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IN FOCUS

Heading towards successful completion

Now our project is entering its final phase, and we are glad to share our thoughts with you and tell you about our achievements

LOGMOS today

Two and a half years passed since the start of the LOGMOS project, and even though we still have half a year ahead to bring the project to the successful closeout, today we can sum up its key outputs and results. We will also look at the project from the perspective of recent developments in the logistics and trade sectors in the region.

To this end, should we try to answer a few questions that would help us better understand and measure the project merits and its benefits to beneficiaries and stakeholders.

So let us start a LOGMOS journey in TRACECA and ask: Was the project well-conceived and well-timed? Do its objectives respond to the needs and challenges of the regional transport and logistics settings? Are we on the right track to meet these objectives? Is LOGMOS relevant today? What is still to be done?

Transport and logistics sector plays a significant role in today's globalised economies and transformation processes taking place in the region. Globalisation, liberalisation of trade and emerging need for more competitive markets are those challenges TRACECA countries have encountered over the recent years. Logistics and multimodal transport are fundamental components of economic policies and determinant of national competitiveness. Thus, the answer to the first question is "Yes"; the LOGMOS project came just in time to help beneficiaries effectively tackle their supply chain challenges.

LOGMOS is aimed at the development of transport, logistics and exploiting full transit potential of the TRACECA corridor, and that means "Yes" to the second question. The LOGMOS concept and project objectives are in line with the recent national policies and EU neighborhood initiatives.

Now we come to the most challenging question that requires an unambiguous



answer. Is the project well on track to meet these objectives?

The project contributed to the implementation of the Motorways of the Sea (MoS) concept though existing and future pilot projects and their hinterland dimension, as well as the development and promotion of the concept of regional networks of Logistic Centers (ILC) and intermodal interfaces.

The project in close coordination with beneficiaries and stakeholders is completing a challenging job on the TRACECA LOGMOS Master-Plan. Furthermore, the project aided the countries in introducing legal and regulatory adjustments in order to make the LOGMOS concept work and boost improvement of the sector performance. Positive impact of this task can be observed in some countries already now.

Besides, the project has helped bring together public and private sector stakeholders to discuss the issues of common interest at the round table. A number of training and dissemination events were organised to ensure sustainability and transfer of ownership. Later in this issue we will inform the reader about the recent events already held and planned for the near future.

That said, it becomes obvious that the LOGMOS objectives partially are met, and partially will certainly be achieved in the end of the project. How did we approach our work? We followed four principles:

- LOGMOS project is an **interactive** platform enabling a dialogue and open to discussion
- We have always been **responsive** to stakeholders' problems, constructive critique and proposals. Stakeholder feedback has become a crucial part of our methodology
- We have been **proactive** and came up with fresh ideas but we also facilitated a **proactive engagement of stakeholders**
- Last but not least, we stick to the project goals and make every effort to efficiently **transfer ownership** to the beneficiaries and stakeholders.

What about the project impacts and its relevance today? Is the project concept still pertinent today more than two years after it was launched?

It goes without saying that countries' commitments to the development are crucial, but let us face it, there is a great deal of work still to be done.

The area of logistics and MoS is directly linked to trade facilitation issues and the abilities of the countries to participate in international trade. Indexes of openness, market transparency, logistics capabilities or trade facilitation published by international institutions, display that the logistics sector remains the subject of

development initiatives both at the national and regional level. In this context, the objectives and goals of LOGMOS are still very relevant, and the project impact will stretch far beyond its lifespan.

All this said, we continue our work on the TRACECA LOGMOS Master Plan, which will be made available to the beneficiaries within the next few months. We also are on the way of finalising all other project tasks, and will present final results to the stakeholders and the public in the next and last issue of our quarterly publication.

In closing, we are pleased to emphasise that the project has received a positive feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders and is perceived as a responsive EU technical assistance case.

We would also like to briefly present below the most recent activities carried out within the project.

Regional Working Group Meeting in Tbilisi

On 26-27 November this year, the LOGMOS project has organised a joint regional working group meeting on TRACECA block train pilot projects, Caspian ferry lines and logistics centres initiatives in Central Asia.

The purpose of this two-day event was to finalise conclusions and recommendations within the elaboration of the LOGMOS Master Plan.

Stakeholders from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, as well as the PS IGC TRACECA, ministries responsible for transport, customs authorities, railway companies, shipping lines and ports, authorities involved in investment promotion and the development of logistics platforms, private sector representatives were invited to this meeting.

For the TRACECA block train connections and maritime leg across the Caspian the following matters were in the focus of the working group: regular container block train operations between the Black and the Caspian Seas and further from/to Central Asia; status and future steps to be taken for the implementation of regular ferry operations (rail ferry and Ro-Ro) across the Caspian Sea; status of logistics platforms in Tbilisi and Caspian ports and future measures to be taken.

Concerning the logistics initiatives in Central Asia, the agenda focused on the role of logistics platforms, hub functions of multimodal logistics centres, extension of TRACECA port hinterland, and opening ways to market for the landlocked countries.

For both domains the LOGMOS project presented related findings and recommendations of the draft Master Plan.

The meeting was important for finalisation of the Master Plan in terms of coordination of the draft document with stakeholders and ensuring that their comments are taken into consideration.

“Silk Wind” appealed the public

The “Silk Wind” train is also on the right track. The project attracted a public opinion and is considered to be a gateway to the seamless and effective route from western China to Istanbul in only 12 days.

The participating countries, i.e. Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Turkey reiterated their commitment to the project and implementation of relevant infrastructural measures, as well as simplification of customs and border-crossing procedures, mitigation of environmental risks and unification of tariff policies in order to make the story come true.

Provided that these infrastructural and non-physical challenges are adequately and timely addressed by participating countries, the “Silk Wind” will not only foster the movements of goods and trade in the region, but also manifest a sustainable political and transport cooperation in the region.

The outlook is quite optimistic since the countries stick to their intentions to promote the project. The agreement between the involved countries is expected to be signed shortly following the MoU signed earlier in the end of last year.

Missions Central Asia

No need to say that Central Asia is a vital link of the TRACECA route, and the project is doing its best to more actively engage the Central Asian countries in the LOGMOS activities.

In doing so, the project team visited Tajikistan in November, and will visit Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in December 2013.

The missions include meetings with the national customs authorities and IFIs representations in the countries. Our experts will also visit the ILC sites and other relevant transport agencies.

LOGMOS Final Event

We clearly realise now that the project completion date is nearing, which is sad on the one hand as we enjoy the project, but we are happy on the other hand as very soon we will be able to present final results of our work.

However, we still have some work to do, and some time to continue this exciting trip across this interesting region.

Our final event is scheduled for the first quarter of the coming year. The exact dates will be fixed soon. At the final event, we will inform stakeholders on the project outputs in detail.

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