

**THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY
11TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS
WORKING GROUP**

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 11th Meeting on March 15th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Governance of Transport Corridors in OIC Member States: Challenges, Cases, and Policy Lessons”. During the Meeting, TCWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to the governance of transport corridors. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report titled “Governance of Transport Corridors in OIC Member States: Challenges, Cases, and Policy Lessons” and the responses of the Member States to the policy questions sent by the COMCEC Coordination Office. The policy recommendations are as followings:

Policy Recommendation I: Developing/Improving an enabling legal, institutional and regulatory framework for ensuring effective coordination and cooperation among the relevant countries and for achieving reform-demanding objectives.

Rationale:

A strong legal and institutional framework, defining common objectives and plans is a pre-requisite for effective coordination among the countries and implementation of the objectives for the development of the corridor. Ambitious objectives without a sound legal and institutional framework make it difficult to achieve reform-demanding objectives. The legal framework is determined as creating binding or non-binding incentives to reach the identified common objectives. Once the consensus is reached between the different stakeholders on the objectives and management of the corridor, the process of creating a legal basis begins. Legal framework typically cover the overall strategic perspective of the corridor in various levels, institutional arrangements, working principles and financing issues. It can also covers sanctions in case of non-compliance, prioritisation systems or sustainability goals. The commitment and willingness by the members to reach a common objective is expressed through legal and institutional framework. Hence, national reforms and investments are more effective when considered from a regional perspective, ideally coordinated with neighbouring countries.

Policy Recommendation II: Establishing a dedicated corridor secretariat/coordination unit for facilitating corridor governance through ensuring permanent communication and coordination among the relevant countries.

Rationale:

The presence of a dedicated secretariat is critical for the effective corridor governance. The function of the secretariat is to maintain the dialogue among all relevant countries and stakeholders. In this respect, a corridor secretariat has a catalyst function towards improved corridor governance by preparing meetings, ensuring communication and coordination among the countries, transforming the objectives into action as well as fund raising for development of the corridor. Furthermore, a dedicated secretariat is also critical for formulating long-term strategies, analysing the current trends and practices, collecting of data and statistics as well as setting performance indicators and monitors their implementation.

Policy Recommendation III: Promoting the development of transport corridor governance in a holistic way, combining hard measures such as infrastructure and soft measures such as political support, stakeholder consultation and capacity building.

Rationale:

Effective corridor governance is a key factor towards successful development of transnational transport corridors. Corridor governance is a complex process involving various aspects such as legal and institutional matters, as well as multiple stakeholders, often from various countries. Furthermore, governance requires various hard and soft measures that are interrelated and need to be developed in a harmonized way. These measures are; infrastructure, legal and institutional framework, corridor objectives and political support, corridor performance monitoring and dissemination, corridor promotion and stakeholder consultation, and capacity building. Developing transport corridors serves to multiple objectives including facilitation of trade by providing access to markets, regional integration, improving growth prospects, enhancing cooperation and collaboration among countries and related public and private sector agencies.

Policy Recommendation IV: Seeking support of the related international organizations in carrying forward corridor governance, especially in the initial phase of corridor development.

Rationale:

Corridor governance depends on a range of factors, such as maturity of the corridor, political will and support, regional stability, the presence of an international organisation facilitating corridor governance, and funding availability. In this respect, international organisations play a decisive role not only in the establishment of a corridor but also in improving corridor governance. The knowledge, accumulation, resources and the role of international organisations as independent mediators are valuable for consensus building among the relevant countries, providing structure, as well as some initial funding in the beginning of the process. With the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor (ALC), the World Bank played a key role in initiating the corridor. Both for South-East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) and notably Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), the EU had a prominent role in bringing together the member states, negotiating the legal framework, commissioning studies, hosting training sessions and more. For the Eurasian Central Corridor, UNESCAP is playing a similar role by publishing strategic documents and performance studies to justify the establishment of governance institution on a corridor level. The initial efforts of international organisations are useful to convince the member states on the merits of joint corridor development.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group: In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.

COMCEC Project Funding: Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.