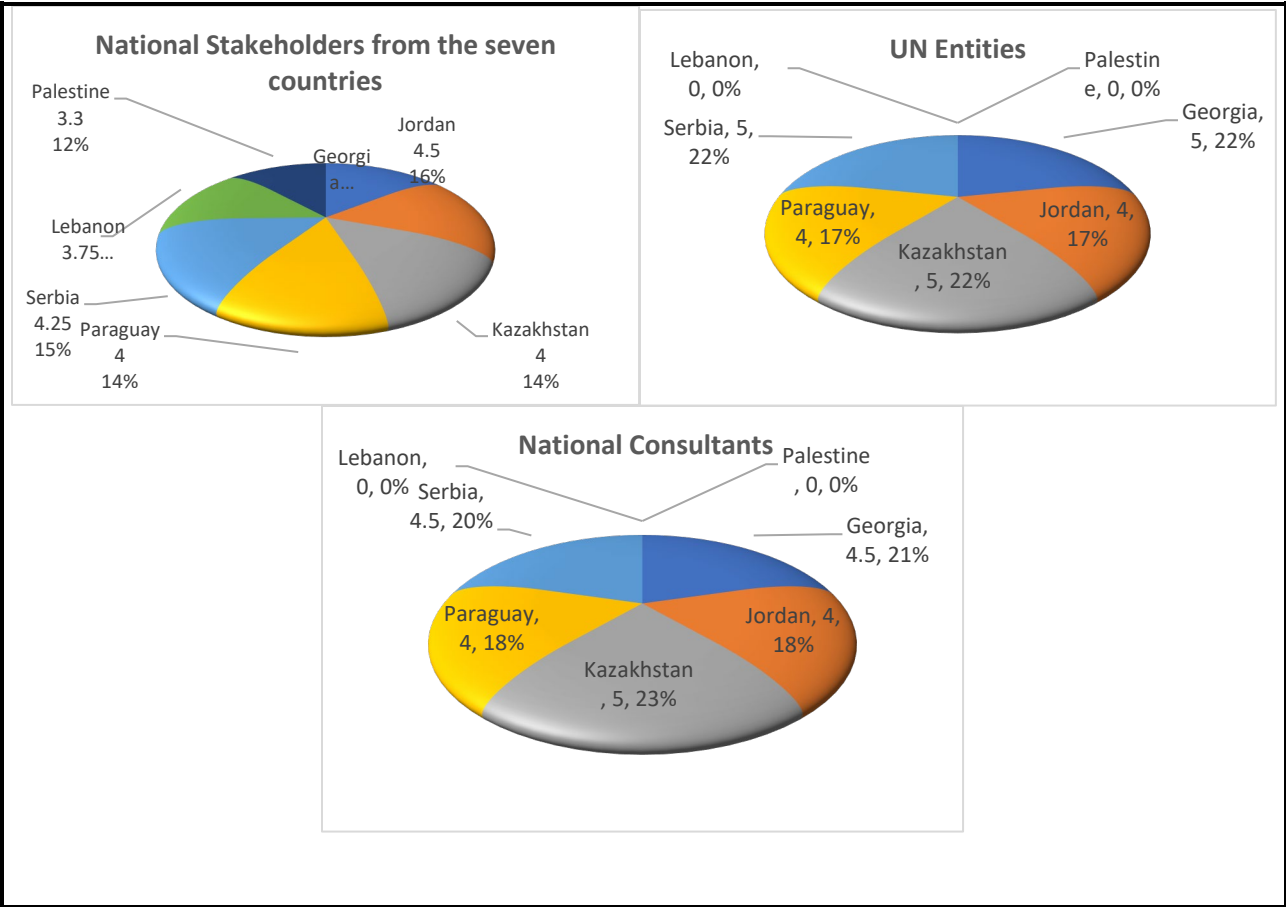
According to the data collected, most respondents were directly or indirectly involved with the SITCIN Methodology implementation process. On average, participants from all categories of stakeholders rated their **level of involvement at around 4**. The UN entities and the National Consultants scored the highest among all stakeholders, averaging around 4+. Their self-rated high level of involvement reflects their direct participation in various phases of the SITCIN Methodology implementation, including maintaining a constant dialogue with all parties. **See Figure 2: Overall Level of involvement in the SITCIN Implementation process.**

In addition, the survey results show that national stakeholders from the seven countries (Government and business associations) were generally satisfied with the training or workshop sessions they attended. On average, they rated a 4 for their **satisfaction with the available training sessions**; more than 65% similarly rated 4 for the usefulness and applicability of the SITCIN Methodology in their work settings.

A majority of national stakeholders indicated that the knowledge and experience acquired through the SITCIN Project would likely nurture a culture of cooperation and dialogue between actors involved in specific activities and overcome the existing silo mentality among Government agencies and departments.

⁹ The level of involvement helps assess how national stakeholders (Government and Business stakeholders) benefited from the Project various activities (capacity building, national dialogue sessions, data collection). It also helps measure their understanding and level of satisfaction with the SITCIN Methodology; their perception concerning the easiness or difficulty of adapting the Methodology in a specific country as well as his/her perception of their respective country's capability to adapt the methodology. For the other stakeholders (National Consultants, UN Entities) their level of involvement is measured through their direct or indirect support or their contribution to the project (from an organizational perspective, by providing directly or indirect contribution through third party: financial, HR or technical support services to the beneficiary countries; their contribution to the development of the Methodology.

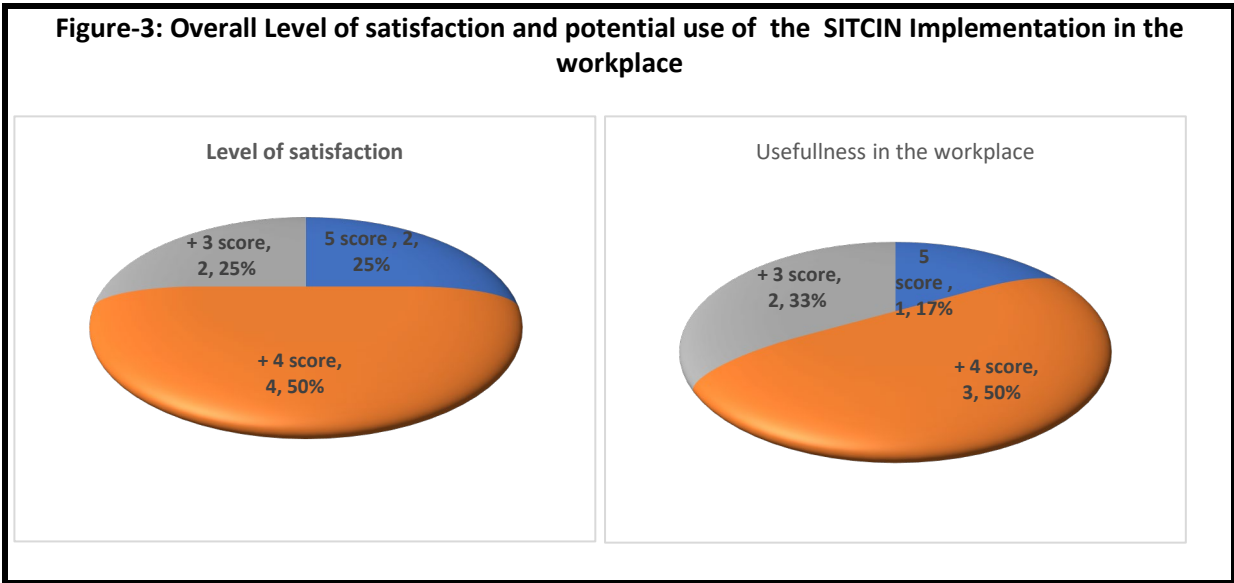
Figure 2: Overall Level of involvement in the SITCIN Implementation process



The survey results, from a strictly business perspective, indicated that 75% of the business associations were satisfied with the three activities. Fifty percent (50%) of business representatives **rated their satisfaction 4**. Furthermore, the same percentage was optimistic about the potential to apply the knowledge and experience gained during these sessions in their respective workplaces.

These ratings will later confirm the relevance of the training sessions to the needs of both government and business stakeholders. Furthermore, those ratings also validate the potential of a more fertile ground for changing the enduring silo mentality among various stakeholders toward a more constructive collaborative approach and more robust policy dialogue to addressing urgent transport connectivity-related issues of mutual interest as both Government and Business leaders recognized the usefulness of the training sessions delivered by under SITCIN.

Figure-3: Level of satisfaction and applicability/usefulness in the workplace.



Some National stakeholders commented on possible improvements to the SITCIN Methodology, including 1) learning more about improving intermodal transport and logistics; 2) organizing additional workshops at regional levels; and 3) adapting the Methodology implementation to the post-COVID-19 era with new indicators and better public awareness about the new tool. The last comments demonstrate that not all national stakeholders were aware that the UNECE developed a set of additional pandemic resilience indicators enabling Governments to evaluate their transport system preparedness for and resilience to future pandemics.

During the sessions, most stakeholders did not take up the opportunity to suggest issues that the SITCIN Methodology did not cover. However, six made suggestions that converged into the following themes. They suggested:

- **Establishing a permanent body/working group or other mechanisms** to implement the SITCIN Methodology on an ongoing basis. That Working Group would include UNECE representatives, government and business representatives, as well as a few specialized civil society organizations (human rights or gender-based and Environmental and climate change), to closely monitor changes in the transport sector, share these potential changes, and update beneficiaries;
- **Extending safety and security standards** (as expressed in the SITCIN) from roads to the inland waterways and the railway in particular (given the number of rail accidents at level crossings and during transport etc.);
- **Introducing potential amendments and additions to the regulatory and legal framework** that would cover both passenger and cargo transportation; and
- **Increasing collaboration and awareness to promote the SITCIN Methodology's utility:** Ministers responsible for transport in the pilot countries, as the Project's primary beneficiary, should proactively collaborate further with UNECE and its UN entities partners to showcase the current applicability of SITCIN, its results and its relevance to broader audiences.

5.2 Evaluation criteria and questions

Relevance: *The Relevance criteria examined the extent to which the SITCIN Project, including the key activities conducted during the implementation process, responded to the needs and priorities of the seven countries; was inclusive and consistent with global and regional priorities; and relevant to the UNECE's mandate to promote sustainable transport, which is safe, clean, and competitive.*

All evidence collected during the literature review confirmed that the SITCIN Project responded to the needs and priorities of the selected countries in the pilot.

Firstly, as previously mentioned, the selection of the initial five countries was demand-driven and followed pre-specified criteria of acceptability defined by the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division (i.e. all five countries have made formal requests to be part of the project). As early as 2018, UNECE organized several workshops focusing on helping Member States implement and measure progress towards implementing transport-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG meetings took place in Podgorica, Montenegro, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, and Ljubljana, Slovenia. These workshops set the stage for interested countries to express their desire to achieve transport-related SDGs.

Secondly, the selected pilot countries had to meet specific criteria, such as; 1) the identification of transport connectivity as a national priority; 2) the commitment of the National Government towards transport connectivity, 3) the geographical conditions of the country as being landlocked or transit developing; and 4) the maintenance of some form of geographical balance (1 country from each of the following regions: Central Asia, South Caucasus, Southeast Europe, the Middle East/North Africa and Latin America regions)¹⁰.

In addition, all seven beneficiary countries are either LLDCs or important transit developing countries for their landlocked neighbours¹¹.

Thirdly, judging by the score obtained from the survey questionnaires and oral interviews with various categories of stakeholders, evidence strongly confirmed not only the high relevance of the SITCIN Methodology and its accompanying activities outputs to the needs of the beneficiary countries but also the Methodology's direct alignment with countries priorities to develop an interconnected transport system.

According to the collected data, of the 43 stakeholders who participated in the survey or the oral interviews, 37 responded to the question on relevance, **a retention rate of 86%**. **Figure 4** below shows the responses of all responding stakeholders and confirms the Project's high relevance to the seven countries' needs and its alignment with their national priorities. It also illustrates the disaggregated scores on relevance by all groups of respondents.

More than 65% of respondents scored the Project's Relevance between **5 and 4+**. Twenty-four percent (24%) of respondents scored the Project's Relevance at 3+; only 8% scored under 2.5.

¹⁰ Project document Template: 11th Tranche of the Development Account. Page 5.

¹¹ Final Template Report -DA-11th Tranche. January 2022. Page 2

Figure 4: Disaggregated score on relevance from all groups of respondents

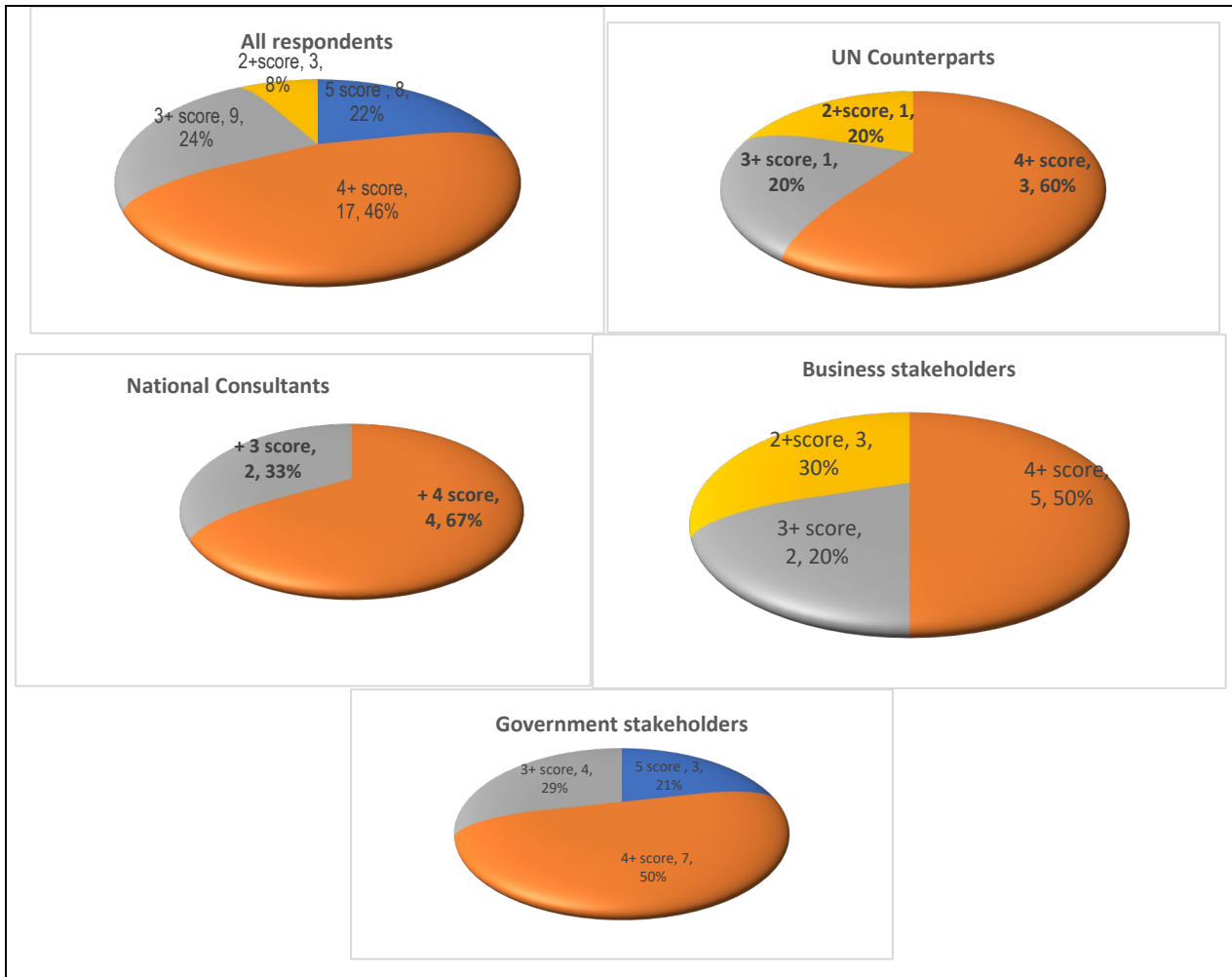


Figure 4 shows that more than 20% of the responding stakeholders (8) gave a maximum score of 5 to the relevance of the SITCIN Methodology to the needs of the seven beneficiary countries. Again, UN entities and UNECE staff are firmly represented (65%) among those giving the highest score. Government stakeholders and representatives of business associations, on average, scored a 4+, while the national consultants scored 4 for the project's relevance. The fact that national stakeholders and national consultants follow an almost similar pattern in their scoring may be explained by their deep knowledge of their countries' structural context. In addition, having been directly involved with the UN entities in preparing the full implementation of the SITCIN Methodology, they are more able to anticipate and assess the challenges that the full implementation of the SITCIN Methodology may pose to their respective countries.

The stakeholders' high relevance rating of the SITCIN Methodology highlights the importance of transport sustainability and inland and intermodal transport connectivity in landlocked countries to regional and global needs, specifically to the participating countries.

Various stakeholders provided explanatory arguments supporting the relevance of the SITCIN Methodology to regional and global needs and priorities.

The SITCIN Project—its Methodology and activities—was relevant to Kazakhstan's needs and priorities, given its geographic position in the region and globally. Located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, bordered by China, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Russia, Kazakhstan has seven international automobile corridors totalling 8,300 km; its railway lines are equally important in serving the Central Asian corridor. However, it only has one inland waterway connection with the Russian Federation through the Irtysh and Ural rivers.

The SITCIN Methodology is also relevant to the needs and priorities of Serbia's investment in developing a new transportation policy focused on efficiency and interconnectedness and its desire to become a member of the European Economic Area and the European Union (EU). The SITCIN Methodology thus provides Serbia with the appropriate tools to compare UN conventions with EU procedures in transport connectivity and to address the weaknesses of its forthcoming transport policy.

Stakeholders from Georgia stated that the SITCIN Methodology opens new approaches for their country to develop an effective and connected transportation system. Georgia's location in the Caucasus region, on the coast of the Black Sea, positions it as a gateway between Europe and Asia with easy access to Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East, and it is developing an integrated, multimodal transport infrastructure to be the transit gate for Euro-Asian trade. They considered that the SITCIN Methodology is highly relevant to their country's needs

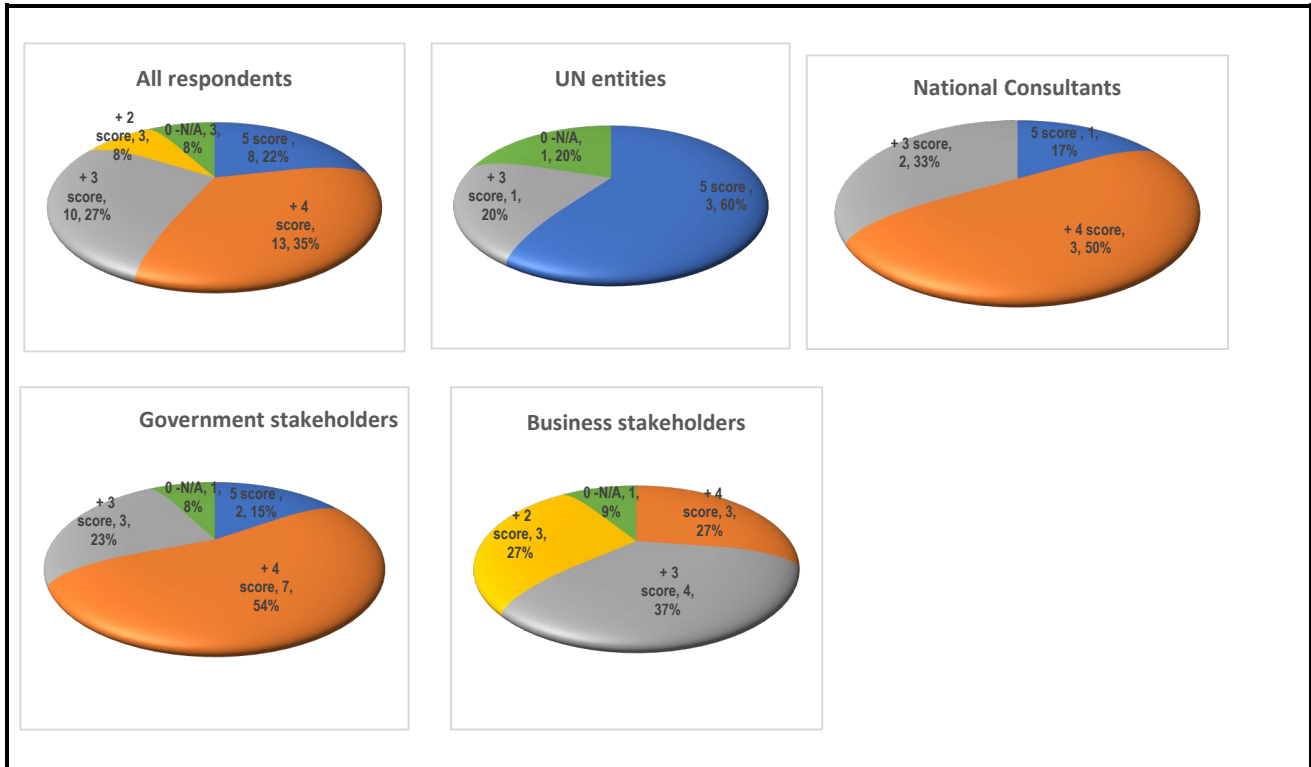
A similar imperative exists for Jordan and Paraguay. The (SITCIN) indicators are helpful to Paraguay because they provide an overall view of the country's transportation system. The NRC results showed that their system depends on waterways since they had no built-in plans to diversify freight options (with rail infrastructure, for example) for more resilience. Paraguay's National Consultant found the indicators helpful in evaluating the degree of harmonization with international standards (shown by the global score for each country) and with other members of Mercosur. For Jordan, the SITCIN Methodology and its implementation activities highlighted the importance of sustainable transportation and inland transport connectivity among Arab countries.

Among the business stakeholders who filled out the questionnaire, 60% rated the Project as very relevant to the needs and priorities of the business associations, with an average score of 3+.

A sub-question on the relevance criteria asked stakeholders if UNECE's efforts added value in enabling the pilot countries to implement transport-related SDGs. Despite slightly different interpretations, more than 90% of stakeholders confirmed that the UNECE's efforts to implement the SITCIN methodology have added value in implementing transport-related SDGs. The UN entities and UNECE staff (representing almost 20% of the interviewees) scored 5. They asserted that the SITCIN Methodology complied with the UNECE mandate to promote sustainable transport, which is safe, clean, and competitive. They also considered that the perspective offered by applying the SITCIN Methodology could improve traffic safety, environmental performance, energy efficiency, inland transport security, and efficient service provision.

The National consultants, Government and Business stakeholders, representing 81% of all interviewees, gave the second-highest score with 4+ in assessing the value added by the UNECE's SITCIN Project. They stated that the sessions organized by UNECE were relevant and aligned with its broader work and mandate. **See below Figure 5.**

Figure 5: Overall Level of perception of the value added by the UNECE's project



Twenty-seven percent of the respondents representing the business perspective considered that the SITCIN Methodology would support business organizations in achieving specific development objectives: promoting virtual data collection, attracting private investment, and stimulating economic activities. In addition, one business representative stated that the Government's adoption of the SITCIN Methodology, an evidence-based tool, would build private sector confidence.

The Evaluation also collected testimonies from some pilot countries, revealing the Project's high relevance to countries' needs and priorities. For example, Officials from Serbia consider the data collected under the SITCIN Project as first-class and helpful in aligning Serbia's transportation connectivity. However, they found some of the indicators more relevant than others, those being too advanced for a country of Serbia's socio-economic development status. Maybe more relevant to a more economically developed country like Germany. They also expressed concerns about using the SITCIN Methodology for transporting dangerous goods or using diesel locomotives for rail transport. One Serbia delegate drew attention to the fact that Serbia signed the World Convention on the transport of dangerous goods when it was still part of the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

The stakeholder from Jordan slightly echoes Serbia's view concerning the contextual adaptability of some indicators. SITCIN is a comprehensive methodology in the intellectual and academic sense for this participant, but its application is cumbersome. The national staff responsible for implementing the Methodology may not always have a solid understanding of its application. Those responsible for implementing the Methodology would need special training on designing the training programme, implementing it, and evaluating the quality of the training delivered. A disaggregated or a differently aggregated and detailed set of indicators would be easier to understand and implement if they reflect each country's socio-political and economic reality.

The Evaluation's Relevance criteria also assessed the SITCIN Methodology for its awareness of the needs of marginalized and/or vulnerable groups and its inclusiveness of the consultations.¹² Nevertheless, only a few stakeholders (around 25%) responded to the question and scored between 2 and 1; the lowest collected, indicating that the issue received insufficient attention during the consultation processes or the training sessions. Female stakeholders, over 62% who responded, appeared to be more aware or concerned about the lack of focus on the most vulnerable.

Overall, according to the collected evidence, the Evaluation found that the SITCIN Methodology and its implementation were highly relevant to the countries participating in the pilot project and seeking to develop efficient and interconnected transport systems. It also found that the SITCIN Project achieved its stated objectives by providing less developed and/or landlocked countries a tool which they can use, in a harmonized and systematic way, to improve their transport connectivity by benchmarking themselves with other countries. The Evaluation also found the Methodology firmly aligned with the UNECE's mandate to promote sustainable transport systems. However, the inclusion and needs of the marginalized remained unaddressed.

Coherence: *This section examines the extent to which the entire SITCIN Implementation Process was coherent and the outcomes consistent with the Project's overall objectives and expected accomplishments. It focuses on the following elements:*

- The overall coordination and collaboration (of external and internal entities)¹³ to facilitate the implementation of the SITCIN Methodology in the seven countries, including policy dialogue to improve coordination and harmonize efforts to bring about change.
- The appropriateness of the sequence in which the SITCIN Methodology was implemented to ensure the most favourable outcomes and effects.
- The specific adjustments required by the COVID-19 crisis and their flexibility in effectively responding to the member states' emergent and new priorities.

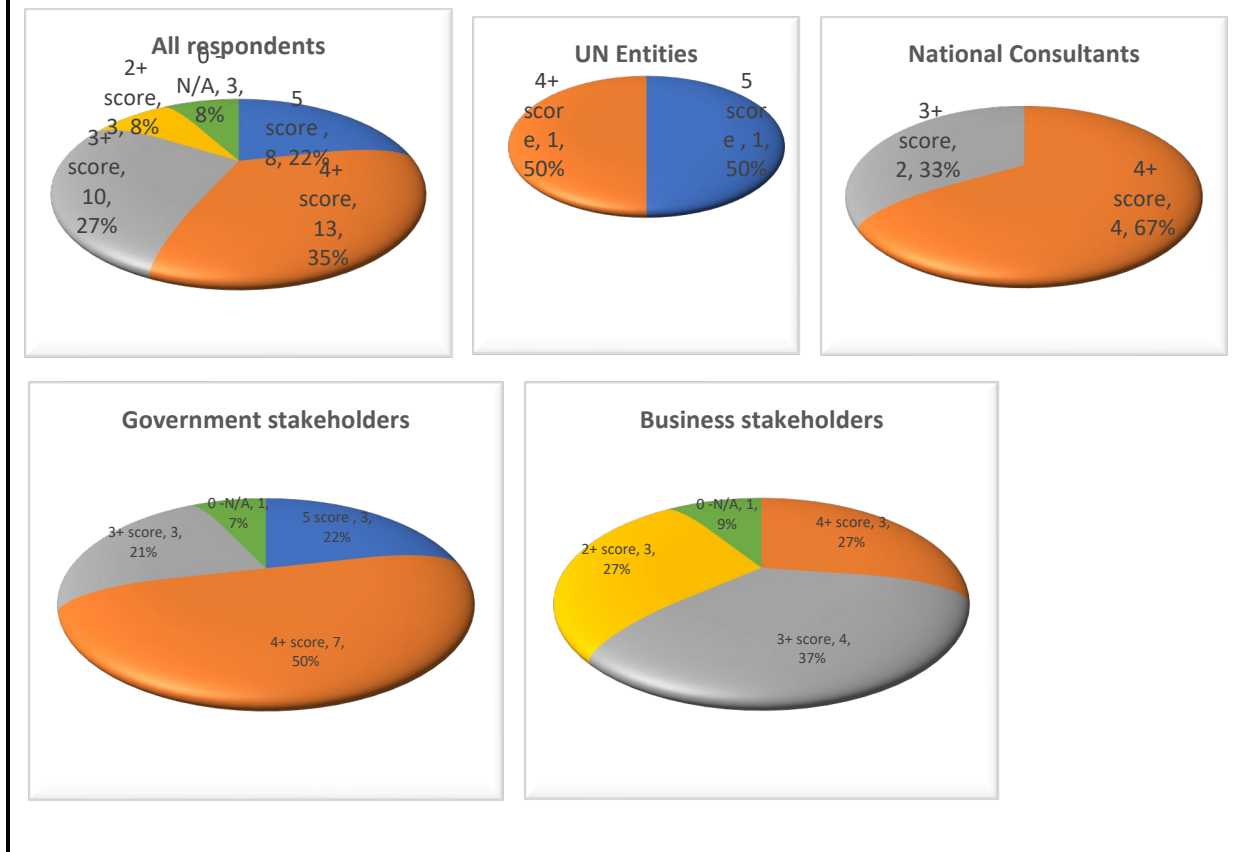
Almost 90% of the stakeholders from all categories responded to the evaluation questions and sub-questions on the criteria of Coherence. To various degrees, they recognized that the SITCIN Project was coherent; almost 60% of respondents gave an average score of 4+ to the Project's coherence.

For instance, UNECE staff rated the coherence of the Project in terms of internal communication and collaboration at 4.5. Citing that most internal and external communications were excellent; however, from their point of view, external communication could sometimes be challenging (poor internet connection, time zone difference, etc.), mainly when dealing with consultants outside the UNECE region and other regional commissions. **See Figure 6 below for the Disaggregated score on the coherence of the Implementation process.**

¹² The needs of vulnerable groups are further considered a cross-cutting issue and are presented later in the Evaluation.

¹³ External coherence will look at the coordination of activities and policy dialogue with national and other international actors Internal coherence will examine the role of other Divisions within the UNECE in the delivery of the SITCIN activities as a UNECE's whole-of-institution efforts

Figure-6 Overall stakeholders' score on coherence



National Consultants gave an average **score of 3+ to the Project's relevance**. This is evidenced by their broad knowledge of the SITCIN Methodology implementation process. Their role was to prepare the country's Reports and organize the national policy dialogue sessions and the capacity-building workshops. They also considered that the SITCIN Methodology implementation created a favourable climate for constructive collaboration between the UNECE and transportation-development stakeholders. Additional comments provided by national consultants are summarized below. **See Annex 5** for a summary of observations collected during the oral interviews with national consultants.

"That the implementation of the SITCIN Methodology created a positive climate for constructive collaboration between UNECE and all the stakeholders toward developing an efficient, interconnected transport system. The coherent teamwork of the National Consultants and the UN Entities made the positive climate possible. They developed a strong relationship with the Minister of Transport and liaised with all key stakeholders while maintaining a constructive relationship with UNECE Office."

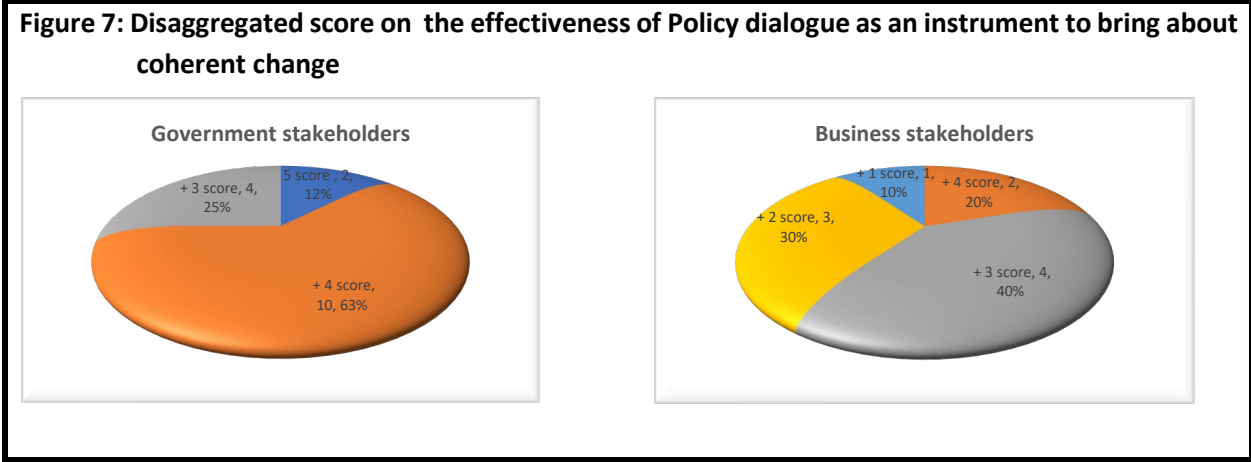
Another national consultant held a somewhat dissenting opinion about the coherence of communications during the Project.

"Efforts to develop a broadly inclusive framework for consultation did not bring the expected results. The ministries and government departments tended to work in silos with few exchanges between experts of data or on issues of common interest." The Consultant added that stakeholder engagement should be part of a broader

participatory approach that starts with the project design and preliminary analysis and is sustained through the implementation. In addition, stakeholders should have been more involved in developing indicators to ensure they applied to their particular context and circumstances.

The generally high satisfaction expressed by the participating beneficiary countries is corroborated by their responses concerning the effectiveness of policy dialogue. A government representative from Serbia who provided a score of 5 stated that: "The national consultants who led the workshop ensured that the importance of this project was adequately understood and well communicated, and it provided participants with sound guidance to approach the process of collecting information and scoring indicators in the future".

Most stakeholders also praised the coherence of the collaboration and policy dialogue in bringing about change in transport connectivity. **Fig. 7** In particular, many recognized and confirmed the constructive role of ECLAC, ESCWA and the National Consultants, who coordinated communications with stakeholders in Government and business. Fifty-four percent (54%) of responding National stakeholders (Government and Business combined) scored an average of 4+ for the effectiveness of the policy dialogue.



Concerning the required adjustments as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey and oral interviews showed that stakeholders overwhelmingly believed the Pandemic somehow generated significant disruption in the delivery of activities. Thirty-seven of the respondents (85%) shared a similar opinion. However, an almost equal percentage (88%) confirmed the delay did not prevent achieving expected results. In conclusion, despite some initial constraints and delays, due to the confinement from COVID-related lockdowns, SITCIN implementation did not necessarily change course, resulting in the successful delivery of the three main activities.

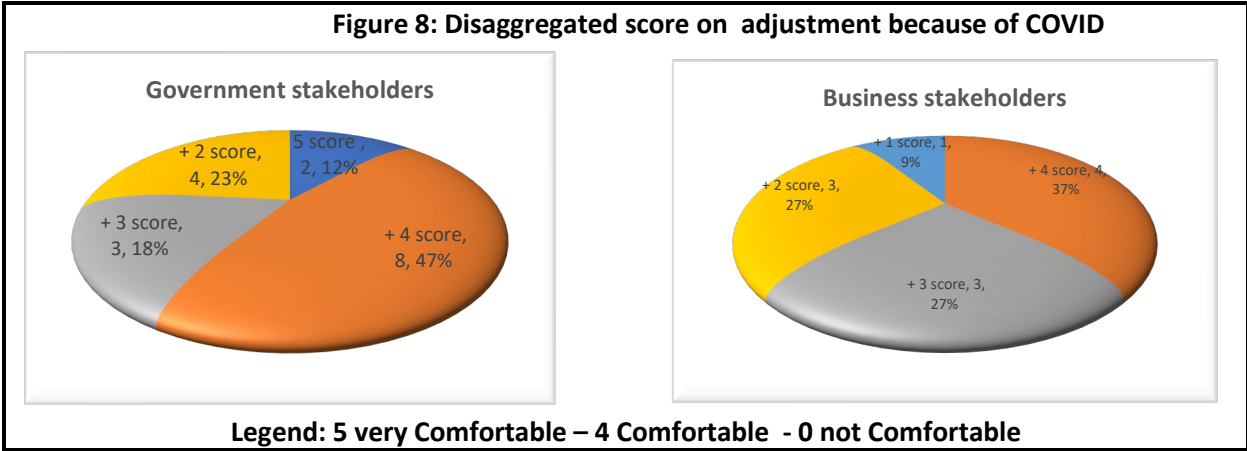
One of the significant consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic was the cancellation of face-to-face meetings, regular gatherings and travel restrictions, a very effective tool in the policy dialogue tool to achieve results and bring about change. UNECE also used online tools to hold virtual events and meetings during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Although resource efficiency was not the primary driver for transferring events online, the virtual nature of SITCIN related-activities has helped reduce costs and increase overall resource efficiency, enabling the addition of Lebanon and Palestine to the list of pilot countries and several additional activities. This included

preparing a set of pandemic preparedness indicators to support Governments in assessing their preparedness for future pandemics or international contingency situations¹⁴.

A minority of stakeholders, no more than 3 to 5%, suggested there was difficulty in adapting to remote access and other virtual technologies for group meetings and other workplace online events. Nevertheless, the majority accepted that remote access and virtual gatherings were now the only alternatives in delivering the main SITCIN activities: national policy dialogue meetings, capacity-building sessions, and data collection processes. The survey results measured the comfortability of stakeholders with the new virtual format; 56% of the responding national stakeholders admitted being comfortable with the new virtual format. On average, they rated their level of comfortability at around 4. Government stakeholders (77%) felt more comfortable with the virtual format than business associations (64%). **See Figure 8 for the score on adjustments to COVID-19.**

During the oral interviews, some national consultants acknowledged the usefulness of greater electronic and digitalization mediums in meetings and other SITCIN related-activities. However, they also insisted that in the post-COVID era, the use of these mediums still needs improvements. They suggest that the UNECE and its UN entities, along with the National Governments, should use the lessons learned from the seven pilot countries during the confinement period and the advent of new communication technologies to reconsider how best to reshape the communications and collaboration mechanisms with stakeholders. In addition, they pointed out that a new way of thinking is necessary because of the changes brought to transport connectivity systems by the pandemic. In particular, the SITCIN Methodology may also need to reflect the post-COVID changes from different perspectives, namely behaviour, administration, and procedures. The seven countries and the UNECE will need a better preparedness strategy for similar pandemics in the future. As part of the project , UNECE developed in mid-2022 an instrument to increase resilience of inland transport systems to external shock¹⁵.

Furthermore, as evidenced later in the conclusions section, the UNECE guidance on Measuring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Pandemic Resilience Indicators, to some extent, are addressing these concerns.



Effectiveness

¹⁴ https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/WP5_id_2021_07e_0.pdf and a SITCIN User dashboard: <https://sitcin.org/> and an eLearning course: https://rise.articulate.com/share/hnNWQFPw_oCSnrhzBN471ZUz_U-zPWV1#/

¹⁵ <https://unece.org/transport/documents/2022/01/working-documents/international-contingency-management-instrument>

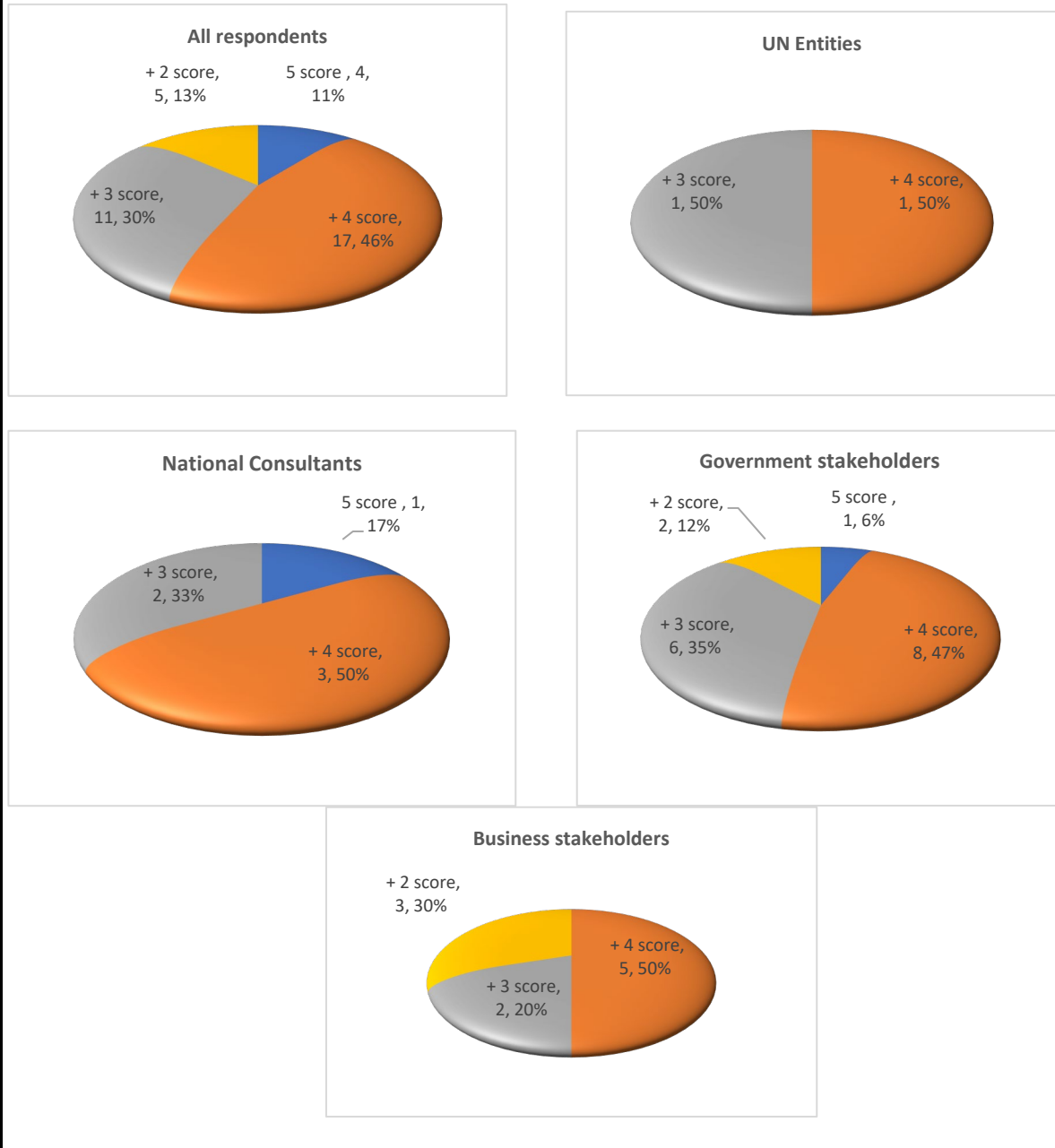
The project objective was to enhance the national capacities of selected developing and middle-income countries to design and implement an evidence-based transport policy framework that fosters sustainable transport connectivity and the implementation of transport-related SDGs.

- **EA1.** Improved understanding of national transport stakeholders in identifying and assessing the most critical aspects of inland transport connectivity using a set of quantifiable and measurable Sustainable Inland Transport Indicators (SITCIN);
- **EA2.** Enhanced national capacities for developing evidence-based policies on inland transport connectivity (based on the results of the SITCIN benchmarking exercise) to achieve transport-related (SDGs)

From an effectiveness perspective, this section examines how the entire SITCIN Project has achieved its planned results and objectives through the delivery of the scheduled activities: capacity training sessions, data collection, and policy dialogue. Assessment of SITCIN effectiveness encompassed the following lines of enquiries: 1) *results at the outcome level concerning the delivery of the three key activities*: (including the beneficiaries' level of satisfaction/usefulness); 2) *the key challenges and obstacles to achieving the Project's objectives*; 3) *the effectiveness of the SITCIN project in facilitating the sharing of best practices*; and finally, 4) *inspired by the Evaluation participatory approach* (suggestions and pieces of advice from stakeholders to improve the SITCIN project's effectiveness).

More than 85% of all stakeholders responded to the questions related to the Project's effectiveness. According to the survey and the oral interview results, almost 60% of the respondents confirmed that SITCIN, as a pilot project, was very effective in achieving its broad objectives to the greatest extent possible, despite constraints created by the pandemic. This group of respondents representing all categories of stakeholders gave an average score of 4+ to Project's effectiveness. Along the same line, 52% of those stakeholders, representing Governments and business associations, considered the outputs achieved from the activities conducted under SITCIN as effective; they rated the output's effectiveness at around 4+. The same groups that rated effectiveness as satisfactory were the primary beneficiaries of the capacity-building and policy dialogue sessions, leaving assumptions about their high level of satisfaction with the SITCIN activities. **See Figure 9 below.**

Figure 9: Disaggregated score on the overall effectiveness of SITCIN implementation



The following section describes a few key facts related to stakeholders' level of satisfaction and the relevance/usefulness of the primary activities delivered under SITCIN.

A representative from Kazakhstan wrote that SITCIN activities acted as a catalyst and a convener in the questionnaire. The national consultants played a crucial role in establishing a constructive dialogue between stakeholders who did not have a tradition of working collaboratively in the past.

Two representatives from Kazakhstan and Serbia stated that they would be able to fully use the skills, experience and knowledge they learned in their workplace.

A representative from Serbia wrote that the capacity-building activities were effective. SITCIN is beneficial and provides a practical framework for future use. The whole exercise as a self-assessment tool, in the long run, is necessary to exploit all the benefits of SITCIN indicators properly. Additionally, national consultants have carried out excellent work in knowledge sharing. The initiated knowledge-sharing with SITCIN activities should encourage pilot countries to further enhance knowledge-sharing among themselves when necessary. Complementary to the comments above, a representative from Georgia reported that training sessions helped participants identify a clear vision of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, strategies, and resources that organizations and communities need to enable them to thrive in a fast-changing world.

On the one hand, the national consultants closely involved in delivering the SITCIN activities praised the stakeholders' participation. However, that level could have been higher. They believe that leaving the national consultants and the UN entities in charge of liaising with national stakeholders has proven to be an effective strategy as they established direct contact with the key Ministries and political leaders. On the other hand, this relationship with the Ministers' Office and other key political and business leaders gave greater visibility to SITCIN and provided these leaders with the space to spearhead the process. All participating national consultants confirmed that the SITCIN project achieved all the expected accomplishments and provided adequate results. Furthermore, these effective results, among others, helped create a certain level of trust between the different experts and made the exchange of best practices more fluid.

Participating stakeholders in the survey and the oral interviews identified some challenges and obstacles. In addition, they provided, to the extent possible, advice on how to address these challenges and improve the Project's effectiveness.

Ninety-five percent of stakeholders have identified the COVID-19 pandemics as a significant challenge for implementing the SITCIN project. However, a similar proportion believed that the delay created by COVID-19 was not long enough to affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the process.

Among other challenges, some participants, mainly among the national consultants and a few national stakeholders representatives, identified a lack of diversity and representativity among national stakeholders. They pointed out that only government and business organizations participated in the discussions and benefited from the training sessions, leaving some more oriented social or environmental organizations outside the consultation table. This lack of inclusion, in return, may partly explain why cross-cutting, human rights, and environmental issues were merely raised during the consultations.

Another noticeable challenge, as mentioned by a national consultant, remains the timid engagement and motivation of the private sector. Business organizations from the seven pilot countries represented almost 30% of national stakeholders (12 out of 43). Seven of the 12 business representatives who filled out the survey questionnaire are from the Republic of Kazakhstan. In the interviews, a representative from Serbia explained the timid engagement from business organizations: "on one side, Government is robust and inert, it needs time to consolidate; on the other hand, businesses do not gladly allocate time for something it does not see as its main activity".

A few stakeholders, including some national consultants, indicated that the SITCIN Methodology is not straightforward and requires more training, particularly for LDC. Another stakeholder referred to the lack of

readiness of some countries to use a technology platform not widespread. Participants from Kazakhstan raised the difficulties of obtaining translation into Russian of all materials, starting with the final results and asked to make Russian one of the communications languages on the UNECE website.

From the business association's perspective, participants underlined a few challenges/obstacles that need to be addressed:

- Lack of improvements in the state regulatory and forecasting system;
- An obsolete Information and Analytical Center to collect data;
- Lack of regular critical information on the current state and prospects of development of the freight forwarding market; and
- Availability of regular analytical reports to interested organizations and companies.

In conclusion, applying the SITCIN Methodology and delivering the activities demonstrated a good level of effectiveness. However, there is still room for improvement, including making the consultation process more inclusive by attracting representatives from other specialized civil society organizations. In addition, consultation should focus more on approaching the end-user using a bottom-up approach instead of a top-down approach.

The various sessions allowed stakeholders to share experiences and best practices and gain insight into and understand how different countries have their way of thinking concerning the specificity of transport connectivity. However, several stakeholders believe the current mechanism to facilitate sharing best practices and experiences needs improvement. Some stakeholders suggest enhancing the sharing practices among pilot countries and UNECE specialists. Other stakeholders, many from Kazakhstan, propose the creation of a Working Group based on the Kazakhstan Research Institutes of Transport and Communications or another competent body for analysis, monitoring, research, preparation of appropriate action plans, and implementation monitoring and control over their implementation in the transport and communication complex of Kazakhstan. Such a body would allow it to organize more constructive work among the countries and close interaction with specialists from other countries.

Overall, the SITCIN project achieved its primary objectives and has effectively met its expected accomplishments of improving the understanding of national transport stakeholders in identifying and assessing the most critical aspects of inland transport connectivity using a set of quantifiable and measurable Sustainable Inland Transport Indicators (SITCIN). The publication of the National Connectivity Reports from all seven pilot countries is evidence of that accomplishment. In addition, the SITCIN project also resulted in the publication of the UNECE guidance on Measuring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Pandemic Resilience Indicators, the SITCIN eLearning course and the (online) SITCIN user platform are other pieces of evidence of achievements.

Additionally, although unequal in their progress, the seven countries' national capacities for developing evidence-based policies on inland transport connectivity (based on the results of the SITCIN benchmarking exercise) to achieve transport-related SDGs are improving. However, this improvement should encompass several fronts and depend on the country's socio-economic development level. Nevertheless, these universal indicators also offer a tool for comparing countries.

Efficiency

This section examines the extent to which the SITCIN Project delivered timely results within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources and whether the project management procedures were straightforward and streamlined enough to meet the needs of the seven pilot countries.

The assessment of efficiency focused on the following line of inquiries: 1) the overall efficiency of the Project; 2) the duration of the Project from design to the preliminary presentation of findings; 3) the allocated budget; 4) efficiency and clarity of management procedures, and 5) suggestions to improve efficiency in the future based on identified obstacles and barriers.

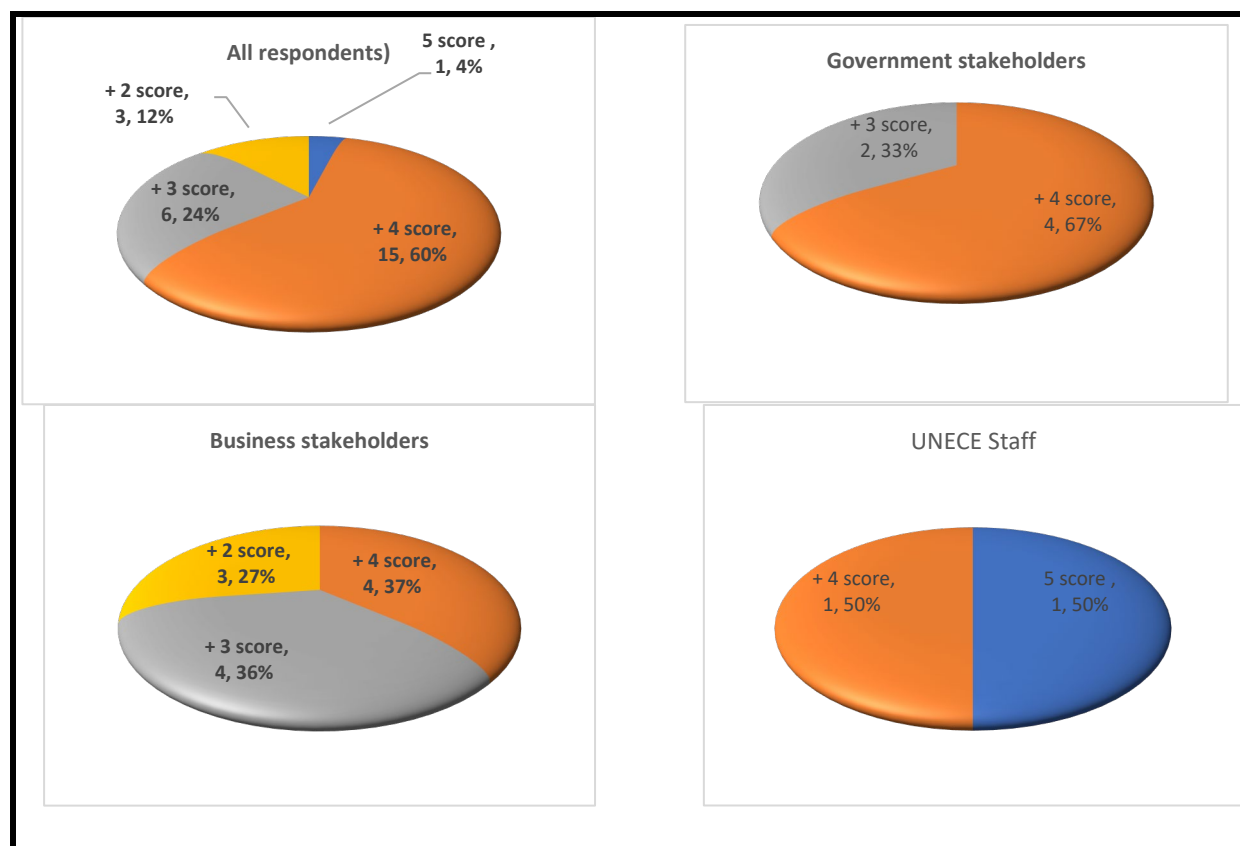
The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) show that most respondents to the question of the overall efficiency of the SITCIN project **gave a positive rating to the overall efficiency of SITCIN activities**. Seventy-three percent (73%) of stakeholders across the various groups (27 participants) scored the project efficiency at 4+, and 7% attributed the maximum score of 5. For example, five out of six national consultants (83%), who were at the forefront of coordinating and managing the project activities, attributed a score of 4+ for its efficiency. In addition, UN entities and the UNECE staff who responded to the question attributed a similar score to the efficiency of the implementation process.

Most questions related to efficiencies, such as budgets, administrative procedures, and contractual agreements for National consultants, did not necessarily involve the national stakeholders. Generally, UNECE, the other UN entities and national consultants dealt with these matters. In addition, UN entities and national consultants played a crucial role in negotiating with high-level Government officials and business associations on logistic issues and the timeline for delivering the training sessions and related activities to beneficiary stakeholders. As a result, national stakeholders could not judge whether the budget allocated to the key activities was adequate to promote and implement the SITCIN project.

However, as previously demonstrated in the sections on stakeholders' level of involvement and output delivery's effectiveness, Government and business associations recognized the crucial role played by national consultants and UN entities in facilitating and nurturing the smooth transition from face-to-face meetings to the digitalization of meetings and training sessions in a short period. They also praised the national consultants and UN entities for facilitating the delivery of activities in the most efficient and timely manner in a challenging environment and ensuring their conversion to results, as evidenced by the publication of the National Connectivity Reports. Nevertheless, national stakeholders also positively rated SITINC's overall efficiency, rating 4+.

Figure 10 below demonstrates that the stakeholders across the various groups gave an overall high score, averaging 4+ to SITCIN efficiency.

Figure 10 - Disaggregated score on the overall efficiency of SITCIN implementation



The Project’s implementation lasted 28 months and started with the proper design, followed by: 1) a series of fact-finding missions in the initial five pilot countries; 2) policy dialogue meetings to discuss and validate the findings of the draft national connectivity reports; 3) capacity building workshops addressing the most pressing topics identified in the NCRs; 4) Inter-regional capacity-building events, and 5) meeting between UNECE and the other UN entities to present the outcomes and deliverables of the Project. **Table 2** below illustrates a timeline of the various activities in the pilot countries.

Table 2 - SITCIN Scheduled activities overtime

Type of Activities	Starting Period	Ending Period
Launch of SITCIN	September 2018	
Fact-Finding missions in the five initial pilot countries	July 2019	February 2020
Policy dialogue meetings in the seven pilot countries	March 2020* Interruption due to COVID-19.	January 2022** Policy dialogues were held in Lebanon and Palestine (2021-2022)
Capacity building workshops	March 2021	December 2021
Inter-regional capacity-building event	September 2021	September 2021
SITCIN Outreach Webinars	December 2021	December 2021

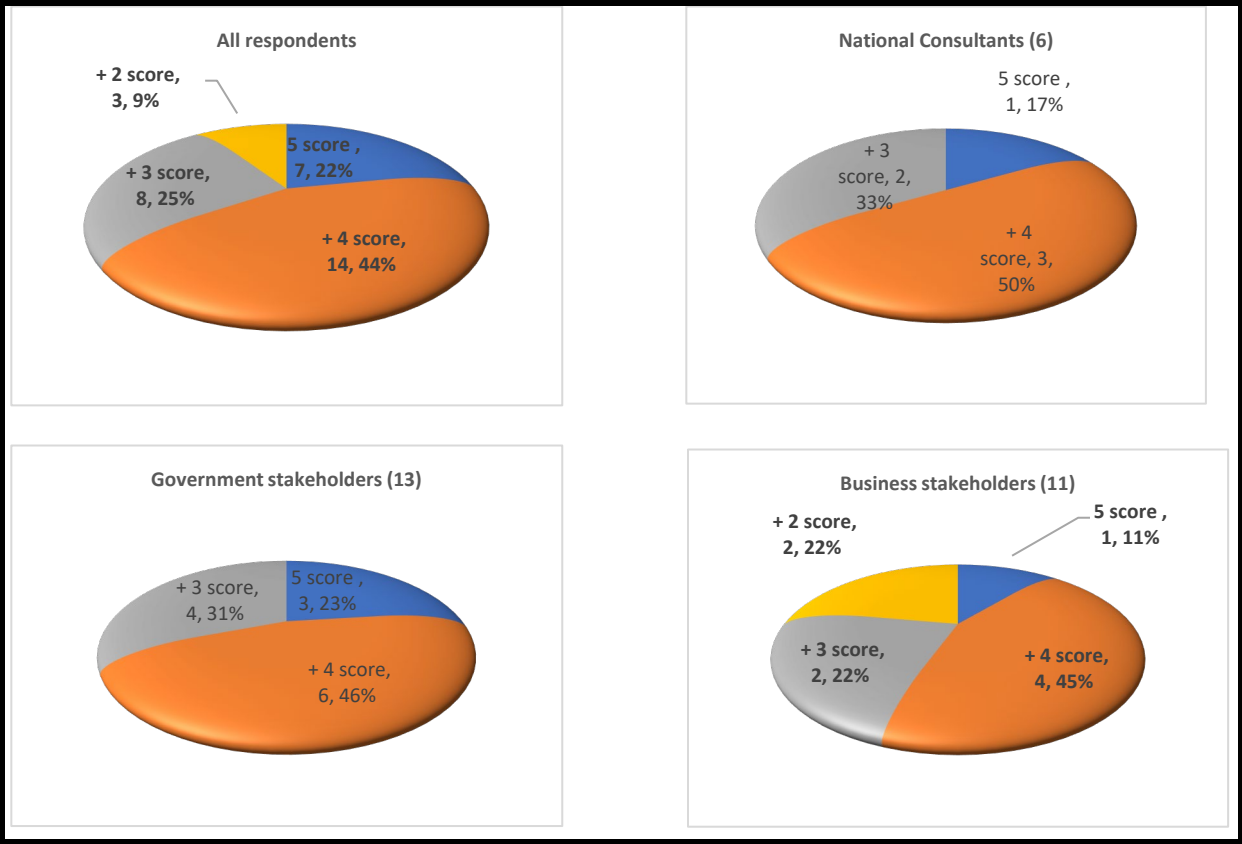
Considering the delays caused by COVID-19 restrictions and the complexity and scope of the Project covering seven countries on three continents, the task was accomplished in a reasonable timeframe, and the delays did not prevent achieving the expected results.

Key stakeholders interviewed over the time required to complete the Project, recognized that COVID-19 created a challenging environment for the implementation process (i.e., restrictions on public meetings and other similar rules in the workplace) and impacted the various activities but did not derail the Project's objectives. The only adjustment was eliminating face-to-face meetings and favouring virtual meetings and training sessions. However, as reported by a national consultant, *“the adaptation to digital communications resulted in some delays, but that was not important enough to affect the initial trajectory established for the Project's various activities”*. The overall survey results revealed that stakeholders overwhelmingly recognized the efficiency and timely execution of the SITCIN project.

Approximately sixty-six percent (66%) of all respondents (29 out of 37), considering the project duration, rated it as very efficient, with a score of 4+.

Figure 11 below gives a breakdown of the scores across the groups of stakeholders.

Figure 11: Disaggregated score on the project duration



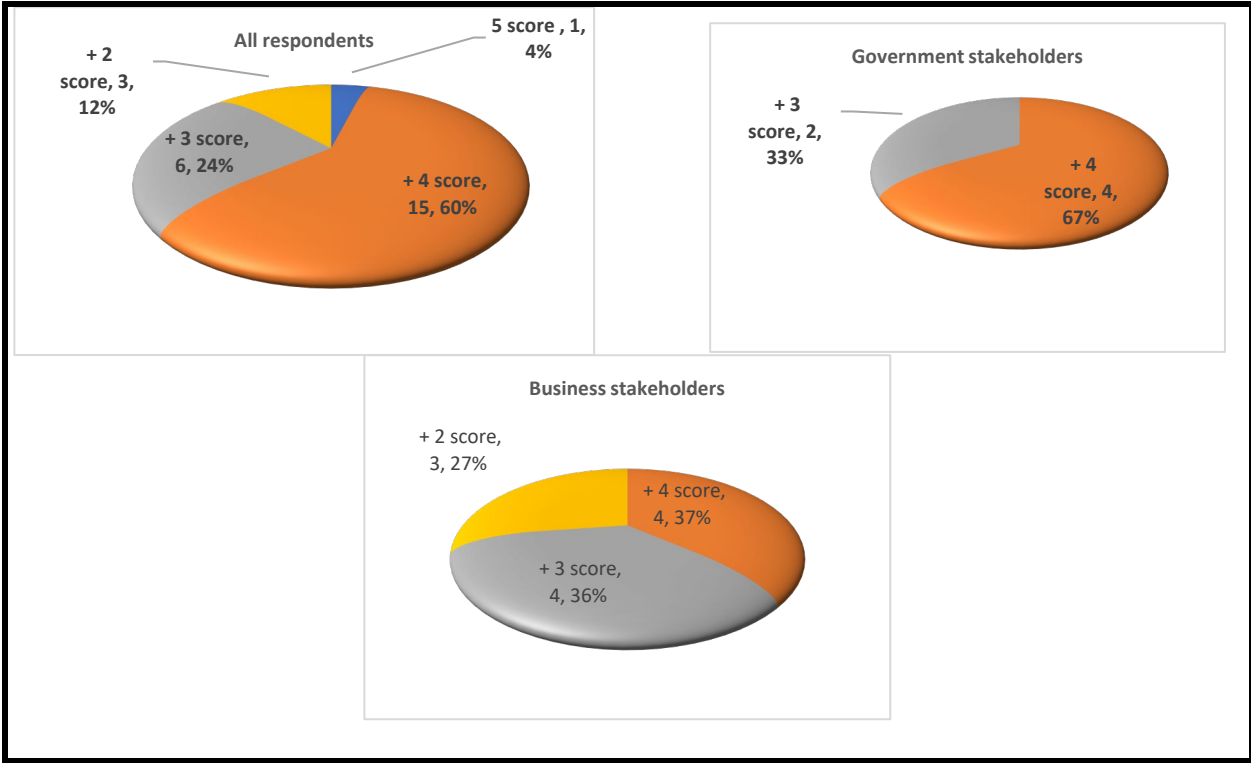
The budget for the design and implementation of the SITCIN project derives directly from the DA-Budget Funds for a total of \$520,183.32 US. UNECE contributed \$334,552.47 to the budget, followed by ECLAC with \$95,385 and

ESCWA with \$90,245.85. See Annex 6¹⁶ for comprehensive financial information. Major budget lines for the project included general operating expenses, contractual services, workshops/study tours, and travel of staff and consultancy fees.

Over 28 months¹⁷, the project facilitated the delivery of 24 workshops, seminars and training events at the national, regional, and global levels. These events attracted close to 600 participants. In addition, with the COVID-19 Pandemic, many virtual and hybrid presentations drew more participants. Within the same timeframe, SITCIN generated the delivery of the NCRs of the five initial pilot countries, while the NCRs from Lebanon and State of Palestine were at the time of preparing this report still pending final approval of stakeholders before dissemination.

The survey and interview results on the efficiency of resources allocations vs achievement of results indicated that 60% of stakeholders responded positively to the question; they rated the project 4+. Seventy percent (70%) of national stakeholders agreed that the allocated budget was in coherence with the results achieved. UNECE staff indicated that SITCIN fully achieved its main objectives within the anticipated budget and efficiently used resources. They cited that UN entities enhanced the activities' efficiency by cultivating and maintaining strong relations with political and business leaders and key departments and agencies. See Figure 12 on the perception of resource allocations.

Figure 12 - Disaggregated score on the perception of resources allocations vs achievements



¹⁶ Template for DAA Final Reports. January 2022. Page 16-19

¹⁷ Ibid Table 3- Deliverables.

From the beneficiaries' perspective, as previously demonstrated, they praise the work of the national consultants and UN entities for organizing the various activities efficiently within the budget limit and did not envision that additional resources would have produced better results. One stakeholder from Serbia indicated that considering that SITCIN was a pilot project, it met its expectations within the given framework and allocated financial resources.

Overall, the numbers from the interviews and oral surveys confirmed that with a limited budget, the SITCIN project achieved convincing results, as evidenced by the number of activities and, more importantly, the content of the NCRs. Testimonies from stakeholders across various groups also confirmed that evidence. For example, one UN counterpart confirmed sufficient resources to accomplish the project objectives; another UN Counterpart pointed out that human and financial resources were adequate to introduce and discuss the SITCIN Methodology with key stakeholders. In addition, all national consultants shared the same view that the resources allocated by UNECE and the UN entities were adequate and adequately used.

Challenges related to project management procedures and flexibility needed to meet the needs of the pilot countries, similar to the other indicators of efficiency previously mentioned, these issues were dealt with directly by the UN entities and UNECE Headquarters. Although National stakeholders were rarely involved with management procedures, they were allowed to express their opinions on these issues.

The survey and oral interview results concerning the management procedures revealed that stakeholders faced a few hurdles overall. Among the stakeholders who responded to that question, 80% (22) scored, on average, 4+. The UN entities indicated that the procedures were flexible enough to facilitate an efficient operation. One of the UN entities commented that the UNECE established procedures worked well and efficiently implemented the project activities during the project implementation. Both UN staff scored 5 for efficiency of management procedures. Four of the six national consultants (60%) scored 4+ on flexible management procedures. Of the 19 national stakeholders who responded, 14 (74%) scored 4. For instance, a stakeholder from Georgia mentioned that procedures were transparent and flexible and that they had access to the entire SITCIN group and the opportunity to share and discuss their needs.

Despite the high score on efficiency, surveys and oral interviews addressing the lessons learned from the experience provided a wide range of suggestions to continue improving activity delivery for similar projects in the future. For instance, a stakeholder from Serbia anticipated that a lack of administrative capacities in some countries might create hurdles that may negatively impact the overall project efficiencies. Another stakeholder supported the same view, arguing that the current financial and political crisis exacerbates the country's lack of administrative capacity and human resources, negatively impacting future compliance with the SITCIN Methodology.

Many stakeholders from Kazakhstan reiterate the need for document translation in Russian and to improve the delivery of SITCIN activities by creating incentives so more participants could benefit from the training sessions.¹⁸ They conceded that UNECE project management procedures were clear and flexible to meet the needs of both Government and the private sector. However, they suggest creating a permanent working group to clarify, monitor, and adjust the monitoring results for further improvement.

¹⁸ It should be noted that a SITCIN eLearning course providing step-by-step guidance and explanations on how to use the SITCIN methodology has been developed. This course is already available in English and will soon be available in Arabic, French, Spanish and Russian.

From the national consultants' perspective, one lesson learned from the experience concerns sustaining solid contact with senior bureaucrats and business associations, allowing them the adequate space to spearhead the process. In return, their active presence would incite more public participation and empowerment.

Sustainability

This section examines the extent to which the SITCIN Project's results are likely sustainable.

The idea behind Capacity development is inherently part of a systems-building approach that promotes sustainability by encouraging the transfer of skills, knowledge and learning practices to other actors who are then potentially able to use these skills, knowledge and practices to strengthen their work environment.

As a pilot project, SITCIN and its activities are not yet embedded in a more prominent and continuous process and do not officially contemplate follow-up activities with the same pilot countries. However, the UNECE considers replicability in other countries or regions. Moreover, UNECE's primary focus on the capacity enhancement of transport connectivity systems and intermodality has likely encouraged the sustainability of results for the short and medium time without being institutionalized across the board in the seven countries.

The survey results could not convincingly reveal, at this point, the UNECE's intention to engage financial and human resources in following-up capacity-building activities to support the sustainability of the Project in the pilot countries in the long term. However, according to UNECE staff, the products prepared can regularly be used globally by all UN member States to evaluate, monitor, and systematically improve their connectivity performance. In addition, some available, extra budgetary project seed money renders it possible for UNECE to continue further developing, implementing and promoting SITCIN in the short and medium term.

At the other end of the spectrum, most national stakeholders and ideas incorporated in the National Connectivity Reports emphasized great interest in following up on activities engagement until they took full ownership of the SITCIN Methodology and its final product.

According to the survey results, eighty-five percent (85%) of stakeholders (27 of the 33) who responded to the question on the Project's sustainability gave it an overall rating of 4. **Figure 13.** In particular, Government stakeholders and Business associations believed in the Project's sustainability; it is rated at 3+. **Table 3** below details the sustainability rating of all stakeholders involved in the Project. **Table 4** illustrates how National stakeholders from six of the seven pilot countries rated the project's sustainability.

Figure-13: Disaggregated score on perceived sustainability of SITCIN from all groups of respondents and Countries

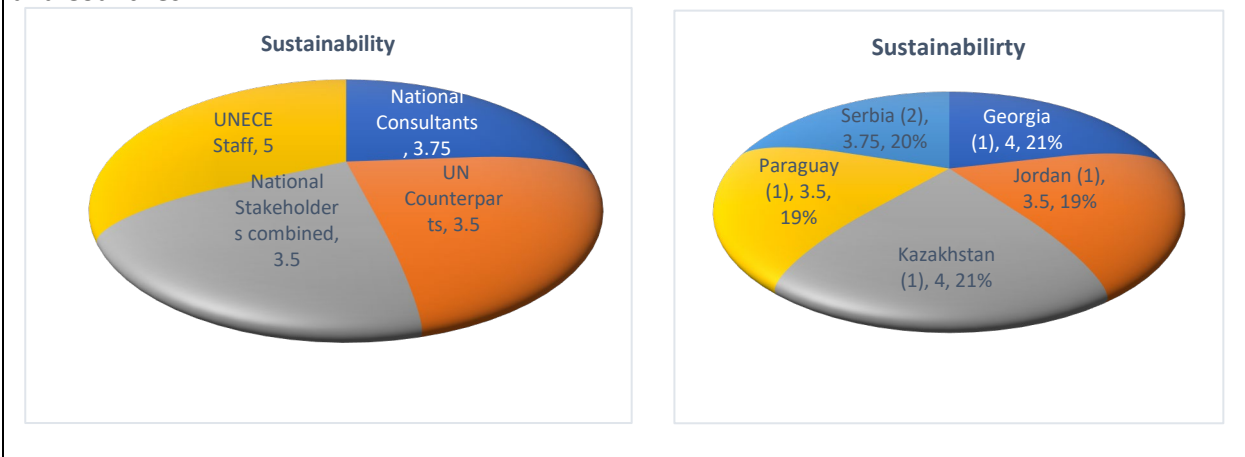


Table-3 Overall Score by all stakeholders

	National Consultants (5)	UN entities (2)	National stakeholders combined (20)	UNECE Staff (2)	Rounded average
Sustainability	3.75	3.5	3.5	5.0	4.0

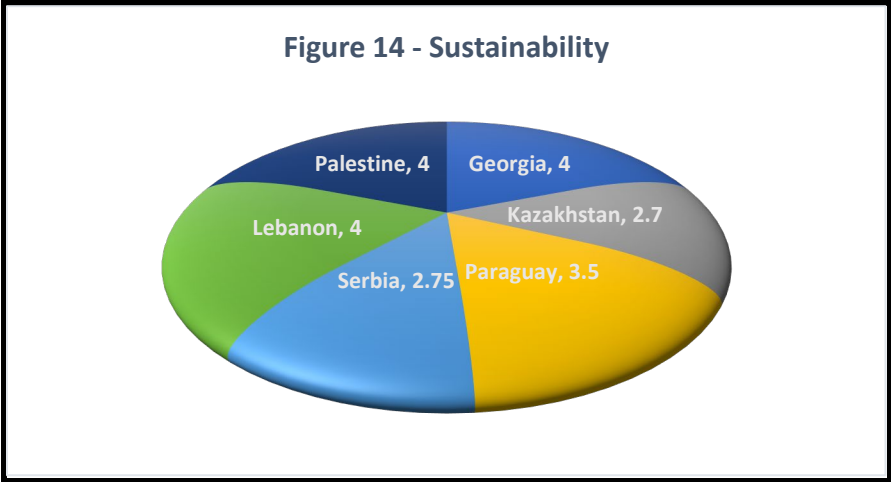
Table-4 Overall National Stakeholders Score on Sustainability by Country

	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Paraguay	Serbia	Lebanon	Palestine	Rounded average
Government	4.25	2.0	3.5	2.5	4.0	4.0	3.4
Business Assoc.	3.5	3.0	4.0	3.00	N/A	4.0	3.5
<i>Average</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>3.75</i>	<i>2.75</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>3.45</i>

Scores in the first table indicate a level of consistency among participants concerning the sustainability of the post-SITCIN activities. UNECE staff, with a maximum rate of 5, seem to have greater confidence that the activities will be sustainable as the beneficial countries take ownership. However, although positive, the rating by the rest of the stakeholders (3.6) does not reflect the same confidence level. The responses may be attributed to the deeper understanding and knowledge that the other stakeholders have of the national context and the country's real potential to take full ownership of the SITCIN Methodology and allocate the adequate resources and capacity to evaluate, monitor, and systematically improve their transport connectivity performance.

In the second Table, Government and Business Associations from the pilot countries seem to be on the same path in assessing the sustainability of the SITCIN activities in their respective country. **The average rating is around 3+.**

For example, although ratings are higher in countries like Georgia, Lebanon and Serbia, the gap between the two groups (Government and business) within a country is relatively modest, averaging 0.5, except maybe in the case of Lebanon, where business associations did not participate in the survey. An explanation of this convergence may be worth exploring further. In the section on Relevance, some stakeholders noted the absence or exclusion of other particular interests (gender equity, environmentalist or vulnerable groups) in the capacity-building activities. **See also Figure-14** for sustainability rating among countries.



On the sub-question about factors that can enhance or undermine the sustainability of the SITCIN project, testimonies from various stakeholders, according to 55% of the survey respondents, can be summarized based on the following issues :

- **Replicability of the Methodology in other countries and regions:** Many respondents would like UNECE to be proactive and encourage more Members States to participate in the Project. Increased participation from other countries will enhance the Project's visibility and improve the methodology tool. In addition, respondents suggest that UNECE should collaborate with other UN entities involved in implementing this excellent tool to encourage all UN Member States for its systematic use.
- **Financial and Political factors:** Many respondents argue that two factors will decide the long-term viability of the SITCIN Methodology. First, despite its proven applicability, its success depends on:
 - **1) the political will:** At the highest level of the decision-making process, Central Government has to make the decision. Any project needs to get a buy-in from the Government. In many countries, public engagement depends on the level of interest demonstrated by political and business leaders to impose the appropriate discipline to move forward with the implementation process. As a National Consultant who witnessed the timid engagement of government stakeholders during the capacity building and policy dialogue sessions explained: A directive from the Minister, the Vice Minister or a CEO will have more weight than a simple email for the National Consultant or the UN Counterpart. Countries with the highest public engagement are those where the Minister of key departments was involved early in the process. For instance, that was the case in Kazakhstan, Paraguay, and Georgia,

where Ministers and Vice Ministers actively supported and participated in some activities. In addition to the political will, other stakeholders mentioned that a change of priorities in the Government or a change of Ministers or Governments might impact the dynamic to move forward with the tool or delay its implementation.

- **The financial side:** as previously noted in the efficiency of budget allocation, the resources allocated to SITCIN were considered adequate and adequately used. In addition, the initiative provided valuable results. However, it is not clear if the financial requirement would be sustainable in the long term. UNECE could offer some financial assistance, but long-term government support is challenging to predict. Furthermore, access to training to enhance the capacity of the most qualified staff remains conditional on the availability of financial resources. Based on stakeholders' testimonies, few suggestions are already in place or considered to diversify the funding source or create innovative partnerships with the private sector or other public institutions.

For instance, in Kazakhstan, the "Scientific-Research Institute of Transport and Communications" LLP (NIITK), the most significant scientific research and design center in Central Asia dealing with integrated transport issues, played a critical role in supporting the SITCIN-related activities because the institute maintains a good working relationship with the various Government and private sector experts in transport connectivity issues.

In Paraguay, an option is to transfer the SITCIN file to the National University to sustain the progress. In addition, because of its existing network, the National University put the University in a better position to adapt the finding on a larger scale.

Finally, some countries developed new Policies or strategies in the Transport sector that will allow the use of some of the tools proposed in SITCIN. That's the case in Serbia and Paraguay. In the case of Paraguay, the country had developed a Road Safety National Plan, which was in place until 2018 and partially addressed the GFPARS' post-crash response but did not cover all its eight actions. The Ministry of Public Works and Communications and the National Agency for Road Safety are working on a new plan to promote the inclusion of post-crash response standards and procedures that did not exist in the previous plan. This cooperation could be enacted with support from the UN Road Safety Fund.

- **Post-COVID realignment** is another factor that requires consideration: as previously discussed, COVID creates a new reality. SITCIN implementation takes place under abnormal circumstances. Therefore, data may lack accuracy. Many of the findings reflect conditions created by COVID-19. Consequently, it would be advisable to do a post-COVID assessment of what has changed since COVID, lessons learned during the pandemic, and what new approaches may be required in the post-COVID area. The UNECE guidance on Measuring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Pandemic Resilience Indicators may need a second look.

Finally, to ensure that the achieved results are sustainable, some stakeholders suggested developing a more efficient mechanism to facilitate the sharing of best practices. Stakeholders from Kazakhstan particularly favour this option. For example, many suggested establishing a permanent working group to clarify, monitor, and adjust the monitoring results. An interviewee said the Scientific Research Institute of Transport and Communication might consider establishing such a Working Group. Jordan also suggested the creation of a council of stakeholders involved in the Project with an accountability framework accompanied by an action plan, roles, responsibilities, and an annual assessment or evaluation of results to report to the political leaders and senior government officials.

Gender Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming

This section examines whether the SITCIN Project was able to mainstream gender equality and human rights into delivering the project's key activities, as mentioned in the TORs (Relevance Criteria) and the project document. However, in the inception note leading to the evaluation report, it was agreed to regroup Gender and Climate change as cross-cutting issues.

UNECE is firmly committed to making gender equality a reality by supporting its Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda with a gender lens and internally in its organization's working environment. The Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for 2021-2025, an update of the initial Policy covering the years 2016-2020, is the organization's response to compelling challenges to gender equality. With its tool for implementation – the UNECE Gender Action Plan (GAP) – the Policy has been a key driver of accountability and improved results on gender equality and women's empowerment in UNECE. The updated Policy continues to provide the organization's directions for gender-related work, which aligns with the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). It aims to strengthen further the reflection of gender issues in the substantive work of UNECE's subprogrammes, improving accountability, monitoring and reporting, building capacity, changing the organizational culture, and achieving gender parity of staff. The UNECE is also committed to further strengthening the substantive work on gender mainstreaming in its subprogrammes, improving accountability, monitoring and reporting, organizational culture, gender parity of staff and building capacity¹⁹.

However, despite the UNECE's longstanding commitment to promoting gender mainstreaming, the survey results concerning the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, sustainable environment, and climate change seem to indicate that they have attracted less interest than other issues addressed in the SITCIN activities.

Women represented 38% of the stakeholders who participated in the SITCIN activities. However, the cross-cutting issues received a low response rate and scored less. Most stakeholders abstained or did not fully answer the question and sub-questions related to Gender, Human rights, and Climate change. **See Figure 15 below regarding the disaggregated scores on cross-cutting topics.**

Stakeholders who responded to the question granted the lowest score for cross-cutting issues, around 2, compared to other criteria. Accordingly, only three respondents (11.5%) scored higher than 3+. Looking into the score distribution by country, no country fares better. Palestine is the only country with a score higher than 3.

Such allocation of low scores across categories and the absence of discussions on the cross-cutting issues could be attributed to several factors:

¹⁹ UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Accelerating the attainment of SDGs with a gender lens in the UNECE region (2021-2025). Page 1-9

- 1) Regarding the development of international transport infrastructure, rail and road networks, and interoperability of transport systems in a technical sense, are mainly male-dominated areas; Gender and Human rights aspects are often hard to address.
- 2) SITCIN concentrated mainly on transport-related issues. Consequently, even during the design phase of SITCIN, the Gender and Climate change issues were not an integral part of a logical framework. In addition, those issues did not figure on the agenda during pre-discussions with potential beneficiaries or during the scoping missions. These omissions also explain why Gender and Human Rights received little space in discussions, as observed by some stakeholders.
- 3) Gender equality and human rights remain sensitive issues in some cultures across regions and countries that require diplomacy and caution.

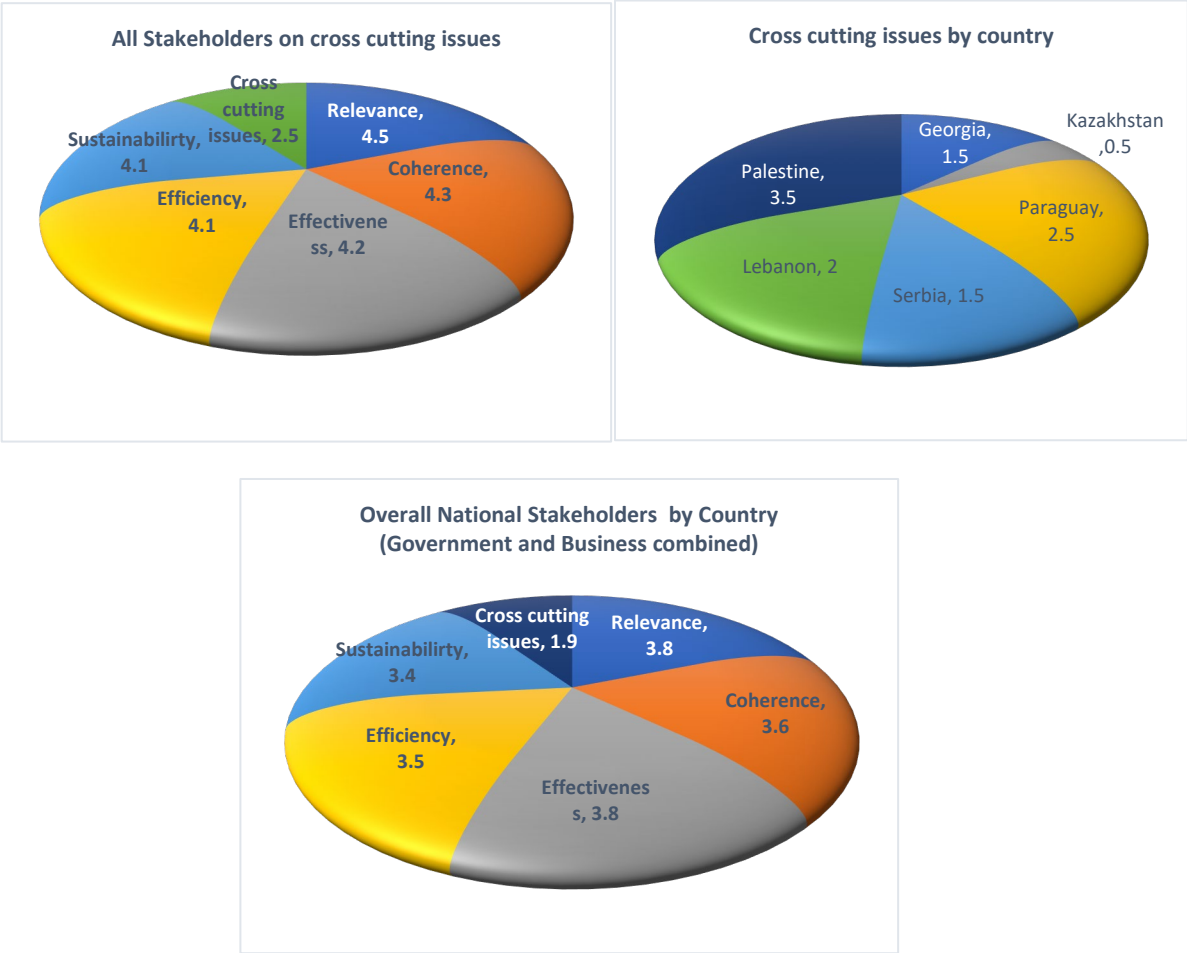
The summary of stakeholders' comments on gender and human rights issues below, complemented by the low response rate on these questions, may explain the cultural sensitivity surrounding gender and human rights issues. Those who responded fall into the following categories:

- Some participants recognized insufficient focus or discussion on the needs of the most vulnerable in the transport sector. However, they hoped that future implementation of services, such as the certification in the transport of dangerous goods and advisers on safety and security, may encourage more focus on the inclusion of the most vulnerable.
- The second category concerns stakeholders who participated in more than one of the SITCIN-related activities, including Government representatives and a few business representatives. Their responses vary according to their gender, the country they represent, and whether they are government employees or business association representatives. Most male stakeholders recognized that the needs of vulnerable groups received little attention in the activities they attended. Business representatives mentioned the project is irrelevant for marginalized and target groups.
- Female stakeholders, over 62% who responded, appeared to be more aware or concerned about the lack of focus on the most vulnerable. Generally, they consider that the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups were superficially addressed during the discussions.
- Some national stakeholders recognized the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the transport sector as a noble principle. But they considered that those issues are poorly addressed in their country's transport policies, business plans, and development strategies, but they were not in a position to propose an alternative to address them.
- A representative was particularly blunt, stating: "a business association's main activities are related to the common issues and interests of companies acting in the transportation industry, so vulnerable and marginalized groups are not often discussed". Although a specific portion of transport activities is related to passengers' transport, vulnerable groups' needs are not highly prioritized in business discussions.

In conclusion, the SITCIN activities were primarily oriented toward transport connectivity systems in the seven pilot countries. More efforts may be needed to mainstream gender equality, human rights, and climate change throughout future SITCIN activities. A future step is to consider creating better awareness among beneficiary

countries about the need to apply gender; disability approaches in the design, implementation and results of future SITCIN activities. **See Annex 2.** The annexed guideline, an incremental approach, provides the user with a step-by-step planning approach to facilitate more gender and human rights-sensitive programming within the SITCIN Project implementation process in demand-driven future beneficiary countries or other scale-up initiatives.

Figure 15 - Disaggregated scores on cross-cutting issues by category



6. Conclusions

Through a combined participatory, consultative and equity approaches, using a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative sources and techniques, the purpose of this Evaluation was to assess the Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability of the SITCIN Methodology implementation Project, an ambitious goal of the UNECE, in enhancing the national capacities of seven pilot landlocked or transit developing countries through providing a self-assessment tool to measure and monitor the performance of their inland transport systems and their degree of interoperability with transport systems in their respective sub-regions, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The overall conclusion drawn from the Evaluation is that the UNECE's SITCIN Methodology Project succeeded in gaining traction by creating awareness and raising the interest of many transport-related stakeholders, particularly from Government, Business Associations and UN entities such as ECLAC and ESCWA with a presence at the regional level and who have already partnered with UNECE. In addition, the implementation process, through the critical activities of data collection, policy dialogue, and capacity-building sessions to support changes during and after the implementation of the Project, has been highly relevant, coherent, effective, and efficient. Furthermore, the results achieved appear sustainable in the short and medium terms, at least from the UNECE's perspective. But, the long-term engagement of the pilot countries remains, at this point, difficult to predict. National stakeholders admitted that the long-term sustainability of the SITCIN's achievements in their countries would be more often conditional on political (government) will and would depend on the availability of financial resources that both government and private sector would be ready to invest in the transport-related sectors.

Regarding the cross-cutting issues of Gender equality and Climate change, UNECE is committed to Gender Equality and promoting safe, clean and competitive sustainable transport toward achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. By the nature of the SITCIN project, most discussions focused on transport-related issues and challenges and gender equality and climate change were less in the picture. No groups or category of stakeholders were proactive in bringing forward these cross-cutting issues.

The Evaluation has reached a series of conclusions drawn on the various lines of evidence from the findings:

- UNECE's Sustainable Transport Division and its partners at ESCWA and ECLAC have set an ambitious and challenging goal in proceeding with the implementation of the SITCIN Methodology in seven countries with different cultures and languages, geographic zones, and administrative structures. The implementation process succeeded in attracting around 600 participants from key government departments, agencies, and business associations in transport-related activities through the three main activities. In addition, in February 2022, some 50 transport ministers and leaders from around the world, including delegates from over 90 countries, attended the the 75th-anniversary session of the UNECE's Inland Transport Committee, which featured a presentation on SITCIN. The significant achievements in this pilot project are, without a doubt, the high satisfaction rate, the visibility and the optimism expressed by some participants to apply the knowledge and experience gained through these sessions to their workplace. Furthermore, they strongly expressed their wish to see further implementation of those activities on a broader scale with more diverse clients.
- **Relevance:** Evidence demonstrates that the implementation of the SITCIN Project has been highly relevant and has responded to the needs and priorities of the beneficiary in transport sustainability and inland and intermodal transport connectivity. They strongly believe the SITCIN Methodology opens new approaches to developing an effective and connected transportation system nationally, regionally and globally. A majority of stakeholders also noted that the perspective offered by applying the SITCIN Methodology at national and inter-regional levels could improve transport sector efficiency, traffic safety, environmental performance, energy efficiency, inland transport security and efficient service provision. Stakeholders considered the Project's activities highly relevant and well aligned with the UNECE's broader work and mandate to facilitate and manage inland transport connectivity systems and implement transport-related SDGs in landlocked and/or transit developing countries. At the same time, some participants would like to see the Methodology more adaptive to countries' contexts and realities, including using more vernacular language to facilitate local and regional training. However, it is essential to note that the objective of the SITCIN project was to develop

a set of "universally applicable" indicators that any interested country can use. These universal indicators also offer the option of comparing countries.

However, supporting evidence of the Project's relevance to the needs of the vulnerable groups and regarding climate change was more challenging, as they were not explicitly in the focus of discussions. Therefore, a formula or mechanism to make the activities more inclusive and attractive to a broader and diverse audience may be given more significant consideration in future projects.

For example, a more inclusive consultative and participatory mechanism means the involvement of other UN entities with shared priority interests in supporting countries to achieve some of the SDGs, different groups or civil society organizations and institutions specialized in broader socio-economic issues at the country level, such as institutions and or organizations specialized in gender equality and women's rights issues, environmental groups, learning institutions or think-thanks and organizations representing people with disabilities or marginalized groups, etc. These actors understand specific local problems better and are well connected with community leaders. They can play an essential role in providing and validating information given their knowledge and lived experience, specifically with prevailing bottlenecks and constraints at the local and national levels. It is a necessary step to acquire their buy-in and confidence in the process.

- **Coherence:** The implementation of the SITCIN Project has proven to be highly coherent in facilitating a very professional collaboration and coordination internally between specific Divisions within the UNECE at every phase of the Project's design and implementation; and externally in establishing a solid working relationship between the UNECE, the partnering UN entities: ECLAC and ESCWA, Government stakeholders and the National Consultants. Participants highly valued the role of the UN entities and National Consultants' approach to policy dialogue. These National Coordinators created a favourable climate for constructive collaboration between the UNECE and transportation development stakeholders in Government and the private sector while keeping Ministers and senior government officials in the loops.

Since COVID-19, a lot has changed. The Pandemic has turned over traditional behaviour, practices, and communication modes, impacting the entire transport connectivity system and its related activities. It has also affected the structures, management, procedures and operation of all modes of transport. Although in the transport sector, in particular, many things are returning to their pre-pandemic state. Even the data collected before the Pandemic for the SITCIN implementation may have changed or may no longer reflect the post-COVID reality. However, in the case of the SITCIN project, the UNECE quickly adjusted the scope of the related activities, resulting in a limited impact on the project's expected achievements and communication effectiveness among stakeholders. Virtual communication became the norm, and stakeholders were ready to adapt to that new form of communication and the new reality that COVID-19 has created. In addition, as part of the project's response, additional "pandemic resilience indicators" have been developed; they are now available to Governments and will eventually be part of the SITCIN user dashboard. As previously mentioned, UNECE, as part of the project, produced a draft concept on International contingency management as an instrument to increase resilience of inland transport systems to external shocks: https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/ECE_TRANS_2022_19E.pdf.

- **Effectiveness:** The SITCIN implementation process has achieved its objectives, and all activities were implemented as planned. The effectiveness is evidenced by the high stakeholders' satisfaction concerning the key activities delivered. SITCIN has also met its primary objective of identifying and assessing the most critical aspects of inland transport connectivity using a set of quantifiable and measurable Sustainable Inland Transport Indicators (SITCIN). The publication of the National Connectivity Reports (NCRs) from all seven pilot countries, the UNECE guidance on measuring the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic²⁰, and the Pandemic Resilience Indicators are pieces of evidence of that accomplishment. Some national stakeholders admitted that the national consultants played a crucial role in establishing a constructive dialogue between stakeholders despite not having to work face-to-face.

However, participating stakeholders also identified a few challenges and obstacles to tackle, including the lack of diverse specialists among national stakeholders and the timid engagement of business associations in the process. In particular, they suggested improving the current mechanism to facilitate sharing best practices and experiences. In addition to the more inclusive consultative and participatory approach previously mentioned, many stakeholders proposed the creation of a working body that will enable exchanges of best practices and organize more constructive collaboration among the countries and close interaction with specialists from other countries.

In conclusion, the UNECE, the current pilot countries and future beneficiaries may consider drawing lessons from experience and determine ways to move forward.

- **Efficiency:** In terms of efficiency, the SITCIN Project's financial planning and implementation were commensurate to its scale, implemented in 7 countries on three continents with the assistance and collaboration of ECLAC and ESCWA in the respective regions. The Project's duration, from design to the preliminary presentation of findings, lasted 28 months. Despite some delays caused by COVID-19 restrictions and the complexity and scope of the Project, the task was accomplished in a reasonable timeframe, and the delays did not prevent achieving the expected results. According to survey results with UNECE staff, the human and financial resources allocated to the project were used efficiently. As previously mentioned, many stakeholders from all categories praised the constructive contribution of the UN entities' representatives and the National consultants to lead the activities to their expected results in the most efficient and timely manner in a challenging environment. Although stakeholders did not suggest any alternative to achieve the same results, other options would be: greater involvement of each country's business associations in the process, when/if possible, for the UNECE to partner with like-minded UN entities to improve resource availability. Finally, broader civil society organizations' engagement would result in more efficient social empowerment.
- **Sustainability:** The UNECE promoted the principle of national ownership throughout project implementation, so countries are not dependent only on UNECE funding. In parallel, some pilot countries expressed great interest in following up on activities engagement until they took full ownership of the SITCIN Methodology and its final product. As previously indicated, the UNECE delivered many concrete deliverables to facilitate the sustainability of SITCIN's key achievements, including various capacity-building sessions and exchanges of best practices involving internal experts on transport-related issues. However, long-term government

²⁰ Guidance on Measuring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women and Men. UNECE/UNWOMEN. October 2021.

support and commitment to sustain the efforts of the past two years is challenging to predict as the life of any project is conditional on Government buy-in, its political will and the availability of resources. Moreover, evidence shows that a change of Government or Minister can signal the end of a project.

A few options are available to ensure Government commitment to the results achieved by the SITCIN project. First, it is crucial to have a more innovative mechanism for facilitating best practices and information exchanges between government, business associations and UN entities on transport-related issues. More efforts are needed to develop a more inclusive framework for advocacy that would be capable of influencing and mediating between government and business associations on all transport socio-economic related-issues.

- **Cross-cutting issues of Gender equality and climate change:** UNECE is firmly committed to gender equality and has adopted measures to incorporate gender equality and climate change into its operations. As previously indicated, the two issues were not explicitly considered during the project design and implementation. The SITCIN activities were primarily oriented toward transport connectivity systems in the seven pilot countries. More efforts may be needed to mainstream gender equality, human rights, and climate change throughout future SITCIN activities.

7. Recommendations

After an exhaustive analysis of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the SITCIN Project in supporting Member States to strengthen their capacities in the area of transport connectivity and intermodality in the context of the SDGs, the evaluation formulated the following recommendations:

1. Given the high level of satisfaction expressed by national stakeholders complemented by the very sound relevance of the Project to the beneficiary countries and the activities' alignment with national priorities, UNECE, in collaboration with ESCWA and ECLAC, should continue to encourage more countries to facilitate and manage inland transport connectivity and implement transport-related SDGs inter alia through the use of the SITCIN methodology.
2. Acknowledging that the current informal mechanism for sharing good practices and experiences in the field of promoting inland transport needs improvement, and in light of the findings of the evaluation report and lessons learned from the National Connectivity Reports, which contribute toward wider institutional knowledge and articulate possible pathways for future similar projects:
 - a) UNECE could propose to its Member States a more structured innovative approach or mechanism to manage and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and good practices among national stakeholders, transport and other related specialists at the national, regional and global levels. Moreover, the mechanism should be inclusive enough to attract a broader civil society audience. Along with the specialists in the transport connectivity sector, members would include, for instance: more business representatives, environmental specialists, urban planners, gender specialists, etc. The UNECE's

Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), which has a mandate to promote experience sharing, could be well-placed to take up this role.

- b) Furthermore, UNECE should identify and consolidate areas of commonality in both the current evaluation report and the National Connectivity Reports to generate a plan of action for future SITCIN related or similar type projects.
3. Recognizing the validity and usefulness of the additional set of emergency preparedness indicators developed in the framework of the project, in response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the positive feedback received from stakeholders, UNECE in cooperation with ESCWA and ECLAC, could continue to promote these indicators' broader use among United Nations Member States, thereby strengthening inland transport sector resilience to and preparedness for possible future contingency situations, in line with UNECE's various Guidelines and Directives on the impact of COVID-19. And, recognizing that stability is critical for successful applications of the SITCIN at its beginning stage, the whole SITCIN could be updated regularly to include among others: emergency preparedness and response to future shocks like COVID-19.
 4. Capacity-building and national appropriation remain key to sustaining the SITCIN's achieved results in the long term. While UNECE continues to further develop, implement and promote SITCIN, if necessary, UNECE may devise new forms of strategic partnerships with other UN entities and other institutions depending on the circumstances.
 5. Acknowledging the insufficient focus on the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights and climate change in the SITCIN activities, future projects should include a brief assessment on how best to mainstream and address these issues. In this regard:
 - a) Future projects of the programme should include a step-by-step planning approach to facilitate more gender and human rights-sensitive programming. This approach will provide the beneficiary countries (with guidance from an assigned gender specialist) with a concrete plan to systematically and gradually integrate gender priorities into scale-up initiatives like the SITCIN project, with desired and feasible outcomes on gender equality objectives and indicators to measure progress. For instance, workshops at country, sub-regional or regional level, as appropriate, with women groups to discuss the project approach and share experiences and best practices may be helpful.
 - b) Building further on existing programmatic activities, a similar approach than the one outlined above could be used to integrate climate change and broader environmental considerations, as appropriate.

Annex 1: Evaluation TORs

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1819BA: Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport related SDGs in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries

I. Purpose

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the objectives of the UNDA 11th tranche project on “Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport related SDGs in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries” were achieved. The evaluation will assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project in supporting member States to strengthen their capacities to assess the performance of their inland transport systems and their degree of interoperability with transport systems in their respective sub-regions, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The evaluation will also assess progresses on human rights, gender equality results, disability inclusion, climate change and disaster risk reduction in the context of this engagement. The evaluation will finally look at the activities repurposed to address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, and assess, to the extent possible, the ECE’s COVID-19 early response through this project.

The results of the evaluation will allow improving capacity building services provided to member States through regular technical cooperation as well as the development and implementation of similar future projects and activities by the Sustainable Transport Division of ECE.

II. Scope

The evaluation will include the full project implementation during the period of 1 January 2018- 31 December 2021 in 5 countries (Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Paraguay, Jordan).

III. Background

The project supported the following expected accomplishments of the transport sub-programme as defined in the UN Biennial Programme Plan and Priorities for the period 2018- 2019 (A/71/6/Rev.1):

“(b) Greater geographical coverage and more effective monitoring of implementation of United Nations legal instruments and recommendations on transport administered by ECE”; and

“(c) Enhanced capacity in ECE member States, particularly in landlocked developing countries for the development of the Pan-European and transcontinental transport infrastructure and transport facilitation measures.”

The project also supported Result 2 of the transport sub-programme as defined in the United Nations Programme budget for 2021 (A/75/6/Add.1): “Enhanced regulatory framework for sustainable inland transport systems that are safer, cleaner and more efficient”.

Transport and the 2030 Agenda

Sustainable transport is essential to achieving most of the SDGs. It is mainstreamed across several SDGs and targets, especially those related to food security, health, energy, infrastructure and cities and human settlements. The implementation of the project has required the harmonization and collection of data, which includes – among others – already identified SDG indicators. This is expected to have had a positive impact on national capacities to monitor and report on progress towards the SDGs, at all levels. The project contributed the following SDGs: SDG 3 (Target 3.6 and 3.9); SDG 7 (Target 7.3); SDG 8 (Target 8.1, 8.2 and 8.4); SDG 9 (Targets 9.1, 9.a and 9.4); SDG 11 (Targets 11.2,11.a); SDG 12 (Target 12.4); SDG 13 (Target 13.2); and SDG 17 (Target 17.14).

Synergies

The project built on ECE's extensive expertise in the field of sustainable transport, and collaboration with other Regional Commissions on transport related issues. The ECE Sustainable Transport Division administers 59 United Nations legal instruments and serves as the secretariat to twelve treaty bodies which shape the international legal framework for inland transport. This includes road, rail, inland waterways, and intermodal transport, as well as dangerous goods transport and vehicle construction.

Objective and scope of the project

The project objective aimed at enhancing the national capacities of selected developing and middle-income countries to design and implement an evidence-based transport policy framework, that fosters sustainable transport connectivity and the implementation of transport related SDGs. In the framework of the project a set of 215 Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators was developed offering an instrument (a measurable set of criteria) for Governments enabling them to evaluate/ assess: i) the extent to which they implement the relevant UN legal instruments, agreements and conventions effectively; and ii) the degree to which their inland transport systems are inter-operable with the systems within their respective (sub-)regions. Use of the indicators enables policymakers to assess their country's degree of external economic connectivity in terms of efficiency of inland transport, logistics, trade, customs, and border crossing facilitation processes.

Target group

The target group of the project were public sector officials from a range of line ministries and agencies including Ministries in charge of transport, the economy, infrastructure development, customs committees/ border management agencies as well as road and rail infrastructure managers and operators, including also representatives of private sector, chambers of commerce and other related agencies. The five pilot countries were selected as they are all Landlocked (or transit) Developing Countries and thus face specific transit and transport challenges.

COVID impact

In March 2020, the project was modified to help assess and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on inland transport systems. A cluster of additional indicators was created enabling countries to assess their transport system preparedness for and resilience to pandemics and other cross-border emergencies. Due to COVID-19 induced travel restrictions a significant part of the budget was reallocated from travel of participants and staff to: i) additional (virtual) capacity building events; ii) the development of an online SITCIN data collection platform

enabling countries to use the indicators in a fully automated manner and iii) the development of an online, multilingual elearning course for countries on how to use the indicators.

Modalities and budget

The budget of the project was \$550,200 funded from the 11th tranche of the Development Account. The project was implemented in cooperation with ESCWA and ECLAC. The project was managed by the Economic Affairs Officer from the Transport Facilitation and Economics Section, funded from the UN regular budget (Sect.20) resources.

IV. Issues

The evaluation will answer the following issues: Relevance; Coherence; Effectiveness; Efficiency and sustainability.

Relevance:

1. To what extent did the Project respond to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries to develop efficient and inter-connected transport systems, in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and the Vienna Programme of Action (resolution 69/137)?
2. To what extent were the activities consistent with global and regional priorities? How relevant were the activities vis-à-vis the programme of work of the UNECE? What value has UNECE's efforts added in this area?
3. How relevant was the project to the target groups' needs and priorities? Was there a focus on the most vulnerable ones?
4. Did the project apply gender, rights-based and disability inclusion approaches in the design, implementation, and results of the activities?
5. How relevant was the project with regards to climate change and disaster risk reduction?

Coherence:

6. How coherent was the collaboration with other entities in the UN system and other international organizations?
7. How coherent was the project design? Were the activities implemented in the required sequence needed to ensure the greatest impact of the project? To what extent are the outputs consistent with and relevant to the overall objective and expected accomplishments?
8. What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?
9. How did the adjustments, if any, affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework?

Effectiveness:

10. Did the project achieve the results expected during the project design in terms of the planned activities, outcome, and impact?
11. What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the activities, objective and expected accomplishments?

Efficiency:

12. Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources?

13. How could the use of resources be improved? Would you propose any alternatives to achieve the same results? If yes, which ones?

14. Were the human and financial resources allocated to the project used efficiently and commensurate the project results?

Sustainability:

15. How is the stakeholders' engagement likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated or institutionalized? To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries 'own' the outcomes of the work?

16. To what extent are the objectives of the activity still valid? How can the activity be replicated in the UNECE region or in other regions?

17. What are the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 related activities? Could they be replicated?

18. What are the laws, regulations, policies, or projects that have been developed so far as a result of the project, based on the pilot countries enhanced capacity for evaluating the efficiency of their inland transport systems and for the development of new, sustainable evidence-based transport policies?

V. Methodology

a) The evaluation will be conducted based on the following mixed methods to triangulate information:

- A desk review of all relevant documents, as the primary source of information. The desk review will include inter alia: the project document and information on project activities (monitoring data); studies and reports (Project progress reports, the national connectivity and sustainability plans developed for each of the five pilot countries in the framework of the project and available financial information). The consultant will also research projects in the same area conducted by other UN agencies.

- Interviews (in person and/or by telephone/video) to be conducted with (i) the national Government focal points for the project in each of the five pilot countries as well the national consultants who acted as UNECE counterparts throughout the national assessments and follow up activities; (ii) representatives of government agencies responsible for the areas addressed in the studies; (iii) representatives of enterprise support institutions and, (iv) implementing partners ESCWA and ECLAC closely involved in the implementation of the project. As deemed necessary, focus group discussions via online platforms can also be organized.

- Online survey of the key stakeholders and beneficiaries. The survey will be developed by the consultant on his preferred platform.

- Remote observation of virtual workshops and meetings

b) Norms and standards

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with [the ECE Evaluation Policy](#) and the Administrative instruction guiding Evaluation in the UN Secretariat ([ST/AI/2021/3](#)).

Gender equality and human rights considerations are integrated at all stages of the evaluation: (i) in the evaluation scope of analysis, evaluation criteria and questions design; (ii) in the methods, tools, and data analysis techniques; (iii) in the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the final report.

c) Outline of the final report

The evaluation report will strive not to exceed 30 pages and follow the mandatory outline for UNDA report to be shared by the Programme Management Unit. An Executive summary (max. 2 pages) will summarize the methodology of the evaluation, key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

VI. Evaluation schedule

- A. Preliminary research: by 1 January 2021;
- B. Data collection: by 15 February 2022;
- C. Data analysis: by 15 March 2021;
- D. Draft report: 1 April 2022;
- E: Final draft report: 15 April 2022;
- F: Final report: 31 April 2022

Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator. The timing above is indicative.

VII. Resources and Management of the evaluation

An independent consultant will be engaged for a period of 40 days to conduct the evaluation, within a budget of \$22,000 inclusive of all costs.

To enhance the relevance, quality and credibility of the evaluation process, an Evaluation Committee will support the evaluation process. The Committee will be comprised of three members:

- Project Manager, Mr. Roel Janssens, Transport Facilitation and Economics Section, Sustainable Transport Division
- Programme Officer in charge of evaluations, Programme Management Unit (PMU)
- Ms. Ketevan Salukvadze, Head of Transport and Logistics Development Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia

The Evaluation Committee will be involved in the following steps:

- Review of the Terms of Reference
- Review of the proposed evaluator profiles
- Reception and review of the draft evaluation report

The Project Manager, Mr. Roel Janssens in consultation with Mr. Konstantinos Alexopoulos, Chief of Section will be involved in the following steps:

- Provide all documentation needed for desk review, contact details, support and guidance to the evaluation consultant as needed throughout the timeline of the evaluation.
- Advise the evaluator on the recipients for the questionnaire and for follow-up interviews.
- Process and manage the consultancy contract of the evaluator, along the key milestones agreed with PMU.

The Programme Management Unit will be involved in the following steps:

- Selection of the evaluator
- Development and clearance of the Terms of Reference
- Provide guidance to the Project Manager and evaluator as needed on the evaluation design and methodology
- Clearance of the final report after quality assurance of the draft report

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps:

Findings of this evaluation will be used, when possible, to:

- improve direct project's follow up actions, implementation of products by project beneficiaries and dissemination of the knowledge created through the project;
- learn lessons from early response to the impact of COVID-19, to develop further related projects
- assess the gaps and further needs of countries in the area of this project;
- formulate a tailored capacity building project for Governments interested in starting to use the indicators for evaluation of their national transport system efficiency
- induce new project ideas, improving the planning and design of future capacity-building activities and projects on regional and inter-regional transport connectivity in the UNECE and other regions

The results of the evaluation will be reported to the Inland Transport Committee.

Following the issuance of the final report, the Project Manager will develop a Management Response and action plan for addressing the recommendations made by the evaluator. The final evaluation report, the management response, and the progress on implementation of recommendations will be available on the UNECE website.

IX. Criteria for evaluators

Evaluators should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in relevant disciplines
- Specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, advanced statistical research and analysis.
- Demonstrated relevant professional experience in design, management and conduct of evaluation processes with the UN Secretariat, with multiple stakeholders, survey design and implementation, and project planning, monitoring and management, gender analysis and human rights due diligence
- Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations.
- Fluent in written and spoken English.

Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to UNECE before embarking on an evaluation

Annex 2: SITCIN structure and methodology

SITCIN structure and methodology

The indicators are structured within three pillars of sustainability and applied across the four inland transport sectors including road, rail, inland waterways, and intermodal transport.

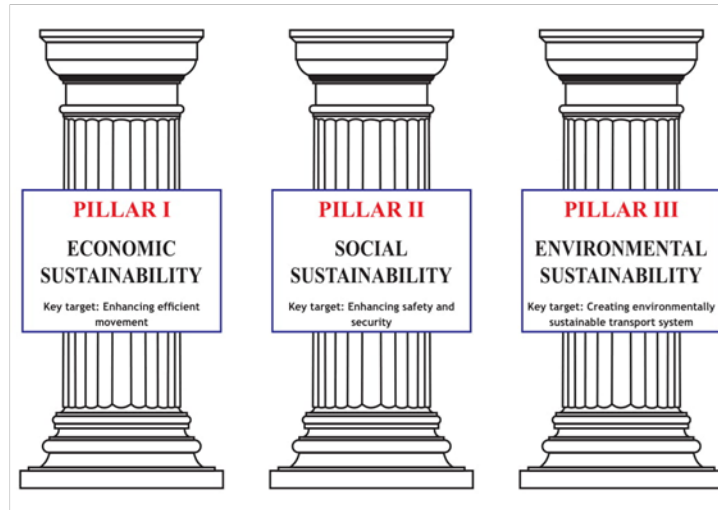


Figure 2: Three SITCIN pillars

- A. **Economic Sustainability:** Indicators within this pillar aim at assessing and validating border crossing efficiency, time, and costs as well as the quality of (inter-modal) transport infrastructure and the use of ICT and intelligent transport solutions.
- B. **Social Sustainability:** Indicators within this pillar aim to assess the adequacy of road traffic rules enforcement, road traffic infrastructure, vehicle regulations and administrative frameworks surrounding cross-border transport of perishable foodstuffs and dangerous goods.
- C. **Environmental Sustainability:** Indicators within this pillar have been designed to evaluate measures aimed at reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollutants and noise emissions; in doing so, they consider a modal split, alternative fuel share, the average age of fleet etc.

Annex 3 – SITCIN Evaluation Matrix

Appendix 3: This evaluation matrix is developed to guide data collection and analysis of efforts by activities and all aspects of the DA-11 project, including the SITCIN Methodology. Considering that the MDGs include gender equality, human rights, governance, and environmental sustainability, those themes are therefore regrouped under cross-cutting issues to form additional evaluation criteria. This regrouping makes it easier to assess whether they have been mainstreamed or not in the DA-11 project's various phases, including efforts by the beneficiary countries to propose appropriate recommendations. This matrix will also serve as the basis for developing interview guides. Moreover, it will also help ensure the reliability and validity of data gathered for the evaluation and facilitate the identification of observations and evidenced findings.

Evaluation Questions from TORS	Sub-Questions Added	Data collection methods
1. Relevance		
The extent to which the project objectives, its interventions and expected achievements are consistent with beneficiaries and stakeholders' requirements, countries' needs, global and regional priorities. The appropriateness of the project, its interventions in a given region or country.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the UNDA 11th tranche Project respond to the priorities and needs of the 5 beneficiary countries to develop efficient and inter-connected transport systems in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and the Vienna Programme of Action (resolution 69/137)? • To what extent were the activities proposed in the project consistent with global and regional priorities? How relevant were the activities vis-à-vis the programme of work of the UNECE? What value has UNECE's efforts added in this area? • How relevant was the project to the target groups' needs and priorities (private sector, NGOs, Academic institutions, etc.)? • To what extent did the involvement of the other target groups/external stakeholders reinforce the 5 Governments and UNECE's ability to contribute to meet the project's stated objectives and achieve expected results/accomplishments? • How relevant was the project with regards to climate change and disaster risk reduction? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the objectives of the activities under the DA-11 project still relevant and can be replicated in the region and globally? Please use the space below to provide additional information.? • In your opinion, how broadly inclusive were the discussions and consultations processes throughout the various phases of the DA-11 Project, including the implementation of the SITCIN Methodology? • In your opinion, what added value have UNECE's efforts, through the UNDA 11th tranche project and its outputs, including the application of the SITCIN methodology, contribute to your country's ability to develop and manage inland transport connectivity systems and implement transport-related SDG? Please use the space below to comment and elaborate on perceived UNECE's added value? • In your opinion, how broadly inclusive were the discussions and consultations processes throughout the various phases of the DA-11 Project, including the implementation of the SITCIN Methodology? • To what extent did the project's implementation process, combined with the introduction of the SITCIN methodology, and the NCRs help create synergies or complementarities in some key areas of implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interview with key informants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Consultants from the 5 pilots ○ International Consultant (SITCIN) ○ UN Counterparts ○ UNECE staff • Semi-structured interviews with country representatives • Survey questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government stakeholders ○ Business /NGO Stakeholders ○ Chief of Section Transport Division ○ Program Management Unit

Evaluation Questions from TORS	Sub-Questions Added	Data collection methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is UNECE's contribution perceived as adding value in the 7 countries' context? How? <p>***Topics related to gender, human rights, disability, inclusion, and climate change, originally under RELEVANCE were regrouped under a new criterion: CROSS-CUTTING issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the involvement of the other target groups/external stakeholders reinforce the 5 Governments and UNECE's ability to contribute to meet the project's stated objectives and achieve expected results/accomplishments? To what extent did the project's orientations have to be adapted to the seven countries' social, economic, historical context and environmental conditions? To what extent climate change and disaster reduction were strategically and operationally integrated into the Project Framework? To what extent has the DA-11 Project strategically and operationally integrated crosscutting themes? 	
2. Coherence		
<p>Will assess the internal coherence of the project and examine the role of the Sustainable Transport Division in coordinating with other relevant Divisions (content and duration of intervention). External coherence will look at the coordination of activities and the platform put in place to facilitate effective policy dialogue between national, regional and other international actors/stakeholders as a means to foster national and regional communication and collaboration to address common problems by using common approaches.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How coherent was the UNECE's collaboration internally and with other entities in the UN system and other international organizations? How coherent was the project design? Were the activities implemented in the required sequence needed to ensure the greatest impact of the project? To what extent are the outputs consistent with and relevant to the overall objective and expected results/accomplishments? To what extent have the capacity-building initiatives /trainings for the 5 pilot countries been coordinated and harmonized with those of other UN Agencies in those countries? What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged with COVID-19? How did the adjustments, if any, affect the achievement of the project's expected results in your country as stated in the original results framework? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the adjustments, if any, affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework? To what extent did the UNECE's approach to policy dialogue with your country and the other stakeholders create an enabling political context for reaching the project's expected accomplishments? How could the approach to policy dialogue be improved? What were the concrete means and measures adopted (internal and external) by UNECE's Sustainable Transport Division during the Project's implementation to ensure coherence and optimization of synergies between the various UN Legal Instruments? Please explain. How did the adjustments, if any, affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework? What are the concrete means and measures adopted (internal and external) by UNECE's Sustainable Transport Division during the Project 's implementation to ensure coherence and optimization of synergies between the various UN Legal Instruments? How many formal mechanisms were implemented in the context of the project to facilitate and promote civil society and private sector participation in political decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interview with key informants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Consultants from the 5 pilots International Consultant (SITCIN) UN Counterparts Semi-structured interviews with country representatives Survey questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government stakeholders Business /NGO Stakeholders Chief of Section Transport Division Program Management Unit Virtual Focus Group Kazakhstan – TBD

Evaluation Questions from TORS	Sub-Questions Added	Data collection methods
3. Effectiveness		
The extent to which the project intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance to the ECE and the beneficiary countries.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources? • What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the activities, objectives and expected results/accomplishments? • Were there human and financial resources allocated to the project used efficiently and commensurated with the project results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the main success factors or limiting factors that affected results achievement? • To what extent did the DA-11 project and the implementation of the SITCIN methodology, in terms of effectiveness, achieve their planned objectives and produced their expected results and impacts? • In your opinion, what can be identified as the key achievements of the UNECE's DA-11 project and the implementation of the SITCIN methodology in your country's drive to the development of an effective inter-connected transport system and achievement of transport-related SDGs • What were the main key results achieved regarding the strategic priorities of the countries and the UNECE? • Were the approaches used to identify and engage stakeholders, as well as disseminate information and facilitate dialogue between stakeholders effective enough? How could these approaches be improved? • To what extent was the project effective in facilitating the sharing of best practices as well as inter-regional lessons learning and peer-to-peer learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interview with key informants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Consultants from the 5 pilots ○ International Consultant (SITCIN) ○ UN Counterparts • Semi-structured interviews with country representatives • Survey questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government stakeholders ○ Business Stakeholders /NGO ○ Chief of Section Transport Division ○ Program Management Unit • Virtual Focus Group Kazakhstan – TBD
4. Efficiency		
The extent to which resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results; using efficient governance, good management processes and implementation structures.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources? • How could the use of resources be improved? Would you propose any alternatives to achieve the same results? If yes, which ones? • Were human and financial resources allocated to the project used efficiently and commensurate with the project results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the original timeframe established for accomplishing the project results appropriate and adequate? • Has there been any delay(s) or gap(s) between the period when the project was approved and the period of its full implementation? • What factors or barriers, if any, prevented the efficient implementation of the project; for example, lack of available scientific, human and/or technical resources • Were the UNECE project management procedures clear, streamlined, and flexible enough to meet the needs of the selected countries? • Has there been any delay or gap between the period when a project was approved and the period of its full implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interview with key informants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Consultants from the 5 pilots ○ International Consultant (SITCIN) ○ UN Counterparts • Semi-structured interviews with country representatives

Evaluation Questions from TORS	Sub-Questions Added	Data collection methods
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect has any shift to project approach and budgetary support had on the efficiency of the delivery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government stakeholders ○ Business Stakeholders /NGO ○ Chief of Section Transport Division ○ Program Management Unit
5. Sustainability		
The degree to which benefits from the implementation of the project will continue after the funding has expired.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the stakeholders' engagement likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated, or institutionalized? To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries 'own' the outcomes of the work? • To what extent are the objectives of the activity still valid? How can the activity be replicated in the UNECE region or other regions? • What are the lessons learned from COVID-19 related activities? Could they be replicated? • What are the laws, regulations, policies or projects that have been developed so far as a result of the project, based on the pilot countries' enhanced capacity for evaluating the efficiency of their inland transport systems and for the development of new, sustainable evidence-based transport policies? • Is the time allocated for project delivery and achievement of results adequate and sufficient to ensure the sustainability of results? • To what extent have risks associated with the sustainability of results been adequately identified, analyzed and managed? • Has the program planned for sufficient resources to ensure operationalization and monitor integration of cross-cutting themes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the UNECE's Sustainable Transport Division initiatives to enhance your country's capacities to design and implement evidence-based transport framework and transport connectivity and transport-related SDGs provided durable results? • What conditions or factors could enhance or undermine the project's positive outcomes and long-term benefits? • Have the countries put in place specific mechanisms to ensure that the resources and engagement with national and international stakeholders are sustained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interview with key informants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Consultants from the 5 pilots ○ International Consultant (SITCIN) ○ UN Counterparts • Semi-structured interviews with country representatives • Survey questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government stakeholders ○ Business Stakeholders /NGO ○ Chief of Section Transport Division ○ Program Management Unit
6. Cross-Cutting issues		
The treatment of cross-cutting issues throughout the project's implementation process, namely assess signs of progress on human rights, gender equality results, disability inclusion, climate change and disaster risk reduction in the context of this engagement.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the project focused on strategically and operationally integrated cross-cutting themes, climate change and disaster risk reduction? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How broadly inclusive were the discussions and consultations processes throughout the various phases of the DA-11 Project, including the implementation of the SITCIN Methodology? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review

Evaluation Questions from TORS	Sub-Questions Added	Data collection methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project planned for sufficient resources to ensure operationalization and monitor integration of cross-cutting themes? <hr/> <p>Using a single “cross-cutting issues” criterion to assess An analysis of crosscutting issues at all three levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent climate change and disaster reduction were strategically and operationally integrated into the Project Framework? • Were concrete strategies to integrate cross-cutting issues developed by the selected countries throughout the implementation phases of the project, and did the narrative project reports systematically account for results in this area? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with key informants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Consultants from the 5 pilots ○ International Consultant (SITCIN) ○ UN Counterparts • Semi-structured interviews with country representatives • Survey questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government stakeholders ○ Business Stakeholders /NGO ○ Chief of Section Transport Division ○ Program Management Unit

Annex 4: Summary of the seven National Connectivity Reports

A. Highlights of the National Connectivity Reports

Given that each NCR already contains an integrated SWOT analysis and detailed analysis of different modes of transportation, this brief and non-exhaustive analysis highlights the following six chapters or operating sections: *Border Crossing Facilitation, Transport Infrastructure, Safety and Security, Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs, Dangerous Goods, Intermodality and Environment.*

1. Broader crossing and transport infrastructure

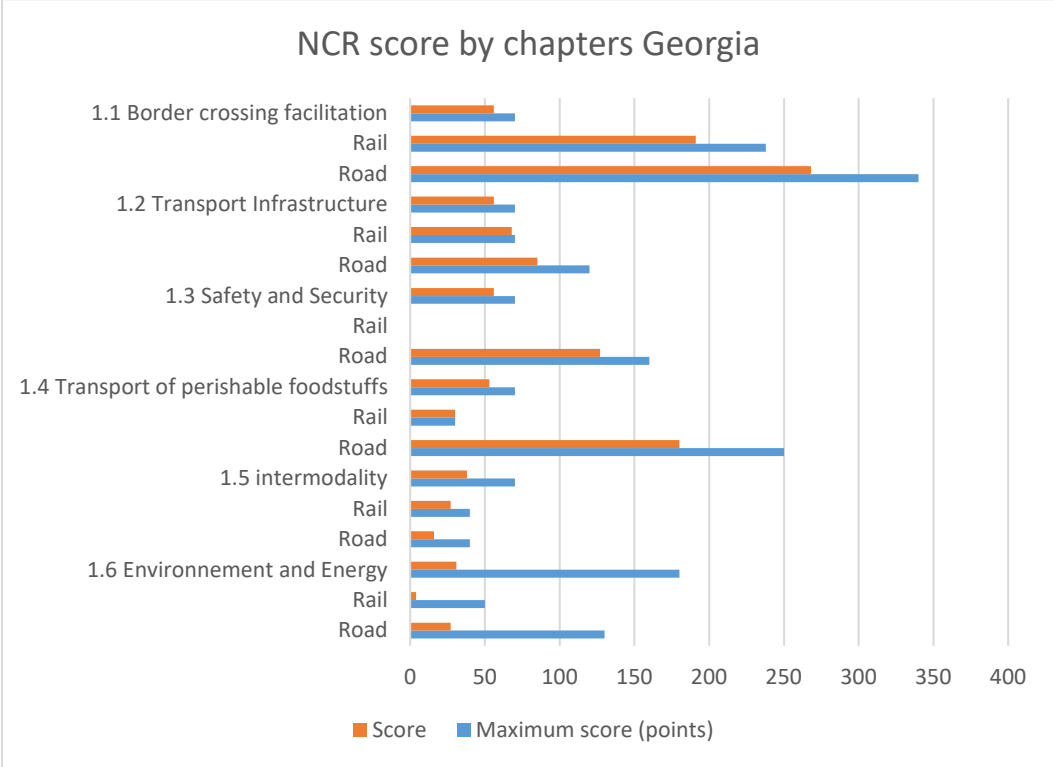
All seven countries, even the unique Palestine reality²¹, recognized the growing importance of efficient cross-border and transport infrastructure services (road, rail, inland waterways), to ensure the rapid passage of vehicles, goods and persons in their economic development. For example, in Palestine, within the territories controlled by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), there is a border crossing with Jordan (King Hussein Bridge) to the rest of the Arab and neighbouring countries and another with Egypt (the Rafah crossing). Several other crossing points with Israel are not considered as Palestinian crossing borders. They are used to cross goods from both directions for import and export purposes through ports under Israel, and therefore Israeli procedures fully apply to them and are subject to Israeli closures, restrictions and control procedures under various pretexts.

Transport infrastructure is demand-driven and, therefore, a priority in all seven countries. Except for Palestine, six of the seven countries offer border crossing points with a minimum of services 24/7, although unequal among the countries regarding clearance, control procedures, electronic database use, access to e-services, and harmonization with international standards. In the case of Palestine, the movement of trade across the border is more challenging and mainly subject to Israeli procedures. Moreover, Palestinians have limited control over the cross-border movement of goods; therefore, Palestine is subject to fluctuation in procedures, which may hinder and disrupt commercial movement. Other countries, such as Paraguay, already a member of the MERCOSUR, and Serbia, a potential accessor to the European Union and a party of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), are more inclined to subscribe to a more integrated framework concerning border crossings and the movement of goods within their respective association. A more detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the seven countries can be found in their individual National Connectivity Report.

As for significant weaknesses, they include the need for improvement in critical areas common to all seven countries: cumbersome procedures, insufficient facilities, low coordination of services, absence of clear delegation of authority among the various agencies responsible for managing broader crossing services, and a lack of harmonization with internationally agreed upon standards.

²¹ National Connectivity Report Palestine. There are two parts of the State of Palestine (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), and within the West Bank the lands are politically classified into areas under Palestinian administrative control, and others under Israeli control.

For example, as illustrated in the graph below²², Georgia is doing relatively well in border crossing facilitation, scoring 56 points out of a maximum score of 70. The critical challenge for Georgia is to have the same quality and simplified broader crossing procedures and services in the adjoining countries.



Lebanon also emphasizes border crossing and plays the role of a transit corridor in transportation, and its liberal trade regime allows it to serve as an entry point to the regional market. Lebanon has three official crossing points on the border with Syria. It also has two big seaports (Beirut and Tripoli) on the Mediterranean Sea gateways for goods coming through sea containers, cargo shipments, and other goods entering and leaving the country. Lebanon's SITCIN overall score is 645 points out of the possible maximum score of 1074. After the normalization process, the country's index was 60%. The results obtained by Lebanon in land transport facilitation and border-crossing are acceptable given the region's unstable political conditions. Lebanon shares borders with Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. Safety and Security

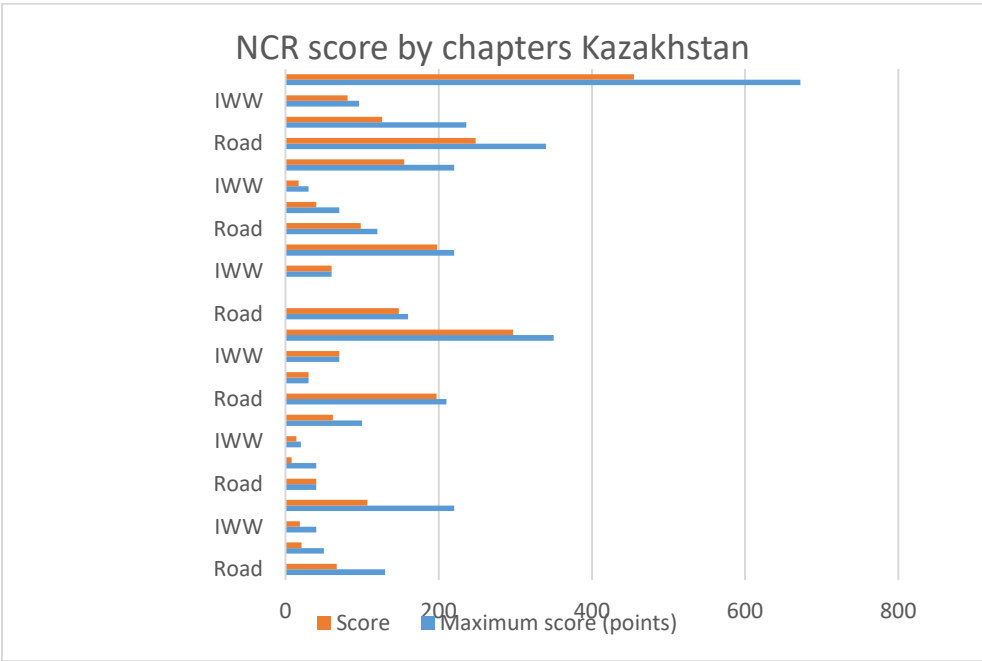
All five initial countries deploy adequate technical, financial, and human resources to improve safety and security rules and regulations related to all aspects of their transportation modes to comply with international standards. However, those rules and procedures suffered from a lack of enforcement measures and non-compliance with

²² Georgia National Connectivity Report (NCR) 2019. Page 119.

the standards. In addition, most of the five countries lack a centralized system for inspection and compliance with regulations to share information among the appropriate authorities responsible for the three concerning modes.

In the area of Safety and Security, the Republic of Kazakhstan performs relatively well, scoring 198 points out of 220. In addition, 41% of significant length roads with two lanes follow international standards and most of the highway roads follow international standards in road signs, signals, and markings with national legislation²³.

At the other end of the spectrum, the two added countries of Palestine and Lebanon suffer from political circumstances making Safety and Security a sore point in their records. Thus, coordination between Lebanese and Syrian authorities is changeable, oscillating between the level of political relations and the caprices of security officials and/or politicians. In the case of Palestine, the process of collecting data on roads and traffic is generally weak and is not continuous or updated, which hinders proper planning of infrastructure. In addition, traffic accidents are on the rise, and there is a clear shortage in the traffic police force and a lack of Palestinian National Road Safety Programs.



3. Transport of perishable foodstuffs and dangerous goods

All five initial countries deployed significant efforts to improve the control and coordination of transportation of hazardous goods by road, rail transport, and inland waterways modes by installing advanced electronic cargo information e-single windows. In addition, they sought to harmonize their rules and provisions related to the transportation of perishable foodstuffs and perishable goods with regional and international standards and agreements. For example, Serbia sought to fully harmonize requirements related to road transport of dangerous goods with the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR).

²³ The Republic of Kazakhstan National Connectivity Report. Page 117.

In the case of Paraguay, the country developed a solid national framework on general provisions for transporting dangerous goods and training personnel involved in transporting hazardous goods. This framework comes from the 'Sectoral Agreement for Transport of Dangerous Goods' in MERCOSUR. The framework also addresses the Inland Waterways mode. Georgia created procedures for approval and revocation of approval of inspection bodies based on internationally agreed provisions. Kazakhstan is updating the Agreement on International Freight Traffic and the rules for transporting dangerous goods in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

However, some of the legislation in place lack the necessary enforcement mechanisms. In addition, most of the data on road transport restrictions applicable to the transport of dangerous goods are not always adequately monitored and are not made publicly available. Finally, some countries lack the appropriate human resources to adapt their infrastructures to new technologies and innovations transporting perishable foodstuffs and dangerous goods. In addition, the economic constraints caused by the current pandemic have also hampered the countries' efforts to develop appropriate policies, plans, and bodies to monitor and collect the data information. That is the case for the current Intergovernmental Committee for the Parana-Paraguay Waterway's plans to create a new division in charge of statistics.

In the case of Palestine and Lebanon, the results obtained in the transport of dangerous and perishable goods are deemed acceptable. The indicators are relatively stable, with 66% for Lebanon and 50% for Palestine. For Palestine, the lists of dangerous and perishable foodstuffs and dual-use are available and enforced. This list is consistent with international provisions and arguably even more stringent. These procedures are accompanied by a delay in Israeli detection and clearance of these goods. Nevertheless, goods are duly labelled, indicating their nature and the requirements of transport documents for these goods comply.

4. Intermodality

All five initial countries have great potential for a broader range of transportation intermodality. Therefore, most of their countries tried to harmonize their laws on intermodality with international transport agreements related to the three modes. As a result, they developed a more or less adequate connection between roads, railways, and inland waterways, depending on their geographic configuration. For example, in Paraguay, IWW transport is the country's most widely used transport mode; 80% of export cargo movement uses this mode. A similar situation exists in Georgia, where multimodal transportation mainly serves cargo movement. Another example in Jordan, which has narrow waterways, is the law on multimodality is harmonized with international transport agreements. As a result, Akaba port terminals are well connected with road networks and railways.

Intermodality needs improvements in all five countries, and in some of these countries, regional political instability negatively affects the flow of goods through intermodality transportation. For example, Serbia lacks strategies and action plans to develop intermodal transport and logistics platforms. In Kazakhstan, the high tariffs for container transportation within the country and the adverse effects of the US sanctions against Iran hampered the full use of intermodality. Similarly, regional political instability affects the flow of goods in Jordan, and intermodality does not exist in rail transport – not rail services. The same insecurity situation prevails in Palestine, Lebanon and the broader region, making intermodality transport unstable.

5. Environment and Energy

The Environment and the Energy sector is probably the most critical and challenging chapter for all seven countries because they recognize the urgency to carry out concrete environment-related actions. Yet, at the same time,

they are thorned with the desire to comply with environmental practices and regulations in their respective transport modes against the wish to fulfill their citizens' basic economic needs.

Most of the five initial countries have moved toward using alternative fuels, controlling CO₂ emissions, and increasing the use of vehicles on alternative fuels. For example, Serbia moved to install various fuel filling stations along international roads and inland stations using Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) as a standard fuel. Jordan has moved ahead to protect the Abaka region, classified as a particular area by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), by introducing regulations to reduce ship fuel emissions. Paraguay has regulated the quality of diesel and petrol, and there are provisions regarding the level of air pollutants from automobiles. The above countries have also established new norms to reduce noise and acoustic pollution.

However, besides the lack of enforcement mechanisms, the initial five countries face the challenge of removing aged and polluting cars, buses and trucks on the road, resulting in a significant environmental impact. Jordan's average passenger cars, buses, and trucks age is 10, 20, and 17 years respectively. For example, in Serbia, the average age of cars, and buses is 15 years. Georgia has one of the worst environmental records for old road and rail fleets, lack of national vehicle emissions, and noise emissions. In addition, the proportion of vehicles using alternative fuels is relatively low in these countries.

Few initial countries have yet to implement measures to address climate change and the impact on inland water systems. For example, through its Climate Change National Directorate, Paraguay is currently developing plans concerning the effects of climate change on road transport systems. In addition, the country has implemented tax benefits for alternative fuel vehicles. However, the average age of vessels in 2019 was 33 years due to the Government failing to implement such measures. Furthermore, the measures concerning noise pollution remain ineffective because, although municipalities are often in charge of implementing the law on noise pollution and the provisions regarding reducing air pollutants, not all have done so. As a result, transport by inland waterways remains low in some countries.

Generally, all five initial countries deal with an ageing fleet of trucks, cars, and boats. They also lack adequate methods for measuring CO₂ emissions and taxation based on measured CO₂ emissions, and they still have poor testing CO₂ emission control. The situation is even worst in Palestine and Lebanon. In the case of Palestine, the truck fleet is diesel-based, and the average age of all types of vehicles is high. Furthermore, although laws and legislation determine the maximum emission rates from cars, these legislations lack effective monitoring mechanisms. In the case of Lebanon, the lowest percentage obtained was in the environment and energy indicator set, which reveals that the country has not yet set or is not following the appropriate guidelines to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the high energy consumption in transporting goods and people across borders.

Palestine and Lebanon showed poor scores in energy and environment, the lowest among the seven pilot countries. In both countries, the truck fleet is diesel-based, and the average age of all types of vehicles is high. Similar to the initial five countries, although there are laws and legislation that determine the maximum emission rates from vehicles, they lack effective monitoring mechanisms.

B. A summary of Convergent Key Recommendations between the seven NCRs

The following sub-section highlights key convergent recommendations by sector found in almost all seven NCRs.

Border Crossing

- All NCRs called for the modernization of Border Control Points' infrastructure and the extension of working hours to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery.
- Most BCPs need better digitalization of information systems for better communication and cooperation among the various agencies and the private sector.
- All seven countries call for mechanisms to facilitate better harmonization and integration services between the various regulatory bodies and agencies to reduce bureaucratic redundancies and other barriers.

Annex 5: Financial Information -Project Document

Object Class	Description	A. Budget/Allotment (as per project document) (USD)	B. Revisions to allotments(if any) (USD)	C. Explanations of revisionsto allotments (USD)	D. Total Expenditure (USD)
015	Other staff costs - General temporary assistance	0			1,890
105	Consultants	166,000			355,738.5
115	Travel of staff	97,750			29,460.75
120	Contractual services	50,950			117,638.46
125	General operating expenses	50,000			9,616.97
130	Supplies and materials	0			0
135	Furniture and equipment	0			1,925
145	Workshops/Study tours (Grants and contributions)	185,500			3,869.68
	Total	550,200			520,183.32
015	Other staff costs - General temporary assistance	0			0
105	Consultants	116,000			208,370
115	Travel of staff	57,750			20,808
120	Contractual services	25,450			103,996.87
125	General operating expenses	30,000			1,377.64
130	Supplies and materials	0			0
135	Furniture and equipment	0			0
145	Workshops/Study tours (Grants and contributions)	115,500			0
	Total	344,700			334,552.47

015	Other staff costs - General temporary assistance				
105	Consultants	20,000			62,001.90
115	Travel of staff	9,500			5,454.75
120	Contractual services	12,750			13,331.99
125	General operating expenses	10,000			7,413.43
130	Supplies and materials				
135	Furniture and equipment				1,925
145	Workshops/Study tours (Grants and contributions)	38,000			118.78
	Total	90,250			90,245.85
015	Other staff costs - General temporary assistance				1,890
105	Consultants	40,000			85,411.6
115	Travel of staff	20,500			3,198
120	Contractual services	12,750			309.6
125	General operating expenses	10,000			825
130	Supplies and materials				
135	Furniture and equipment				
145	Workshops/Study tours (Grants and contributions)	12,135			3,750.9
	Total	115,250			95,385

Annex 6: Summary of interviews with key stakeholders by Group

COMBINED SCORECARD FOR EVALUATION CRITERIA- UNECE STAFF

			Total
Level of involvement/ practical linkage with work	4	4	4
Relevance	5	5	5
Effectiveness/usefulness	4.5	4.5	4.5
Efficiency	5	4.5	4.75
Coherence	5	5.0	5
Sustainability		5.0	2.5
Cross-cutting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Environment 	3.5	4	3.5
Lessons Learned	5		

Level of involvement (4.5): As chief of the section responsible for this specific UNDA project I was working very closely with Roel, the project manager on the development of the project, the organization of workshops and the preparation of the final product. The main challenge that we faced was the COVID 19 pandemic. In the initial project plan, a lot of missions and workshops were foreseen. All these workshops took place in a virtual way though. The budget reallocation due to the above-mentioned challenge was also challenging since we should ensure that sustainable solutions and activities should be performed. The pandemic “obliged” us to include indicators relevant with pandemics/force majeure further enlarging the scope of the project.

Relevance (5): Their involvement, reports and participation were very relevant. Fully relevant. Aligned also with the SDGs. The added value of UNECE’s efforts : Provide them a tool with which they can on a harmonized and systematic way improve their connectivity by benchmarking themselves with other countries, learning from their good practices, and monitoring their performance. **Effectiveness (5) :** Fully achieved the planned objectives and final products. **Challenges (4.5):** the COVID 19 pandemic. Many meetings took place virtually, some missions were canceled but give us the opportunity to accomplish the tasks without using the funds foreseen and add more activities / outputs for the benefit of the countries. **Efficiency (5):** objectives fully achieved with the anticipated budget. Resources were used fully efficiently and the results / final products justify this. **Sustainability (5) :** Actually, the products prepared can be used globally by all UN member STATES on a regular basis in order to evaluate, monitor and systematically improving their connectivity performance. the national stakeholders have ownership of the project and its final product since they were fully involved in its preparation and their ideas, suggestions and practical cases were incorporated in the final product. From now on UNECE should communicate with the assistance of the other regional commissions involved in this excellent tool to all UN member States ensuring and promoting its systematic use by the countries. **Coherence (5):** that both internal and external communication was excellent. Most challenging as always was the external one especially because we had to deal with consultants outside the UNECE region and the other regional commissions. However, the cooperation with them it was excellent despite the fact that it was heavily impacted by the pandemic. Due to the pandemic UNECE personal were obliged to use more electronic means of communication such the Microsoft teams that in the end facilitated and even improved a lot the efficiency of the communication. UNECE’s approach to the policy dialogue was really very effective. The meetings organized were very efficient and well received by the participants, the participants themselves enjoyed the project and they were actively participating to these dialogues / exchanges of good practices and cases. Time difference was always a challenge for organizing common meetings. Also the

number of participants. This was a risk but the good will for all stakeholders and excellent preparations of those meetings reduced any possible risk. **Adjustment to COVID** : Missions had to be canceled, meetings had to take place virtually, budget reallocation and new supplementing activities were introduced. In the end the challenge of COVID was an opportunity that made us deliver more with the same budget. **Lessons learned and sharing of best practices** : Very successful. Stakeholders were very open in sharing experience and good practices and their involvement in the finalization of the product was more than foreseen. The preparation of the actual indicators was a very challenging task and quite difficult. The fact that we managed to have those indicators identified, described, and agreed among the regions was a huge achievement. This also underlines the global nature of those indicators.

Cross-cutting issues : To the extent possible, the Project applied gender-based inclusion approaches. The work on CITCIN became part of the regular agenda of the Working Party on transport trends and economics and we are reporting annually to the inland transport committee on these indicators. There are specific indicators prepared addressing only the environmental challenges. In that sense, the project was very relevant with regards to climate change.

Level of involvement : Coordination with beneficiary countries and other stakeholders when finalising the methodology. The methodology and indicators need to be generalised and applicable in all countries, while situation in each selected countries varies. **Relevance (5)**: The Methodology is particularly relevant to the needs of especially for landlocked developing countries like Paraguay, Georgia and Kazakhstan. It provides the countries with a self-assessment tool. **Effectiveness (4.5): Challenges**: To promote the tool to other countries and to encourage the beneficiary countries to continue utilising the tool to create data series and enable a monitoring process. This can be challenging considering the resources needed to apply the tool. **Efficiency (4.5)**: factors impacting full implementation: The COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from the COVID-19 pandemic, the project implementation was pretty smooth. The involvement of UNECE regional commissions (ECLAC and ESCWA) has contributed to meet the needs of the beneficiary countries within their regions. **Sustainability**: The SITCIN is developed to be applied by any country in the world. **Sense of ownership**: During the project implementation, yes. Beyond the project, the UNECE and the regional commissions should continue promoting the use of the tool by the national stakeholders. **Factors/conditions enhancing the outcomes**: Participation from countries other than the beneficiaries will enhance the project’s outcome as more feedback could be received to improve the tool. Less buy-in from national stakeholders will therefore undermine the outcomes of the project. **Coherence**: UN legal instruments play a very important role in developing the indicators as SITCIN is developed to help countries monitor their progress in achieving SDGs and implementing UN legal instruments. A national policy dialogue was conducted in each beneficiary country to endorse the national connectivity report and determine the capacity-building topics needed by the country. In my opinion, this approach is suitable. **Th risk of dealing with multiple stakeholders**: Each country has its own needs and interests, and it is very challenging to accommodate them in the final product of SITCIN. **COVID**: Several national policy dialogues were held virtually. **Lessons learned: the most promising activities**: National Policy Dialogues, because these activities brought together various stakeholders of the pilot countries and increased their awareness in the importance of monitoring their country’s progress in achieving the UN SDGs and legal instruments. **Weakenesses of the Project** : It would have been better if the international consultant (me) was involved earlier (from the beginning of the project) and involved in all fact-finding missions in each beneficiary country, as I was responsible for coordinating with all of the national consultants. This would have been more efficient and reduced miscommunication. But the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the stakeholders the importance of transport connectivity, something that SITCIN

aims to improve. **Cross-cutting issues:** UNECE appointed a female international consultant to coordinate the national consultants. The environment is one of the three pillars that cluster the developed indicators.

COMBINED SCORECARD FOR EVALUATION CRITERIA – UN Counterparts

					Total average
Level of involvement/ practical linkage with work	4.5	3.5	5.0	4.5	4.4
Relevance	5	5	5.0	3.5	4.65
Effectiveness/usefulness	4	N/A	N/A	3.6	3.8
Efficiency	4.5	N/A	N/A	4	4.25
Coherence	5	N/A	N/A	3.5	4.25
Sustainability	4	N/A	N/A	3	3.5
Cross-cutting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Environment 	2	N/A	N/A	2.0	2.0
Lessons Learned	5	N/A		4	

COMBINED SCORECARD FOR EVALUATION CRITERIA – Kazakhstan

****Involvement (4)** The most exciting events are those devoted to disclosing data collection and validation processes. Issue not addressed: further agreement on a mechanism for implementing the SITCIN methodology further. Relevance:

Relevance (4): The activities carried out under the project are entirely consistent with the priorities, goals, and objectives set out in the strategic and policy documents of the Government of Kazakhstan. Activities (policy dialogue sessions, capacity building activities, data collection and validation process) fully serve Kazakhstan's national priorities and needs, all relevant to the formation of an efficient and interconnected transport system. According to my observations. The needs of vulnerable groups did not receive any special consideration in the activities. The reason is the other focus of the project. The conditions and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups are not adequately addressed in the country's policies, business plans, or development strategies. I see the SITCIN methodology as a type of UNECE assistance in building a country's domestic capacities, above all human resources. It is an understandable and accessible tool to assess progress in implementing organizational, political, infrastructure, and technological measures.

Effectiveness (4.6): the National Consultant played a critical role and effectively established a constructive dialogue between the stakeholders. Challenge was using a technology platform not widespread in Kazakhstan to organize online events and problems with translation into Russian. Advice for the Managing team. There needs to be more coverage of the SITCIN methodology and the results of the pilot projects. It would be interesting to have additional training in transportation statistics generation, administrative data, collection, analysis, and use in operations on the second question.

Sustainability (3): factors and challenges: The main problem may be the further application of SITCIN methodology in conditions when the structure responsible at the national level for the project development is not determined. However, the continuation of the project may require a progress assessment and the identification of the impact of the processes taking place in the logical chains.

Coherence (4): the process of the dialogue with the authorized state bodies of Kazakhstan and industry associations could be discussed further and receive broader coverage.

Lessons learned (3): SITCIN indicators are simple, easy to understand, cover all modes of transportation and key processes, and each Department can use them. From my point of view, I am satisfied with the result of the project. Emerging progress in IT development makes it possible to create a unified digital platform SITCIN, an interactive map, etc. Anyone should be able to get information in a clear, accessible form.

Cross-cutting issues (2): There is no specific strategy or action plan to integrate the cross-cutting problems into transport connectivity. Some documents addressed strategic transport issues such as environmental protection and amendments to environmental legislation. The strategies for developing public transport in individual cities include issues of accessibility of services for persons with disabilities. Gender equality issues in the context of further development of the transport sector in Kazakhstan are not on the agenda.

**** (Involvement 4.33):** Require establishing a permanent Working Group to clarify, monitor, and adjust the monitoring results. The Institute is ready to create such Working Group for analysis, monitoring, research, preparation of appropriate action plans, and monitoring and control over their implementation in Kazakhstan's transport and communication complex.

Relevance: Relevant and alignment with the broader work and mandate of the UNECE. SITCIN and accompanying activities remain the most constructive mechanism for monitoring the balanced development of the transport and logistics complex of the Republic of Kazakhstan through the use of advanced technologies.

Effectiveness: (3.45) Challenges. Difficulties of translation into Russian, a unique platform for conference communication. I would like to have all materials in Russian, starting from the initial and ending with the final results. And in general, to make Russian one of the languages of communication on the UNECE website. Usefulness. The Institute will be able to use the skills and knowledge I have learned fully, I will be able to use the information I have received on webinars. Advice: it is possible to create a Working Group based on our Institute, or another competent body, for analysis, monitoring, research, preparation of appropriate action plans and implementation monitoring and control over their implementation in the transport and communication complex of Kazakhstan. It would be possible, in my opinion, to organize more constructive work in the country, to organize the interaction with teams from other countries.

Efficiency (4.5): Difficulties of translation into Russian, an unusual platform for conference communication. I would like to have all materials in Russian, starting from the initial and ending with the final results. And in general, to make Russian one of the languages of communication on the UNECE website

Coherence (4): The pandemic significantly interfered with objective evaluations, the project stretched over time, something changed the specifics.

****** (4) Involvement.** Additional information is needed. I became familiar with the methodology during meetings and dialogue sessions. The methodology is simple enough to understand. The process is convenient for monitoring and analysis. Issues not addressed: It may be possible to focus on the major freight and passenger transportation routes to observe progress in the context of their development. Identifying a permanent body to implement the SITCIN methodology and assess progress is needed.

Relevance (4.33) The SITCIN methodology generally reflects Kazakhstan's private sector priorities and needs. The activities and their overall accomplishments are aligned with national priorities. The needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups are addressed but not sufficiently addressed.

(5) Involvement National consultants have done a great deal of work on data collection and processing, as well as the creation of national indicators as part of this effort

******Relevance:** The methodology is useful for the development and management of inland transport systems. Effectiveness: to improve by Conducting and providing more regional seminars with the participation of transport and logistics associations of Central Asia. Sustainability: Facilitating factors would be : Sustainable economic situation in the region; Creating favorable conditions for PPP; Facilitating the development and extension of regional trade relations. Adjustment needed: SITCIN is a fairly balanced assessment methodology and does not require additions at this stage. Crosscutting issues: the Association is considering a plan to address the crosscutting problems in transportation safety and the environment. The project is relevant and valuable concerning disaster risk reduction, climate change and environmental protection.

******Effectiveness:** Expertise of Specialists in SCM, and logisticians were not sufficiently used. The system of indicators looks quite accessible, flexible and transparent. Issues to be addressed. Sustainability: Conditions and factor for SITCIN. Uninformed, unapplicable, and uninvolved all stakeholders. The diktat of transport workers continues, which does not coincide with the interests of society and the main payers for services, information and goods. Replicability: Yes, they can. There have all the prerequisites for that. Coherence: The beneficiaries are not included at all, and their opinion is of little or no interest to the developers.

Lessons learned and challenges: Transition costs must be transparent and accessible to all, speed data must be discussed and adjusted, conflicts between logisticians and carriers must be understandable and manageable within SCM, integration (vertical and horizontal) must get indicators in connection with optimizations, measures must be multilateral and comprehensive, SCOR and DCOR must be applied and evaluated, forms and types of infrastructure management (not only transportation, but also logistics: public, research, service, institutional, etc.) must be integrated into the SCM framework, and the logistics system must be designed and operated in an integrated way.

Crosscutting issues (2) : Insufficient representation of the interests of all groups-participants in the logistics process: customers, suppliers, logisticians, carriers, MOB partners, competitors.

***** **Level of involvem** (4)t: In collecting problematic issues of the freight forwarding business on the railway transport, organizing their discussion and solution with state and railway structures. In the processes of collecting challenging issues of the freight forwarding business on the railway transport, organizing their discussion and solution with state and railway structures. Non-addressed issues: Dynamics of work and the cost of services of car and locomotive parks on the railway transport, as well as the approach lines with the temporary indicators of the downtime of cars on them.

Relevance/Alignment with business priorities (3.25): To a sufficient extent. At the same time, in my opinion, the work of the permanent Working Group is required to clarify, monitor, adjust the results of the monitoring.

Effectiveness(4.66) they have achieved them all. Hopefully, the expected results will be long-lasting effects. Challenges: Improvements in the state regulatory and forecasting system are needed: Creation of an Information and Analytical Center to collect, summarize and analyze information on the current state and prospects of development of the freight forwarding market, prepare and distribute regular analytical reports to interested organizations and companies-Advise for more effectiveness: it is necessary to create the Information-analytical center for the collection, generalization and analysis of information on the current state and prospects of development of the forwarding market, preparation and distribution of regular analytical reports to interested organizations and companies. Annual monitoring by government agencies is required. Requires, in my opinion, the work of a permanent Working Group to clarify, monitor, adjust the results of monitoring.

Efficiency (3.5): Delay due to COVID. Improve the delivery of SITCIN activities: Requires, in my opinion, the work of a permanent Working Group to clarify, monitor, adjust the results of monitoring.

Lessons Learned and challenges: Analysis by SITSEN indicators made it possible to systematize the evaluation of transport and logistics companies. For the most part, satisfied. Requires, in my opinion, the work of a permanent Working Group to clarify, monitor, and adjust the results of the monitoring. Comparing the problems identified by other countries, it is possible to analyze the existing ones in Kazakhstan, to prepare measures to identify and eliminate them.

Crosscutting issues: Given that Kazakhstan is located in an area of earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters, it is possible to expand SITCIN indicators in this direction

*******Involvement**, understanding, usefulness in the private sector (2.5): -The Methodology seems Interesting, but it takes time to understand and put it into practice. Not likely applicable in its current format and scope.

Relevance (2.66). Effectiveness (3.33); Sustainability (4.0) Coherence (3); Crosscutting issues (1.5)

***** **Level of involvement (4.75)**. Data collection and verification process, policy dialogue sessions The methodology is quite clear, convenient for monitoring and analysis. Activities not addressed: Harmonized development and introduction of relevant amendments and additions to the regulatory and legal framework related to the organization of passenger and cargo transportation by inland waterway transport in Kazakhstan; Strengthening innovative, scientific and educational activities; Personnel training and motivation, team building, involvement of scientific organizations and consulting firms in the study, analysis and preparation of proposals for comprehensive solutions to accumulated problems;

Compliance with international requirements to educational institutions and training centers, which carry out training of personnel for water transport.

Relevance: (4.33) Sufficiently, reflects the priorities and needs of the private sector associations to operate in an efficient and interconnected transport system. To a sufficient degree the various activities are aligned with the Business sector's global, regional and national priorities/needs. Appropriate measures and plans need to be developed and their implementation monitored to address the need of the marginalized groups in society. Requires, in my opinion, the work of a permanent Working Group to clarify, monitor, adjust the results of monitoring.

Effectiveness (4): the SITCIN Methodology implementation process has achieved its planned objectives and relevant goals. Key challenges/obstacles: Improvement of the system of state regulation and forecasting is required:

- considering the possibility of restoring the river transport industry in the republic, developing and adopting a comprehensive plan (program) for the development of the inland waterways (including increasing the efficiency of the existing and renewal of the river fleet, shipbuilding and ship repair enterprises, infrastructure of ports and waterways, etc.);

- accession to existing international treaties in terms of technological and technical functioning of inland water transport, in particular to the conventions of the International Labor Organization;

- adoption of effective measures to increase the volume of vehicles (vessels) using alternative fuels through the provision of appropriate preferences;

- establishment of an Information and Analytical Center to collect, summarize and analyze information on the current state and prospects of development of the water transport market, prepare and disseminate regular analytical reports to interested organizations and companies. Efficiency: (4.0) No delay, Yes, - UNECE project management procedures for the project were clear, streamlined and flexible enough to meet the needs of private sector organizations like yours. Requires for improvement annual monitoring by state authorities. Requires, in my opinion, the work of a permanent Working Group to clarify, monitor, adjust the results of monitoring. Obstacles: lack of on-going monitoring.

Sustainability: (5) Requires, in my opinion, the work of a permanent Working Group to clarify, monitor, adjust the results of monitoring; regional replicability only with political will.

Coherence (4): concrete measures adopted by UNECE during the implementation process: Looked again at the activities of inland waterway transport from the outside, more structured, consistency.

Crosscutting issues (2.00): nothing on Gender. Expand indicators on environment. Given that Kazakhstan is located in an area of earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters, it is possible to expand SITCIN indicators in this direction.

COMBINED SCORECARD FOR EVALUATION CRITERIA – GEORGIA

Georgia						
						Total average 4.01
Level of involvement/ practical linkage with work	4.5	4	2.8	4.5	4.30	4.0
Relevance	4.5	5	3.0	3.5	5.0	3.50
Effectiveness/usefulness	4	5	3	4.0	5.0	4.0
Efficiency	5	5	4	4	4.5	4.0
Coherence	5	4	3.5	3.5	5.0	5.0
Sustainability	4	5	3	3	5.0	4.0
Cross-cutting						
• Gender	2		2.5	2.0	3.0	0
• Environment						
Lessons Learned				4		

*******Involvement** (4.5) The session helped participants identify a clear vision of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities and thrive in a fast-changing world.**Relevant and alignment:** sessions were relevant and fruitful for participant of countries, however, they would have been more

productive if had you focused on the practical side of the theories/materials that you shared. **Effectiveness:** In accordance with international practice and SITCIN Methodology, I effectively identify the weaknesses in the national legislation with regard to the Transportation industry and share experience with my colleagues. **Lessons learned:** In accordance with international practice and SITCIN Methodology, I effectively identify the weaknesses in the national legislation with regard to the Transportation industry and share experience with my colleagues. full inclusion of all marginalized and vulnerable groups in transport connectivity, has been raised in those sessions.

***** **Relevance** The SITCIN methodology implementation sessions accurately reflected national priorities and the country's needs for working in an efficient and interconnected transport system. I am satisfied with the sessions in which I participated, they were **effective** and achieved the planned goals. Sessions achieved their planned objectives and produced the expected results regarding the management of an efficient transport system in my country. SITCIN sessions were effective in promoting best practice sharing. **Efficiency (5):** I am satisfied with the overall effectiveness of the UNECE approach to addressing key transport issues through communication and policy dialogue with key national stakeholders. **Coherence:** The overall collaboration between the team carrying out the activities with the SITCIN methodology is very effective and well planned. **Cross-cutting issues and inclusion: (4)** The issue of involving marginalized and vulnerable groups was discussed during the session. Currently, I have no information about any concrete strategy or action plan. During the session, there was a specific focus on climate change, environmental protection and disaster risk reduction. This is a topical and necessary issue in the 2 transport connectivity system.

**** **Involvement (4)** My role as a representative of the Georgian Railway in this mission is to explain colleagues, who are taking part in SITCIN meeting, to find out the interoperability of Georgian Railway - Its technical means and normative bases in relation to other countries. For me It was very helpful to find out more about International Customs Systems, about Their interactions And about problems in process. I think it will be interesting to work on the exchange of information in electronic format, I mean as a railway information also custom information. **Relevance (3)** : During my participation in my opinion there was enough focus in direction on the needs of marginalized/vulnerable groups. **Effectiveness:** It is certainly possible to apply the received experience apply in practice step by step . **Efficiency** :After finishing Covid 19 , intense communication and In-depth discussion of problems will be useful activity for developing the project. **Coherence:** I think more involvement is needed. covid 19 was/is A kind of brake In the development of the whole world. But positive dynamics have already been observed. **Cross-cutting issues (3):** Is a priority human rights, gender equality, environmental protection in the transport connectivity system , also safety And development strategy and should be addressed more vigorously .

Level of involvement (5): Georgian International Road Carriers Association (GIRCA) was involved at each phases of the process (data collection and validation process, policy dialogue sessions and capacity-building events). And since our association unites about 300 transportation companies, which are included in the international transportation of goods, we organised the meeting at our office with those private sector companies were there were instructed how to fill the questionnaire and interesting discussion and interesting discussion had taken the place on the matters related to the issue. GIRCA President and our staff have a Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subject. The SITCIN Method illustrates a rigorous possible design to achieve the study purpose. Numbers of data collection points were appropriate in light of the research problem, clear research questions. **Relevance (3.5):** The activities and achievements guided by the national priorities of Georgia where Transport Connectivity development have a significant role. **SITCIN Added value:** achieved certain development objectives, such as promoting spatially balanced economic development, attract private investment and stimulate

economic activity. **Effectiveness (4):** Obstacles: cumbersome Data collection processes. **Coherence (3.5): adjustment** to find the better use of Zoom platforms for meetings and discussions. **Lessons Learned /Challenges (3.5):** Capacity building process was very valuable and important to strengthening our skills, abilities and resources that our organizations need to adapt in a fast-changing world. We, Georgian Road Carrier Association (GIRCA) establish Education Research Centre “Road Transport Academy“ to provide training and retraining of freight and passenger transport drivers. Training Centre is accredited from IRU Academy in programs for Digital and Analog Tachograph and Transport of Dangerous Goods ADR programme. We are satisfied with the SITCIN activities. there are a lot of topics which are interesting and informative for our sector the case study and etc. there are a lot of topics which are interesting and informative for our sector the case study and etc -----

******* Level of involvement:** AFG was involved in all three phases: data collection, national policy dialogue and capacity-building events---Usefulness (5) ----Our Association used very well this opportunity, especially National Policy Dialogue to express views of the Georgian Freight Forwarders and we exchanged and discussed ideas how to improve connectivity in the country with the relevant state authorities. **Relevance: (3.33). Added value:** The SITCIN activities are directly aimed to improve connectivity of inland transport not only in Georgia, but in the region as well. The SITCIN activities gave us chance to look at our challenges zoomed in details and we got interesting outcomes and findings, which might be considered by us (private sector), also by public entities as well. **Replicability:** Yes, it will be better, as land transport connectivity means connectivity of at least two countries and if we need to identify connectivity of Georgia we have to measure connectivity of all countries in the Caucasus region. **Key lessons:** By SITCIN activities we identified how productive is a collaboration between private and public sector, when we together worked on data collection and jointly discussed results of data analysis.

COMBINED SCORECARD FOR EVALUATION CRITERIA – SERBIA NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

							TOTAL OVERALL
Level of involvement/ practical linkage with work	5	5	4	4	2		
Relevance	4.35	4.30	3.33	4.33	3.0	4.0	4.0
Effectiveness/usefulness	3.75	4.50	3.75	4.25	3.5	3.75	3.5
Efficiency	5.0	4.50		4.5	3.0	4.0	3.0
Coherence	5.0	4.00	3.50	4.0	2.5	3.50	3.20
Sustainability	3.0	3.25	3.00	3.5	N/A	3.0	2,75
Cross-cutting	1.0	1.5			N/A	1.50	1.5
• Gender	2.00	2.5	2.00	1.0			
• Environment		2.00					
Lessons Learned							

*******Relevance (5): Involvement (usefulness):** The two-day workshop held on November 15 and 16, 2021, in which I participated as a representative of the Sector for railways and intermodal transport of Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, allowed me to gain a broader picture and understand the significance and value of the SITCIN project, to

understand the methodology for further scoring and calculation of defined indicators, but also to identify a number of relevant sources of information concerning the railway sector and intermodal transport. During the training at the workshop, I was introduced to the following important aspects: 1) Significance and goal of the SITCIN project, 2) Definitions of indicators and the way of their scoring and calculation, 3) Experiences and potential difficulties that may arise in the process of data collecting and scoring indicators in the future. **Effectiveness (3.75)** The National consultant have played a very important role in ensuring a coherent and positive climate and policy dialogue among stakeholders. There was no challenges or obstacles. The workshop was very interesting and that the knowledge and experience I gained at it will be useful in my work in the future. **Efficiency (5)**: Very satisfied with the implementation and content of the workshop I attended, as well as the efficiency of its organization. The national consultants who led the workshop ensured that the importance of this project was properly understood and provided and provided participants with good guidance to approach the process of collecting information and scoring indicators in the future. **Sustainability: (3)** the workshop is very interesting and that it would be interesting to hold it at the regional level or in other regions. **Coherence: (5)**. A framework has been created that will enable to meet the expected achievements of SITCIN. **Lessons Learned:** As a participant in the workshop, I am very pleased with the results of all activities. At the workshop, I learned that it is very important to collect and analyze various data concerning the transport sector, based on which it is later possible to properly assess the state and connectivity of the transport system of a country and draw appropriate conclusions and measures accordingly. I believe that an efficient and resilient transport system, which was faced with serious problems during the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, should be an imperative in the future, given that it is crucial in supplying both citizens and the economy. therefore, it is very important to enable good connectivity and cooperation between different countries in order to ensure efficient and resilient transport services to different types of crises. **Cross-cutting issues (1.5)**: full inclusion not completely addressed, that is, to the extent that it should be. the workshop was relevant in terms of combating climate change and disaster risk reduction, as well as environmental protection. I believe that these aspects about climate change and environmental protection could find a place in the future National Strategy for the Development of the Transport System, given their importance.

*******Level of involvement /usefulness (5):** The capacity building session was organized on November 15-16, 2021, in the premises of the Ministry. The two-day workshop encompassed an overview of indicators with detailed explanation of methodology for assessment and interpretation of indicators. The conducted workshop ensured good understanding of the indicators set and set grounds for its long-term use. During the capacity building training, MCTI employees got more familiar with:

- methodology used during the assessment
- main challenges related to data collection and indicator calculation
- interpretation of each indicator

Issues not addressed: The current set of indicators is broadly based and designed to cover all relevant dimensions of transport sector. At the same time, the users of SITCIN indicators, including Serbia, should closely monitor relevant changes in the transport sector, and suggest potential changes and updates, if and when necessary.

Relevance: (4.35) SITCIN Methodology serve and reflect the Government's national priorities and relevant the country's needs to operate in an efficient and interconnected transport system those sessions achieved their planned objectives and produced the expected results regarding the management of an effective transport connectivity system in the country. **Effectiveness (4.5)**: The capacity building program itself is very useful and provides effective framework for the future use. However, its full exercise as a self-assessment tool in the long run is necessary to properly exploit all the benefits of SITCIN indicators. The capacity building program itself was well organized and no major challenges have occurred. National consultants have carried out excellent work in knowledge sharing. This process can be further enhanced by sharing knowledge among pilot countries, when necessary. **Applicability of the sessions to the work place:** to certain extent, capacity building will make daily activities more effective. **Advice to improve SITCIN effectiveness:** Enhancing knowledge sharing among pilot countries and with UNECE specialists in these matters. **Efficiency (4.5)**: So far the developed program is very well designed and it suits Ministry's needs. **Sustainability: (4)** The capacity building program itself is well designed. UNECE can help in its future enforcement by closely working with countries and motivating them to continuously

use the developed indicators. Condition for enhancing sustainability: The active engagement of all relevant stakeholders and continuous implementation of SITCIN indicators should be in the focus in the upcoming period. **Replication into regional implementation.** Yes, and this can be a way of upgrading and strengthening the role of indicators. **Coherence: (3.5).** Policy dialogue framework is well set, however, its enforcement should be further enhanced. **Lessons Learned:** The main **added value** of the SITCIN project reflects in providing the basis for evidence-based decision making in one of the most important sectors for the economic growth. **Sustainability: Future activities** should be focuses on active and continuous enforcement of developed indicators. **Covid-19** pandemic has emphasized one more time the importance of transport sector. SITCIN indicators can be used to assess the vulnerabilities and gaps in the sector and show pathway for overcoming current challenges. **Cross-cutting issues (2):** Not so much, is done in the area of gender equality **(1.5)** should be further strengthened. To some extent, climate change and environmental protection **(2.50)** can be further strengthened. Maybe the prospective National Transport Strategy (NTS) will cover these areas related to climate change and environmental protection. MCTI is in charge of the development of NTS and it is envisaged to start with strategy design in the second quarter of 2022.

*******Level of involvement (4):** Providing new information how to measure and assess the country's international connectivity—**Relevance (3.33).Effectiveness(3.75)** : The key challenge is to consider the number of pillars and indicators.. Efficiency: (4.0) Replicability: -Yes,Because the capacity-building sessions offered by UNECE in the context of SITCIN provide an opportunity for countries to report on the progress they are making in achieving the goals of sustainable development. **Coherence (3.50).** **Lessons Learned:** Tool that systematically, in one place, gives an overview of all the most important elements of the transport system and transport connectivity of one country and their assessment in accordance with the legal instruments of the United Nations.**To improve activities:** When scoring indicators, in some cases, it would be useful to give a larger range for giving points from 1 to 10, eg 2,3,4,5 or in some cases in decimal numbers. **Sustainability (3): Replicability:** Because the capacity-building sessions offered by UNECE in the context of SITCIN provide an opportunity for countries to report on the progress they are making in achieving the goals of sustainable development **Cross-cutting issues(2.0):** Yes there was a special focus on climate change in the form of Development of technical adaptation measures in road traffic and Models used to predict weather risks for transport infrastructure-

*******Level of involvement/usefulness** : I was involved on behalf of the Sector for Railways and Intermodal Transport in the SITCIN project. My involvement was related to data collection for the part related to railway and intermodal transport as well as to the review of the National Connectivity Report. The SITCIN project provided me with an excellent outlook of the Serbian inland transport market in all aspects as well as the position of the road, rail, inland waterways on it together with the situation of intermodal transport which certainly gave me added value and new knowledge. In a nutshell, the indicator framework is very well created so that most landlocked can adopt and implement it. Although each country has its own specifics, SITCIN experts had no problem defining values and measuring all indicators. Accordingly, I think that Serbia will not have problems in implementation and will easily be able to continue to monitor this SITCIN indicators and thus monitor the situation on the transport market. **Issues not addressed:** Dimension Safety and Security covered only road and IWW mode of transport. I thing that should also cover the railway mode, bearing in mind that there are problems in this area that should be monitored (rail accidents at rail level crossing, rail accidents during rail transport etc.) within SITCIN framework.

Relevance (4.33): the SITCIN Project provides an excellent outlook of the Serbian inland transport market in all aspects as well as the position of the road, rail, inland waterways on it together with the situation of intermodal transport. It provides a good basis for further improvement of transport because it identifies shortcomings, gaps, and needs in the transport and logistics chains. Because only what is measured and monitored over time can be

improved. Activities are aligned to a great extent with global and regional needs. Project is not relevant for marginalized and target groups. **Replicability:** would like to see the extension of the SITCIN project to all countries in the region, with extension of indicators towards measuring the performance of maritime ports and short sea shipping. This will provide a joint platform in South East Europe for monitoring the transport situation which can result in creating tailor-made transport policies at the regional level in order to ensure better connectivity, remove technical and administrative bottlenecks and ensure efficient and seamless rail transport in the region and beyond. The processes were broadly inclusive and included all relevant stakeholders and their representatives.. **Added value of UNECE's efforts.** The added value is reflected in the fact that a lot of work has been done to describe the state of the inland transport sector in one place and assess connectivity with the development of a database in which all data for all analyzed countries are integrated, which will enable further project development. Also, the trainings held were strengthened, which strengthened the capacities in the state administration for further monitoring of the SITCIN framework. **Effectiveness(4.25):** Key achievement is providing the tool that enable Serbia to measure degree of its connectivity both intermodal and within the modes of inland transport together with targeted national capacity building by delivering the methodology of data collection, analysis and reporting to officials who will be responsible for SITCIN in future. **Key challenges/obstacles:** The challenge was to reach to all planned participants in a relatively short period, having in mind the large number of parties that are involved in the transport sector both Government and business. There was a need to attract attention to the Project and to give very good explanation of the benefits of such project. Both Government bodies and businesses are overwhelmed with day-to-day activities, that it took more effort to bring them along in this Project and to relocate some of their time to this purpose.**Sharing of best practices:** Project has done just that, what it was supposed to, sharing the experience of other members of the Project as well as UN's huge experience. There was an opportunity to have an insight and understand how, in the sense of the Project, different countries function and what is their way of thinking concerning some specific fields, which was of special importance for the Government bodies. **Advice for Improvement:** The approaches were effective but there is room for improvement. Even though this Project has an aim to create a tool to help create good transport policy by assessing current state it should be more focused on approaching the end-user i.e. "little person" in the field, because it is the source of real state of overall system (bottom-up approach).

Efficiency (5): Having in mind that it is a pilot Project it meets its expectations within the given framework and resources. **timeframe established for the accomplishment:** The original timeframe was at the beginning a bit optimistic when it came to engaging with the stakeholders, because of their nature. On one side the Government is robust and inert it needs time to consolidate and on the other business does not gladly allocate time for something it does not see as its main activity. There were some delays at the end of the Project but it was due to world pandemic. **Factors /barriers:** The obstacles to the implementation of the project were the almost complete change of higher administration in the Ministry of Transport, which stopped and/or slowed down this and other projects and the Covid19 pandemic. Also, The quantity and quality of data received during measuring indicators, required additional efforts in terms of bilateral meetings and interviews bearing in mind that data were sometimes sparse and scattered misrepresentations or omissions, or not available. Yes, all procedures implemented was very effective.

Sustainability (4): I believe that Serbia will continue with the implementation of this project and its further development, bearing in mind that it provides insight into the transport industry that can serve the development of tailor-made transport policies to remove gaps and/or solve problems. **Lessons learned from COVID 19.** It shown that you must have contingency and backup plan, especially for the transport sector, which is sensitive to disturbances and reacts to them very quickly. The system was not ready for such a dramatic disruption, but it was

contained due to huge effort. **Coherence (3.50):** The project design is logically structured and the planned activities are mostly implemented so that the main objectives are met. I believe that all project outputs are in line with the main objectives of the project. **Adjustment:** some adjustments to the approach to stakeholders but the COVID-19 situation created new challenges which were not envisaged at the beginning of the Project, and they had an impact. Luckily the Project was in its later stage when the COVID-19 situation arose, so it did not affect its main goal, but it had bad effect to its conclusion and end by downgrading (moving the focus away of) its achievements.

Lessons Learned: The most promising activity within this project is certainly creating a framework of indicators, their evaluation, defining data sources that are systematized in one place and an excellent National Connectivity Report in which a comprehensive analysis of previous findings was performed. The main lesson I would like to highlight is the needs assessment analysis made within the capacity building report, which clearly identifies areas where Serbia needs to take certain actions to improve the situation in them and thus increase its overall connectivity in the future. **Lessons from COVID:** It for sure the possibility of efficient remote work, which was used during the project itself. **Advice for improvement:** like to see the extension of the SITCIN project to all surrounding countries, including the indicators that will describe performance of maritime ports and short sea shipping. This will provide a joint platform for monitoring the transport situation which can result in creating tailor-made transport policies at the regional level in order to ensure better connectivity, remove technical and administrative bottlenecks and ensure efficient and seamless rail transport in the region and beyond. **Cross-Cutting issues (0):** No proposal on either topics.

*******Level of involvement:** I participated in a Workshop, within the project, related to the technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of vehicles. So, I have obtained more knowledge and shared best experience in topics related to the Workshop. I have not been involved in the implementation of the entire project other than participation in the mentioned Workshop. I am not familiar with the SITCIN Methodology.

Relevance (3.00)The workshop conducted under the Project is very consistent with global and regional needs particularly the field of road safety. That all objectives of the activities can be replicated in the Western Balkans region. **Inclusiveness:** Every discussion could be very useful for all participants. **Added value** of UNECE`s efforts: Various activities conducted by UNECE in the transport sector provide safe, reliable and sustainable transport system.

Effectiveness (3.5): key challenges/obstacles: acceptance and implementation of the objectives especially if they bring new assignments. **Sharing of best practices:** The sharing of best practices is one of the better methods to explain and learn something. **Efficiency (3.0):** N/A. **Barriers/factors:** Lack of administrative capacities might be a barrier.

COMBINED SCORECARD for LEBANON

Level of involvement/ practical linkage with work	4	3	3.75
Relevance	3.75	3.75	3.75
Effectiveness/usefulness	2.50	3	2.75
Efficiency	4	3	3.50
Coherence	3	4	3.50
Sustainability	4	4	4.0
Cross-cutting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Environment 	2	2.0	2.0
Lessons Learned			

******Involvement (4)** National policy dialogue and coordination with international and regional organizations, facilitations of data collection and discussions with related parties about main recommendations- Easy to use : The customs services are highly computerised and the level of cooperation with the neighbouring countries is acceptable, however we faced some difficulties in relation with the regional tension and financial resources. Other event not addressed : enhance the implementation of E-procedures.

Relevance (3.75): Very relevant, as it will be an opportunity to develop regional partnership and will facilitate the implementation of an integrated system. Added value has been to enhance partnership and collaboration with related countries. **Effectiveness (2.50)**: Lebanon administration is now more familiar with the project and its components. In terms of obstacles and challenges : the current recession and financial crisis will impact the modernisation program and projects implementation. Without a recovery plan the project will not be fully efficient in the upcoming period. **Efficiency (3.50)**: Overall, efficient with some delay due to previous lockdown restrictions. In terms of barriers : Capacity building and more HR. **Sustainability (4)**: Stakeholders' engagement could continue but this will need also continues activities and follow-up. The current financial crisis and the lack of facilities / equipment and resources at the border points. **Coherence (3)** : expectation from the UNECE : --To encourage and to support the capacity building programs. **Lessons learned** : The diagnosis of the current situation was very important. It was a learning exercise highly beneficial. The assessment of the current situation and the SWOT Analysis were the most promising activities.

*******Level of involvement (3)** : Contribution in the definition of the Organisation of Border Points control methods and installation of E-procedures. In the case of Lebanon, moderately easy, with some difficulties (mostly due to financial reasons The customs services are highly computerised and the level of cooperation with the neighbouring countries is acceptable however we faced some difficulties in relation with the regional tension. Other areas for improvement : enhance the implementation of E-procedures. **Relevance (3.75)** : very relevant, as it will be an opportunity to develop regional partnership and will facilitate the implementation of an integrated system. Very relevant, since Lebanon needs more developed and efficient transport systems at its borders with its neighboring countries. The issues addressed within the project activities were directly linked to the regional logistic chain, the current obstacles at barriers levels expose the land transport sector and produce negative impact on national economy. UNECE added value : By enhancing partnership with related countries. By shedding light on its necessity to be implemented and involving the concerned parties in the discussion on its present situation and the necessary steps for its improvement. The need of the most vulnerable groups : Relevant in terms of addressing the present difficulties and weaknesses and providing the necessary solutions. **Effectiveness (3.0)**: Will possibly be more effective in the coming period, and less effective now due to the ongoing health crisis (COVID) and national economic crisis. COVID-19 and the economic crisis were the two main challenges; also the coordination between services / administrations / authorities at national and regional levels. Several weaknesses at administrative level are to be taken into consideration, there is a lack of facilities in trade and land transport sector with particular impact at border points. **Efficiency (3)**: the project did not achieved all its objectives because of delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic that caused the shutting down of borders / public and private institutions / and also put travel restrictions. **Sustainability (4)**: Stakeholders's engagement is expected to remain strong at the end of the project. The political tension in the area might undermine the project's outcomes, stakeholders' transparency and engagement might enhance the project's outcomes. **Coherence (4)**-creation of enabling environment : -A regional coordination could benefit a better engagement. **Lessons learned** : the dialogue between stakeholders and operators was a very important tool, to be maintained in the future. Better regional coordination and project integration are needed-**Cross-Cutting issues (2)**. The project has been successfully inclusive of all genders and other members of the society. There was not much focus on the

environmental effects, since the suggested solutions don't have a major direct effect on the environment (they are sustainable solutions to reduce waiting time and thus reduce air pollution)-

COMBINED SCORECARD FOR EVALUATION CRITERIA – PALESTINE

				Total
Level of involvement/ practical linkage with work	3.5	4	2.5	3.3
Relevance	2.5	4.5	3.0	3.3
Effectiveness/usefulness	3.6	4	2.66	3.5
Efficiency	3.5	5	3.5	4
Coherence	4	4	3.0	3.6
Sustainability	3	5	4	4
Cross-cutting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Environment 	3	4	3.5	3.5
Lessons Learned	4	2	4	3.3

*******Level of involvement:** (4) Data collection, national policy dialogue, coordination with international and regional organization. Other events, Training the staff who will implement the SITCIN Methodology in their country. **Relevance (4) Added value:** with the training, a national team was formed to follow up on the results in the report, and work to raise and enhance the rate of indicators in the future, in addition to preparing annual reports in the coming years. **Effectiveness (4):** Challenges: There is only land transportation in Palestine, and there are no waterways, in addition to the occupation and its geographical divisions. The occupation is the first and main obstacle to any potential development in Palestine. Despite the challenges of the occupation, it is necessary to implement further development projects aimed at developing the transport sector, sustainable transport connectivity, and implementation of transport-related SDGs. **Efficiency (5):** barriers and alternative: improve Coordinating between all relevant parties in obtaining information and dividing roles between them.- -Further of coordination between all relevant parties through the national team. **Sustainability (5)** condition and factors to increase sustainability: Following-up by th UNECE’s Sustainable Transport Division for the beneficiary countries in preparing their annual reports, and the measures taken to raise and improve the indicators, as well as coordination through the UNECE’s Sustainable Transport Division among all the beneficiary countries to exchange experiences. Initiatives because of SITCIN: Policy has been developed by forming a national team to follow up the results involved in the report, and work to raise and enhance the rate of indicators in the future, in addition to preparing annual reports in the coming years. **Coherence (4):** adjustent because of COVID and lessons learned: Forming national team from all relevant parties and in cooperation with stakeholders; Found suitable alternatives for remote communication; Benefited from global experiences in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. **Cross-cutting issues (4):** Climate change- The development and improvement of the transport sector will contribute directly and mainly to climate change, environmental protection, and disaster reduction. Alternatives to address climate change: Continuing to develop the transportation sector and its various modes in accordance

with the best international standards and practices, in addition to using modern technology in transportation and benefiting as much as possible from the uses of intelligent transportation.

******Level of involvement (3.5)** we were involvement in capacity building for traffic police , data collection. Any other events: Some event to study other country's situation and share best practices and experiences. Relevance (4.5):

Annex 6a: Sample of the customized questionnaires



Questions.tionnaire Questions.tionnaire
UN Counterparts.FI Private sector organ



National



Government
Oral Su officials stakeholder

Annex 7: Guidelines for stronger gender and human rights sensitive programming lens in the SITCIN implementation process

Overview

The following Guidelines propose a step-by-step planning approach to facilitate more gender and human rights-sensitive approaches in future subprogramme programming within similar projects and activities as the SITCIN Project. The target audience for these Guidelines is mainly national stakeholders, UNECE officials and other UN entities. Overall, the Guidelines, an incremental approach, provide the user with a concrete plan to systematically and gradually integrate gender priorities into scale-up initiatives like those in the SITCIN project. These Guidelines derive from similar Guidelines and Gender Policies prepared by other selected UN organizations²⁴.

The general assumption that a programming process is gender sensitive when and if it allows the systematic integration of the gender dimension into every step of a project's implementation forms the basis of this Guideline.

In every country, socio-cultural norms and beliefs shape expectations about women's and men's appropriate roles and responsibilities. Moreover, those social norms often influence the division of labour in the workplace, household, value chains, and labour market. Simply put, gender sensitivity is behaviour that avoids discrimination by understanding and accepting the multitude of differences between men and women. Moreover, it is a way of thinking that fosters respect and compassion for others, regardless of these differences. Through a series of consequential steps, this Guideline helps the user identify gender inequalities in a given cultural context, assess their implications for program outcomes, and formulate strategies and performance indicators for addressing them.

I. A scale-up road map

The following sections guide the reader through the various conducive factors, steps and levels necessary for effective gender-sensitive programming. First, it provides a detailed situation analysis of various conducive factors responsible for successful gender sensitive programming. In particular, the Guidelines resume UNECE Gender Policy and commitments over the past years, followed by a highlight of potential questions for assessing a country's national policy, its institutional environment, and its overall readiness for gender sensitive programming. Additionally, it identifies and maps key Gender-Based Constraints (GBCs) or barriers to successfully implement gender sensitive programming in the case of SITCIN's future activities. Finally, it proposes strategies to overcome gender-related obstacles accompanied by indicators to monitor both the scale-up process and the gender strategies incorporated into it.

²⁴ World Bank Group Gender Strategy Mid-Term Review (2020)

CIDA's Policy on Gender Equality

UNICEF's Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF (2010)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Developing gender-sensitive value chains: Guidelines for Practitioners (2018)

II. Situational analysis

Firstly, assessing the broader context from a gender perspective helps understand the cultural environment in which key GBCs or barriers become institutionalized in a specific sector of interventions. Thus, integrating a gendered perspective in the programming process requires a situational analysis related to gender position in a particular sector of interventions (e.g., in the case of SITCIN, a gender perspective in the various modes of transport connectivity, resources management, and gender roles in the transport-related sector). The situational analysis starts with how the UNECE approaches gender-related issues in its institutional and operating environment.

Gender Equality and Human Rights Protection are part of the UNECE's broader mandate contributing to enhancing the effectiveness of the UN through the regional implementation of outcomes of global United Nations Conferences and Summits. In this regard, the UNECE recognizes that gender equality is crucial in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and further progressing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Therefore, it complies precisely with SDG 5 on gender equality by mainstreaming gender equality in all its activities. In addition, the [UNECE Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#) provides a practical guide for the entire organization to achieve and maintain gender equality and women's empowerment in all its work areas and the equal representation of women in its staff. The Policy and its accompanying Gender Action Plan have been fully aligned with the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women ([UN-SWAP](#)).²⁵

The UNECE also sets out norms, standards, and conventions to facilitate international cooperation within and outside the regions. For example, ""Human Rights at International Borders: A Trainer's Guide" has been published on UNECE's website. This capacity-building resource was developed collaboratively by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). It provides guidance on how human rights obligations apply in the context of international borders. It also shows how border governance and the work of border officials is about ensuring the well-being of migrants and communities by upholding human rights and protecting the rule of law. However, across the UNECE regions, significant gender gaps in women's economic empowerment remain, representing a tremendous financial loss for society.

In the case of the SITCIN Project, the UNECE's project document recognized the need to have a gender balance among the workshop participants, and the Evaluation report confirmed such a balance among the participating stakeholders²⁶. However, as required, participating national bodies did not specifically indicate the level of women's participation in decision-making in inland transport connectivity. At the same time, the evaluation of the SITCIN Project implementation, based on stakeholders' responses, revealed poor performance results related to the integration of gender in implementing the SITCIN project (including the three activities) in the seven pilot countries.

²⁵ <https://unece.org/gender-mainstreaming>
https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/ECE_INF_2021_2_ECE%20Policy%20on%20GEEW_1.pdf

²⁶ Project document Template. Page 17.

Thus, gender inequality is a systemic issue requiring structural changes. Accordingly, the Evaluation recommended a complete overhaul of the approach to better address gender equality in the present and future projects. Among others, the Evaluation recommended that:

"Gender should be considered a cross-cutting issue and addressed in every phase of the SITCIN Project, from the design phase to full integration." Because the SITCIN project is demand-driven, UNECE funding should be conditional on the beneficiary's commitment to follow specific guidelines facilitating gender mainstreaming. This task should include assessing how gender will be addressed and secured in the SITCIN activities afterward. If a beneficiary country needs assistance, the UNECE could assign one of its Gender Specialists to provide adequate guidance.

The proposed approach to implementing a more gender-sensitive perspective when planning future SITCIN projects should include investigative work by both UNECE and potential beneficiary countries. Thus, it entails *an assessment of a country's policy and the institutional environment* from a gender perspective of countries requesting UNECE assistance. The approach also calls for *identifying factors influencing women's and men's experiences*

In other words, it is essential to understand how biases, perceptions, and behaviours can undermine women's ability to fully contribute on an equal footing as men in a specific sector and take conscious action to mitigate the adverse effects of those unconscious gendered biases. However, determining the exact nature of potential modifications to those biases or behaviours requires data, specifically data disaggregated gender and best practices. A road map with key phases and activities could be scaled-up and accompanied by a few indicators to measure a demand-driven country's progress on gender and human rights issues. The assessment of a country's policy on gender may also be measured by its alignment with international commitments to Gender Equality and Human Rights.

For example, a brief analysis of the previous pilot countries' policy alignment with international commitments to gender equality indicates that only Jordan has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. That analysis may help explain the little consideration given to gender-related issues in the SITCIN activities.

To conclude, integrating a gender perspective in the programming process requires a gender analysis related to the intervention sector (e.g. a gender perspective in SITCIN; gender roles in climate change and biodiversity conservation), identification of bottlenecks, strategies to remove these bottlenecks, and indicators to measure progress.

Additionally, a rapid assessment of the national policy landscape is also essential to identify institutions and stakeholders working on gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level (e.g. ministries of women's affairs, gender units in relevant ministries, civil society organizations active on gender equality and women's rights, etc.). These actors can play an essential role in providing and validating information given their knowledge and experience with prevailing gender-based constraints (GBCs) at the local and national levels.

Therefore, countries might consider consulting and collaborating with these actors at different steps during the implementation process. They can also be partners for policy-related interventions, such as advocacy for more systematic integration of gender equality dimensions into a new policy or strategy and institutional capacity development to sensitize decision-makers on the implications of gender inequalities in their technical work. The gender analysis includes answering several questions. Please see the box below.

Tools for Assessing country's readiness for implementing Gender-sensitive programming

<p>Questions to measure a country's commitment to Gender Equality and Human Rights</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Is the national policy framework alignment with international commitments to gender equality?2. What is the country's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mainly to SDG 5 on gender equality?3. Has the country endorsed a gender policy or strategy? What are its main priorities or objectives? Are specific groups of women (e.g. rural women, women-headed households) explicitly targeted?4. Does the policy or strategy refer to transport connectivity? How are gender concerns reflected in national policies or strategies related to the various modes of transport?5. Are specific measures to promote women's empowerment and equal opportunities incorporated in the policies' implementation plans? »6. Is there a ministry responsible for promoting gender equality or women's empowerment?7. Are there institutional mechanisms to support the integration of gender equality concerns in national policy and planning processes? (e.g. gender focal points or units within ministries)8. Do those institutions have enough visibility and resources (financial and human) to fulfil their mandate? Is there any mechanism to facilitate coordination and collaboration among actors responsible for gender equality and agricultural development?9. Is there a platform to facilitate dialogue with civil society organizations or producer organizations that are knowledgeable or active in women's rights and economic empowerment?

III. A few conducive factors for successful gender-sensitive programming

- **The participation of women in the planning process**

Women and men have different roles in society in general, and they may have different levels of knowledge, perspectives, interests, skills, and needs related to an issue subject to a development intervention. Therefore, it may be helpful to obtain the expertise of a women's organization working in the sector or at least the support of a gender specialist in the planning process.

- **Identification and mapping of gender barriers and bottlenecks to scale-up SITCIN implementation phases and key activities**

The results of the gender situational analysis should provide sufficient information to identify and map potential barriers and bottlenecks to gender-sensitive programming in SITCIN activities. Gender norms vary significantly across geographic areas or countries where SITCIN is implemented. Therefore, cultural and gender beliefs could be barriers to expanding SITCIN activities into some countries or geographic regions. In addition, institutions and legal frameworks tend to reflect and consolidate common perceptions about women's and men's appropriate roles and behaviours. Therefore, laws, organizational culture, and resistance to change in a bureaucracy may also voluntarily or inadvertently restrict gender equality from being institutionalized within a specific program. For example, it is well-known that the transport sector is dominantly male-represented and therefore may appear less sensitive to addressing gender-related issues.

- **Development of strategies to overcome the gender-related bottlenecks**

After identifying barriers and bottlenecks to gender equality, it may be possible to develop appropriate strategies to overcome those barriers and create an enabling environment for change. A strategy's effectiveness may depend on the scale-up phase; depending on the complexity of barriers, implementing some strategies may take longer to achieve the desired change than others. Overall, overcoming gender-related obstacles to gender equality is a long-term process, often requiring change in behaviours and attitudes.

Several strategies exist to overcome barriers. First, it is essential to understand how specific interventions (e.g. transport connectivity, climate change adaptation, disaster risk management) affect women and men and how these interventions are designed to solve inequity between men and women in a specific sector. In the case of the SITCIN Project, the strategy may involve more effective mechanisms to enhance diversity training, policy dialogue, and consultations among a broader spectrum of stakeholders; including civil society, rights holders or advocacy organizations that are knowledgeable or active in women's rights and economic empowerment, government, and business associations.

Engaging with advocacy groups and other rights-based groups can in the process, help gather locally relevant data while promoting community engagement and ownership of the various activities to be scaled up.

- **Appropriate gender indicators to monitor progress**

Finally, the last step requires developing the appropriate indicators to monitor the project implementation process and the gender strategies.

Developing gender-related indicators will help ensure the use of a gender lens in the SITCIN implementation process, specifically in key activities. All stakeholders should discuss these indicators to ensure they receive a broad consensus. As a result, they will help the UNECE and beneficiary countries assess progress toward gender equality outcomes and how particular activities may influence women and men differently.

Annex 8: List of individuals interviewed

UN Counterparts

1. Mr. Yarob Badr. ESCWA
2. Mr. Jorge Lupano (ECLAC)
3. Mrs. Sabrina Mansion (UNECE)
4. Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski (UNECE)

National Consultants (*Oral interviews)

5. Dr. Branislav Boskovic, Serbia
6. Dr. Mamuka Chikhladze, Georgia
7. Prof. Khair Jadaan, Jordan
8. Mr. Nebojsa Jevtic, Serbia
9. Mr. Eduard Kaplan, Kazakhstan
10. Ms. Mical Rodriguez Laconich, Paraguay

National Stakeholders (Government and business representatives)

(Georgia)

11. Mr Aleksandre Davitidze. Managing Director at CJ ICM Logistics Georgia /President of Association of Freight Forwarders of Georgia (AFG)
12. Mr. Nino Chkheridze. Secretary General, Georgian International Road Carriers Association (GIRCA),
13. Mr. Giorgi Katsitadze. Deputy Head of Freight Transportation Department
14. Mr. Koba Metreveli. Chief Specialist of the Land Transport Division. Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
15. Mr. Nikoloz Gvenetadze. First Deputy Director .Land Transport Agency, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD).
16. Mrs Irina Sigua, Land Transport Agency. Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MOESD)
17. Ketevan Takaishvili. Head of Transport Corridor and Logistics Development Division

(Kazakhstan)

18. Mrs. Zhainar Asilbekova,Expert. Department of Transport Policy and Infrastructure, Transport Logistics Development. Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development
19. Ms. Bekmagambetova Gulnara Muratovna. Executive Director, Scientific and Marketing Research, International cooperation.
20. Mr. Bulekbaev Berik. Association of Transport and Logistics Partnerships in Central Asia. Association of Carriers of Kyrgyzstan.
21. Ms. Adamova Raisa Kasymovna President Association of Shipowners and Entrepreneurs of the Maritime Industry.
22. Mr. Vasily Koval. Project Logistics, Center LLP FK TransAl.

23. Mrs. Adambaeva Mukhidjanovna, General Director of the Kazakhstan Association of Carriers and Operators of Wagons
24. Mrs. Elena Pavlovna, Senior researcher Scientific-Research Center "Certification, Transport and Technology" LLP
25. Mrs. Natalya Serbaev, Scientific Secretary, Scientific Research, International Cooperation
26. Mrs. Zhanetta Yergalieva, Chief Expert, Department of Transport Policy and Infrastructure, Transport Logistic. Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
27. Mr. Rafail Zaslavsky, Expert Consultant. Association of National Freight Forwarders of the Republic of Kazakhstan;

(Lebanon)

28. Mr. Khalil El-Khouty, Head of Unit. High Council of Customs
29. Dr. Ahmad Tamer, General Director of Land and Maritime Transport

(Palestine)

30. Mr. Yousef Darawshi, Focal Point. Ministry of Transport/D.G. of ITS
31. Mr. Wael Hijaei. Board Member, PSC
32. Mr. Raja AL Qadomi. Directorate of traffic police

(Paraguay)

33. Mr. Juan Segalés, Advisor Vice Ministry of Transport
34. Mr. Juan Carlos Muñoz Mena, Director. Shipowner's Association

(Serbia)

35. Mr Marko Cupara, Department for Road Transport, Roads and Road Safety, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure.
36. Mr Desimir Desnica, Department for Road Transport, Roads and Road Safety, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure
37. Ms Milica Dubljević, Secretary of Association. Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia – Association for Transport /
38. Ms Nevena Dučić, Department for international cooperation and EU integration, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure
39. Mr. Miroslav Prokic. Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure/Advisor in Department for Railways and Intermodal Transport.
40. Mrs. Ana Seničić, Department for Air and Dangerous Goods Transport, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure
41. Mrs. Anica Stojićević, Associate. Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of Republic of Serbia – Sector for Railways and Intermodal transport

UNECE Staff

42. Mrs. Fadiyah Achmadi. International Consultant
43. Mr. Kostas Alexopoulos, Chief Transport Facilitation and Economics Section

Annex 9: List of documents reviewed

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UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Accelerating the attainment of SDGs with a gender lens in the UNECE region (2021-20).