




MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Evaluation Title:	Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport-related SDGs in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries.		
Period of Review:	1 January 2018- 31 December 2021		
Date of Evaluation Report:	08/08/2022		
Approved by	Nicolas Dath-Baron Chief, a.i. Programme Management Unit	Date	Signature
		21/11/2022	
Cleared by:	Director of Division Yuwei Li	21/11/2022	
Prepared by:	Manager of the evaluation Roel Janssens	21/11/2022	

Recommendation 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.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- (a) Further promotion of the SITCIN.org user platform and eLearning course at relevant high-level meetings including at the eighty-fifth annual session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (February 2023), forthcoming SPECA Working Group meetings as well as at other inter-governmental platform meetings.
- (b) Deployment of the Russian and French language versions of the SITCIN.org user platform to enable broader use within and beyond the ECE region.

Responsibility: Sustainable Transport Division

Timeline: 30 June 2023

Recommendation 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.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- a) SITCIN to be added as a standing/ recurrent agenda item to future sessions of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), inviting countries that have used the SITCIN self-assessment process to share their experience with the Working Party.
- b) Findings of National Connectivity Reports of countries conducting the SITCIN self-assessment will be considered when designing and implementing technical assistance and capacity building activities designed and implemented by the Division (i.e. in the framework of the SPECA programme, of extrabudgetary (XB) projects etc.)

Responsibility: Sustainable Transport Division

Timeline: 31 December 2023

Recommendation 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.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

It should be noted however that as part of the project, and in response to the outbreak of the pandemic, a set of additional emergency preparedness indicators has been developed, enabling countries to measure the level of pandemic resilience of their transport system. Furthermore, a concept on International Contingency Management (ICM) for road, rail, or inland waterways has been prepared as well. Moreover, the topic of pandemic resilience and transport system preparedness continues to live on in the framework of WP.5. At its September 2022 session, WP.5 encouraged interested countries located on a specific transport corridor or segment thereof to participate in an ICM pilot project.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- (a) The Division will develop an additional application on the SITCIN.org user platform offering the possibility to interested Governments to perform an online self-assessment enabling them to understand their level of preparedness for possible future external contingency situations.
- (b) The Division, in cooperation with interested countries will run, in the framework of an ongoing extrabudgetary project, a pilot project regarding the development of a corridor specific International Contingency Management model to be completed by the end of 2023.

Responsibility: Sustainable Transport Division

Timeline: 31 December 2023

Recommendation 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.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

UNECE will work with WTO and UN-OHRLLS on developing a specific SITCIN application for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) allowing them to measure the performance of their transit and border crossing facilitation policies. Other tailored SITCIN applications could be developed as well, based on requests received by Governments or partner organizations.

UNECE will also inform other regional commissions and invite them to promote the use of SITCIN among their constituencies.

Responsibility: Sustainable Transport Division

Timeline: 30 June 2024

Recommendation 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.

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

The evaluation report does recognize however that climate change and broader environmental considerations have been duly integrated in the SITCIN methodology. Out of the full set, about 14 indicators have been developed to support Governments in evaluating policy measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, air pollutants and noise emissions, in doing so they consider modal split, alternative fuel share, average age of fleet etc.

Moreover, the Division has a longstanding track record of work in supporting countries to address climate change and environmental impacts resulting from the inland transport sector. Examples include the ongoing work of the Group of Experts on Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Inland Transport (WP.5/GE.3) and the sustainable transport policies For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS) model. The critical role of inland transport in accelerating climate change mitigation worldwide is also high on the Inland Transport Committee's agenda.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

Building on the above achievements and to make sure that environmental and climate change as well as human rights and gender equality considerations are consistently integrated in future projects, the Division with the support of PMU and in consultation with other regional commissions will issue a memorandum to request all new projects to incorporate the existing guidance materials such as the UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2021-2025) and the Gender Action Plan (2021-2022) as well as the UN Mainstreaming Guidance on Integrating the Environment and Climate Change in processes for United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (2021) and other relevant UN guidelines and recommendations. The memorandum will include a checklist/set of guidelines on how to integrate human rights, gender equality and climate change in projects, to be consulted by project managers while designing their future technical assistance/ capacity building projects.

Responsibility: Sustainable Transport Division

Timeline: 31 December 2023