



(HYBRID MEETING)

235th/236th Sessions
25-29 April 2022

Brussels, 07 March 2022.

RAILWAY COOPERATION AND THE RAILWAY GUIDANCE

(Item III.e on the Agenda)

SUMMARY

Purpose of document

At the 233rd/234th Sessions, the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) endorsed the Railway Guidance, noting the harmonized railway transit dataset remained in draft form and requesting Members to continue work to finalize the dataset.

The PTC will be informed of intersessional progress on the railway dataset and future work on railway cooperation and will be invited to review the Railway Guidance incorporating the last Sessions' discussion before being sent to the Council in June 2022 for approval and subsequent publication.

Action required of the PTC

The PTC is invited to:

- provide comments on and, if appropriate, endorse the updated Railway Guidance appended to this document; and
- provide feedback on the way forward for future work on railway cooperation.

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I. Introduction

1. The Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) has held a series of discussions on Customs-Railway Cooperation since 2017, covering key issues such as transit declarations, Advance Electronic Data (AED), cargo inspection using modern technologies, and passenger controls. Considering the previous discussions, the WCO Secretariat launched the WCO Railway Project in 2019, with the support of the Customs Cooperation Fund of Korea (CCF Korea), to develop WCO tools focusing on railway transportation based on field studies and surveys, as well as through the conduct of necessary capacity building activities.
2. Based on the findings and analysis from the Railway Project, including the discussions held under other WCO working bodies, the WCO online survey in 2019, the field studies conducted in 2019 and the WCO Global Railway Workshop held in 2020, the Secretariat has developed the draft Railway Guidance.
3. At the 233rd/234th Sessions, the PTC endorsed the Railway Guidance, noting the harmonized railway transit dataset remained in draft form, considering the decision from the 61st Data Model Projects Team (DMPT), and requested Members to continue work to finalize the dataset.

II. Intersessional Development on Railway Cooperation

4. At its 62nd meeting in January 2022, the Secretariat informed the DMPT about the PTC's discussions on the Railway Guidance. Given that a sufficient amount of national rail datasets were not received to meaningfully develop a rail data set, the DMPT was unable to develop a WCO rail dataset for inclusion in the Railway Guidance at this time. A DMPT delegate noted that the DMPT should welcome Members to continue to submit their datasets to the Secretariat.
5. According to the Railway Project, in terms of capacity building activities, six regional railway workshops are to be conducted to enhance implementation of simplified and improved Customs procedures supported by modern Customs techniques after the Railway Guidance is adopted. The Secretariat is preparing the workshops in cooperation with Regional Offices for Capacity Building, starting with the Asia Pacific region in the second Quarter of 2022. It is anticipated that the additional five regional workshops will be completed by the third Quarter of 2023.

III. The Way Forward

6. The Railway Guidance, appended to this document, will be published with the approval of the Council in June 2022. The updates resulting from last Sessions discussions, including deletion of railway dataset for the time being, are incorporated in track changes. The PTC is invited to review and endorse the Railway Guidance before submitting it to the Council.
7. The DMPT will continue the work on developing a railway dataset, and PTC delegates are invited to support the work by sharing their national railway datasets with the Secretariat.
8. During the consecutive six regional railway workshops, the PTC is invited to participate actively by providing their national experiences on railway transportation.

9. Based on the results of work on a railway dataset and the regional capacity building workshops, the Railway Guidance will be updated periodically.

IV. Action required from the PTC

10. The PTC is invited to:
 - provide comments on and, if appropriate, endorse the updated Railway Guidance appended to this document; and
 - provide feedback on the way forward for future work on railway cooperation.

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