



Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans EuropeAid/13785/IH/SER/MULTI

Feasibility Study for border crossing facilitation and improvement of cross-border road transport in the Western Balkans

REGIONAL

Partners:

- South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) Secretariat – Transport Community Permanent Secretariat (TCPS)
- Western Balkans Regional Participants
- Ministries of Transport, Ministries of Interior, Ministries of Trade in region
- World Bank

Budget of Technical Assistance:

- Euro 435,000

EU contribution¹:

- As above (100%)

Technical Assistance provided by:

- CONNECTA (Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans)

Transport

Border crossing procedures have been identified as a significant barrier to trade and mobility in the the Western Balkans. Since the first *SEETO Report on Border crossing facilitation* published in 2012, there has been an intensive inter-institutional coordination at regional level between SEETO, CEFTA, RCC and the international donors (IFC/World Bank, EC) active in this wide and very stretched field. It covers many aspects of the border management including procedures, behaviour and systems. This resulted in a general improved understanding among the transport authorities that reducing the costs for transportation of goods and improving accessibility and mobility is not just a matter of building infrastructure.

The EU-Western Balkans summits provided a real opportunity to improve connectivity within the Western Balkan region as well as with the EU. At the summit in Vienna both infrastructure and soft investment priorities were agreed. One of the soft measures identified, is the cross-border facilitation, especially along the Core and Comprehensive SEETO Networks.

Consequently, one of the agreed measures listed in the *Connectivity reform measures management plan*, monitored by SEETO (until the end of 2018), relates to effective cross-border road transport including the *assessment of the opportunities for introducing one-stop shop on the core road network's border crossing points (BCPs)*.

The **specific objectives** of this assignment were:

- Preparation of a feasibility study for the implementation of **one-stop shop (OSS) controls** on the road border crossing points (BCP) and common crossing points (CCP) and definition of a road map and bilateral agreements for its implementation
- Preparation of a feasibility study for the implementation of an electronic Queuing Management System (**e-QMS**) on selected BCPs



BCP in the Western Balkan region

Results achieved by the TA:

- Site visits, scoping and needs assessment at 32 BCP pairs;
- Assessment of traffic, technical, technological, organisational, institutional and legal issues;
- Feasibility Study for both OSS and e-QMS including Multi-Criteria and Cost Benefit Analyses;
- Drafting template for OSS bilateral agreements;
- Proposals for institutional-legal restructuring for e-QMS;
- Roadmaps for OSS deployment.



BCP recommended layout for uninterrupted flow

¹ EU contribution concerns only Technical Assistance services for project development

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence. → where is Kosovo mentioned in the text?

Key recommendations - further actions:

- Need for ancillary facilities in most border crossings;
- Opportunities for “quick wins” comprising non-physical measures with minimal cost;
- Streamline processes to remove controls/activities not strictly related to border crossing;
- General legal framework in Western Balkans provides a basis for joint controls. For e-QMS some legal amendments would need to be introduced;
- Proceed with design, supply and procurement plan for priority BCPs/CCPs (quick wins);
- Proceed with pilot design and testing for e-QMS at corridor level (starting with corridor X).

Transport



Recommended BCPs and corridors for OSS and eQMS

Key conclusions:

Given the wide-ranging needs at each of the BCPs evaluated, alternative improvement measures were proposed and subsequently tested. These measures comprised physical improvements which involved the construction of new infrastructure, as well as softer policy changes and the introduction of information and communications technologies (ICT). Lastly, improvements in other cross-cutting areas as well as in legal and institutional issues were also identified and recommended to further enhance the benefits of these measures.

Based on technical, financial and economic analyses carried out by the team, 12 border crossing points were carried forward for further investigation as they have clear and supportive business cases and are therefore regarded as priority cases. This conclusion was reached irrespective of the assumed scenario for implementation of either OSS or e-QMS or both.

The planning, implementation and commissioning of the OSS and e-QMS system and ancillary facilities (e.g. waiting areas, ITS systems, etc.) require planning and coordination at different levels. Institutional-legal actions as well as engineering-technology actions should be closely inter-related and structured to adhere to these different levels. These matters were presented in the Road Map submitted.

In all likelihood, the required legal changes will take more time than the physical infrastructure and ITS components since the legal due processes and changes to the national legislation will require several iterations.

Benefits expected due to Technical Assistance:

- Enhancement of joint road border controls (OSS), both among police/customs and among respective countries' authorities;
- Use of best institutional-legal-technological practices;
- More efficient use of current border infrastructures;
- Travel time savings and improved information and communication services.

Impacts anticipated:

- Improved mobility for freight and passengers;
- Reduced bottlenecks at BCPs;
- Reduced waiting and clearance times;
- Pre-booking of borders control slots (eQMS);
- Reduction of transport costs.