



EIGHTH MEETING OF THE RAILWAY WORKING GROUP

22–24 May 2024
Baku, Azerbaijan

Venue: Radisson Hotel Baku

Background

Currently about 25,000 kilometers of main railway corridors connect the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) countries. However, the existing rail network and railway services do not necessarily match the changing trade patterns they are meant to serve. Railways have the potential to transform the region from being land-locked into being land-linked and to connect it better with its rapidly growing neighbors.

In light of the above, *Unlocking the Potential of Railways: A Railway Strategy for CAREC, 2017–2030* (the Strategy) has been developed to serve as a guiding document for the sound, long-term development of CAREC railways. CAREC member countries are now working to implement the Strategy, for which ADB mobilized a technical assistance (TA) project with the financial support of ADB TA funds. TA activities commenced in May 2019, focusing on transport modeling and rail sector assessments, followed by a series of additional activities, such as a traffic study for the rail corridor between the People’s Republic of China, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan and the provision advisory support for preparation of railway commercialization, reform and investment programs in Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.

In 2020–2021, work on TA activities was deferred due to the Covid-19 pandemic but resumed in 2022. At its 6th meeting on 17 and 18 October 2022 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the RWG agreed to add to the TA workplan pre-feasibility study assistance for assistance for (i) Uzbekistan–Turkmenbashi Block Trains and Ferry Services, and (ii) the Uzbekistan Northwestern International Freight Corridor. At its 7th meeting on 22 and 23 May 2023 in Tbilisi, Georgia, sessions focused on rail corridor development and added a rolling stock financing study to the TA workplan. At this 8th meeting, main findings of these studies will be presented. Furthermore, the program will include sessions on (i) rail-port connectivity and (ii) the use of modern IT-systems in railway organizations.

The main objectives of the eighth meeting of the RWG are to report on progress achieved in TA implementation, agree on next steps, and share knowledge and experience on railway commercialization, reform and investment.

Day 1 (22 May)

- 0830-0900 Registration
- 0900-09015 **Opening remarks**
Mr. Kelbuganov Nurzhan Amangeldievich, Deputy Chairman, Committee of Railway and Water Transport, Ministry of Transport, Kazakhstan
Mr. Arif Agayev, Advisor to the Chairman of “Azerbaijan Railways” CJSC
- 0915-0920 **Introduction to objectives and agenda of the RWG meeting**
Mr. Jurgen Sluijter, Senior Transport Specialist, ADB
- 0920-1000 **Session 1: Update on TA activities and work plan**
Progress with approved prefeasibility studies and knowledge support activities and update on the 2023 work plan.
Mr. Tyrrell Duncan, Railway Specialist (TA Team Leader)
- 1000-1030 Coffee break and group photo
- 1030-1200 **Session 2: Central Asian rail corridors: Priorities for intervention**
This interactive session highlights key requirements to build up sustainable rail corridors in Central Asia and aims to define priorities for investment and operational performance. The outcome of discussions will feed the TA workplan.
Mr. Tyrrell Duncan, Railway Specialist (TA Team Leader)
Mr. Udo Sauerbrey, Railway Sector Specialist (TA Core Team)
- 1200-1315 Lunch
- 1315-1500 **Sessin 3: Port-rail connectivity along the Caspian Sea; requirements and opportunities**
Based on a series of field visits and analyses of current rail/port transportation practices, this session will present an overview of current port-rail connectivity, including recent developments in various ports along the Caspian. The session will highlight the requirements increase intermodal efficiency in ports.
Mr. Adrian Sammons, Ports and Shipping Specialist
- 1500-1530 Tea break
- 1530-1630 **Session 4: Rolling stock financing**
Presentation of the findings of a rolling stock financing study, exploring financing instruments that can be considered for railways in Central Asia.

Mrs. Jannat Salimova-Tekay, Business Development Partner, Unicase Law Firm, Kazakhstan

1630-1700 **Remarks from development partners**

1700-1715 **Wrap-up Day 1**

Mr. Jurgen Sluijter, Senior Transport Specialist, ADB

1830-2100 **Reception [venue TBC]**

Day 2 (23 May)

- 0830-0900 Registration
- 0900-0910 **Introduction to Day 2 of the RWG meeting**
Mr. Jurgen Sluijter, Senior Transport Specialist, ADB
- 0910-1010 **Session 5: Azerbaijan Railways' (ADY) recent experience in Middle Corridor rail and port operations**
Increasing volumes on the Middle Corridor required a close cooperation between Azerbaijan Railways and the Port of Alat to ensure an efficient throughput of containers. This session describes how the railways and port, together with other stakeholders such as customs established a working group to improve overall performance, addressing daily issues as well as more tactical matters.

Mr. Mammad Hamidov, Head of the Commercial Department "Azerbaijan Railways" CJSC
- 1010-1040 Coffee break
- 1040-1200 **Workshop 1: Modern accounting standards in railway organizations**
Accounting is not only bookkeeping for tax and financial reporting purposes, but it can also support the monitoring and process improvements within railways. The workshop presents opportunities how modern accounting systems can support various business processes railway organizations.

Mr. Udo Sauerbrey, Railway Sector Specialist (TA Core Team)
- 1200-1330 Lunch
- 1330-1430 **Workshop 2: Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems in railway organizations**
Railways are a capital-intensive industry and thus the utilization of assets is crucial for the economic success. ERP systems are essential to coordinate the use of assets in an optimized way. This workshop will provide guidance in the implementation and management use of these systems.

Mr. Udo Sauerbrey, Railway Sector Specialist (TA Core Team)
- 1430-1530 **Session 6: TA planning and identification of new TA activities**
Review of earmarked and newly proposed prefeasibility and knowledge projects for support through the TA.

Mr. Tyrrell Duncan, Consultant (TA Team Leader)

1530-1600	Coffee Break
1600-1615	Final remarks from development partners
1615-1655	Wrap-up (Summary of Proceedings) Mr. Jurgen Sluijter, Senior Transport Specialist, ADB
1655-1700	Closing remarks Mr. Kelbuganov Nurzhan Amangeldievich, Deputy Chairman, Committee of Railway and Water Transport, Ministry of Transport, Kazakhstan Mr. Emil Mammadov, Advisor to the Chairman, "Azerbaijan Railways" CJSC

Day 3 (24 May)

Visit to the Port of Alat

Indicative program

0900	Pick-up from hotel (transportation by bus)
1030	Arrival at Alat Port
1030-1115	Visit port facilities
1115-1200	Meeting Alat Port management
1200-1330	Return to hotel