Encouraging Seamless Asia Based on the Dalian Initiatives

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Abstract: The strategic approach for formulating a seamless transport environment, which was recommended as the “Dalian Initiatives” at the EASTS Dalian Conference, consists of: 1) Developing Asian common transport policy, 2) Encouraging the leading role of local authorities to create transport corridors/ network, and 3) Establishing an Asian experts’ network for formulating, implementing and monitoring the common transport policy. This paper describes the present status and major issues of transport statistics in Asia, the strategy for promoting a seamless Asia, the outline of a proposed project to study common and standardized transport statistics, and the tentative expert’s network formulated as the EASTS IRG02 Bulletin Board to exchange opinions related to the project.

Key Words: Seamless Asia, Transport Statistics, Common Transport Policy, Cross-border Issues

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to rapid economic growth in Asian regions, the formulation of a production network in the East Asian region, which includes starting the promotion of economic integration and the formulation of an international transport network to allow for the seamless movement of people and goods, has become an urgent issue in East Asia.

Under these circumstances, at the Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies (EASTS) conference at Dalian in September 2007, a panel discussion was held on the theme of “Issues Related to International Transportation and Logistics”, and a strategic approach for formulating a seamless transport environment was recommended as the “Dalian Initiatives”. This consists of three major agendas:

Agenda 1: Developing Asian Common Transport Policy
Asian community should share a common goal and strategy in the area of transport policies (Asian common transport policy) for realizing more smooth and seamless movement of people and goods among Asian countries / regions to maintain the sustainable development. In view of this, EASTS experts will undertake and lay out an draft Asian common transport policy for deep consideration of Asian community.

Agenda 2: Encouraging the Leading Role of Local Authorities to Create Transport Corridors / Networks
Asian municipalities are expected to play a leading role under their own initiatives to create a transport corridors / networks in the sub-regional context based on the mutual cultural understanding, and social and economic exchange development over the years.
Agenda 3: Establishing an Asian Experts’ Network for formulating, Implementing and Monitoring the Common Transport Policy

For promoting early adoption and smooth implementation of the Asian common transport policy to be undertaken by the Asian governments concerned, an institutional arrangement are required to further step up close corporations and concerted actions of the EASTS experts.

Based on the recommendations of the “Dalian Initiatives”, volunteers of EASTS gathered to discuss possible actions to follow up the “Dalian Initiatives”, and “Workshops on Statistics of Asian Traffic and Transportation” were held. In this paper, the present status of the actions discussed to follow up the “Dalian Initiatives” based on the results of those meetings is reported.

2. PROMOTION OF A SEAMLESS ASIA AND PERSPECTIVE FOR COORDINATION IN EAST ASIA

2.1 Sharing Policies for Promoting Communications and Coordination in Asia

As economic coordination has progressed in Asian countries, frameworks for multinational cooperation, such as the Asian Highway, the Trans Asian Railway, and the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) development cooperation program, have been strengthened. As a result, cross-border issues, such as inharmonious structural standards for transport infrastructure and systems, and safety standards, need to be resolved in the near future.

In parallel with the progress of bilateral frameworks such as the EPA and FTA, as well as the multilateral frameworks such as the economic and social cohesion of Asia, there is a growing need to formulate various infrastructures for economic activity; the movement of people, goods, and information; production, and so forth. In order to secure sustainable development in the whole Asian region, priority should be placed on resolving cross-border issues.

Therefore, the “New National Land Sustainability Plan” (National Plan) proclaimed in Japan recommends that the transport infrastructures in each country should be developed according to a plan with mutual cooperation among East Asian countries. The Plan also recommends standardizing various transport technologies, such as the Integrated Transport System (ITS), etc., and creating a safe and efficient international inter-modal logistics environment by improving the use of transport equipment among each other, and utilizing electronic tags to promote the sharing of transport policies in Asian countries. It is also recommend to set up an intellectual platform for sharing the methodology of studying policies.

2.2 Suggestions for Achieving a Seamless Asia

In order to prepare a common transport policy in East Asia, the European Union (EU), where the seamless movement of people and goods has been mostly achieved as if one country, is a good reference.

In order to achieve the spatial integration of member countries in the EU, the Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) Program was set up. This program was driven forward mainly by a neutral research organization, the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON). ESPON was established to assist the preparation of policies related to the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and to organize specialists in the field of regional development research. ESPON provides comprehensive evaluation and monitoring
tools such as databases, indices, analyses of regional development effects, and geographic information systems (GIS).

The sole official statistical institution in Europe, the Statistical Office of the European Community (EUROSTAT), has been collecting and providing the statistical data and information that are necessary for the activities of ESPON. Since one of the functions of EUROSTAT is to collect major transport data from member countries of the EU as an obligation stated in the treaty and shares statistical data and information with the Statistical Department of the United Nations, EUROSTAT serves as an important organization in assisting the activities of ESPON.

Even though the process of economic integration is very different between Asia and the EU, a neutral research organization to assist the preparation of common transport policies and the EU system for sharing transport statistics with such an organization are of great relevance to Asia.

3. STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING A SEAMLESS ASIA

3.1 Identification of Issues related to Transport Statistical Data in Asia
One of the greatest motivating factors to encourage each government to share common transport policies in Asia is that doing so would be of benefit to economic activity and social unity in Asia. Therefore, it is important to inform Asian countries of the missing links in the transport network and the effects of resolving cross-border issues. It is also strategically important to collect reliable information, such as statistical data, to analyze them, and to provide information.

Also, these transport statistics are essential for the activities of transport specialists and important to encourage the coordination of transport policies for developing cross-border transport networks among countries, as shown by the example of ESPON in the EU.

Therefore, the first step in preparing an Asian common transport policy and creating seamless transport networks based on statistical data is to provide information and develop methodologies for analyses and evaluation.

In order to examine international transport statistics, to analyze the tools necessary for preparing and promoting the Asian common transport policy, and to encourage discussions among transport specialists, academic experts, and related government officials, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), Japan held “The Workshop on Statistics of Asian Traffic and Transportation” twice and the present status of transport statistics and future ways of improving transport statistics were discussed. The first workshop was undertaken by: i) the National and Regional Planning Bureau, MLIT, ii) a research group on the Strategy of International Transportation Network, Japan Society of Civil Engineers (JSCE), and iii) a research group on the Methodology of Research, Modeling and Evaluation of Global Logistics, JSCE on 10th and 11th March, 2008, and was attended by academic experts from Asian countries. The second workshop was undertaken by: i) the National and Regional Planning Bureau, MLIT, and ii) Kyoto University’s Global COE program (Global Center for Education and Research on Human Security Engineering for Asian Megacities) on 23rd October, 2008 and was attended by academic experts from Asian countries as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat.
As a result, it was clearly identified that there were many problems such as: 1) no systematic collection of transport statistics, 2) difficulty of access by the general public, 3) no uniformity of definitions and units of data, 4) no framework for cross-border traffic and inter-modal transport, etc. (see Table 1).

Also, the importance of standardizing and sharing transport statistics was recognized, and the importance of improving data for the whole of Asia through the cooperation of countries and related organizations in the near future was confirmed.

Table 1 Examples of Issues of Traffic and Transport Statistics in Asian Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Issues</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental issues</td>
<td>• Limitation of data acquaintance due to governmental policy not to disclose data and business secrets.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• No uniformity of data, such as definitions and units of measurement.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Private-sector provide too expensive data.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Some countries use own language for their statistics.</td>
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<td>• It is not clear who does maintain the data and who will pay for it.</td>
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<td>Issues on the data of port/shipping sector</td>
<td>• Lack of survey items, such as transshipment cargos, TEUs, empty containers, type of containers (20ft, 40ft, 45ft, high-cube, etc.).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Lack of uniformity and accuracy of data of port/shipping, such as names of commodities, methods for count, etc., because of no common guideline for the port/shipping statistics.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Private-sector provide too expensive data. Even though measures to use existing data and official statistics more effectively, there are lacks of effective usage of the data.</td>
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<td>Issues on the data of land transport sector</td>
<td>• Some countries never conduct the necessary statistical surveys due to lack of understanding on the importance of data collection, scarce incentive to conduct surveys, insufficient funds, etc. However, various types of data are needed for a comprehensive understanding of transport.</td>
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<td>• Some organizations collaborate with other organizations for collecting data and traffic projections. However, most of organizations try to collect and estimate data, but most of them are done independently.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• It is very important to maintain database. However it not easy to maintain database and there are cases difficult to catch-up rapidity of change situation.</td>
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<td>Issues on the data of air transport sector</td>
<td>• It is rarely found the complete O-D data of country to country. Statistics of full O-D information do not exist, except for the data in CRS.</td>
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<td>• It is almost impossible to have authorized airfare data.</td>
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<td>• There are no other uniform databases which cover worldwide airports.</td>
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<td>• Segment information, such as aviation revenue vs. non-aviation revenue, cost structure by operating segment, revenue (profit) by airport in an operator, and revenue (profit) by region in an operator, is not formalized.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Therefore, as a first step towards examining a common transport policy in Asia, a proposal regarding a comprehensive research project related to transport statistics has been prepared in order to standardize and share these transport statistics.

3.2 Proposal of Project to Study Common and Standardized Transport Statistics

3.2.1 Purpose of the Project
Various issues related to transport statistics in Asian countries, such as limited acquaintance with the data in some countries, no uniformity of definitions and units of data, etc., were identified, as described in 3.1.

Therefore, as a first step to prepare a common transport policy in Asia, the examination of a conversion method between data with no uniform definitions and units, and sharing information are urgently needed.

On the other hand, ASEAN countries are preparing for regional economic integration with a target year of 2015. Thus, it is important for countries without optimized transport statistics development to improve their transport-related statistics in the future. Hence, the preparation of guidelines and capacity building references for improvement activities are urgent needs.

Furthermore, the storing and arrangement of transport statistics, such as the unavailability of inter-modal transport data, in Asia are insufficient when compared with Europe and the U.S.A. Thus, it will be necessary to construct a transport statistics database in the future, so it is important to start on a conceptual design of such database.

To cope with these requirements, it is necessary to conduct research work at this stage. It is desirable that an organization carrying out this research work be an international organization, not from one particular country, because 1) for the successful execution of the research work, the cooperation of various countries and organizations will be necessary, 2) data collection, and the maintenance and disclosure of such data for each country is closely linked to government policy, and 3) a certain amount of resources is required for this kind of research work. Hence, the carrying out of research work regarding transport statistics was proposed to an international organization.

So, EASTS IRG02 proposed the project to Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the Regional Technical Assistance (RETA) in February 2009.

3.2.2 Contents of the Project
The contents of the project are as follows:

a) Grasp the Present Status of Transport Statistics and Identify Issues
- To review the transport statistics system, budget, present status of transport statistics (including definitions of data, unit, collection process, etc.), process of disclosure, status of utilization and operation and maintenance in 10 countries in ASEAN region, Japan, China, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, U.S.A., Europe, etc..
- To review the existing transport statistics data stored in international organizations, such as ADB, UNESCAP, WB, ASEAN Secretariat, JICA, etc.
- Items of traffic statistics data to be studied are as follows:
  - Port and Maritime Sector: Present status of major ports and scheduled shipping routes (ocean routes and domestic routes), cargo handling volume at major ports (volume by tonnage, TEU, empty containers, trans shipments), trade partners (port of loading/discharge, port of origin/destination), OD data, etc.
  - Road and Road Transport Sector: Present status of major highways (road condition, road type, road development plan, inter modal connection), traffic volume, transport volume data, OD data, present status of cross border facilities, cross border traffic volume, etc.
  - Railway Sector: Present status of trunk railways (Gauge, major stations, ICD), frequency of train operation (passenger trains and freight trains), number of passengers and cargo
handling volume at major stations, number of passengers and cargo volume between major stations, operation of international trains, present status of cross border facilities, etc.

Airport and Air Transport Sector: Present status of major airports, present status and frequency of scheduled air routes (international routes and domestic routes), number of passengers and cargo handling volume at major airports, OD data (between countries), etc.

Inter-modal transportation data.
- To identify key issues in the system and data for transport statistics in 10 countries in the ASEAN region based on the present status of transport statistics in each country.

b) Preparation of Plans to Standardize Transport Statistics Data and Data Conversion Method
- To identify data necessary for examination and research works of common transport policy in Asia.
- To examine data conversion method for above mentioned data in order to secure compatibility, if definition, unit, collection method, etc. are different.
- To examine a possible standardization of each transport data and to prepare a guideline to improve transport statistics data for 10 countries in the ASEAN region.

c) Formulation of a Platform to Share Transport Statistics Data
- To arrange transport statistics data in Asian countries in order to share disclosed data on the network.
- To examine possible platform for sharing transport statistics in Asian countries and to prepare conceptual design of common database.
- To examine a possible sustainable scheme to operate and maintain transport statistics data in the Asian countries (e.g. compulsory up-dating of transport statistics data under a project supported by an international donor) and prepare a guideline to share data.

d) Capacity Building
- To conduct workshops in appropriate timings for the capacity building of government agencies in charge of traffic statistics and to propose organization to secure sustainability for maintaining traffic statistics.
- To acknowledge to the Study countries for importance and benefits of standardization and sharing transport statistics, sharing method, etc., by arranging national workshops and regional seminars.

3.2.3 Expected Impacts
As direct impacts of the Project, the following will be achieved through the sharing of transport statistics data by transport experts and researchers: 1) To accelerate the development of method for transportation project planning able to calculate the financial rate of return, and evaluate and avoid risks from viewpoints of private enterprises, in order to promote private investment for improvement of international transport networks in the Asian region, and 2) To accelerate the development of evaluation method for investment to appropriately reflect a comprehensive framework for determination and implementation of transport policies by countries, mutual consistency of policies between related governments for improvement of transport infrastructure and increment of efficiency of transport markets, incomplete competitive markets, and mutual effects between regions.

As a result, if a common transport policy to realize seamless transport networks in the whole Asia will be promoted, it can be considered that the transport networks will be efficiently improved and also greatly contribute to suitable and strong logistics, greatly disparity in economic integration in the ASEAN region and alleviation of poverty, and achieve reduction
of energy consumption and mitigation of greenhouse gases generation.

3.3 Tentative Formulation of Experts’ Network

On the two occasions “The Workshop on Statistics of Asian Traffic and Transportation” were held, “The EASTS Volunteers’ Meeting” was also held and attended by Asian researchers who had attended the panel discussion of 7th EASTS Conference at Dalian, and who discussed possible actions to be taken in regards to following up the “Dalian Initiatives”.

In “The EASTS Volunteers’ Meeting”, “Agenda 3: Establishing an Asian Experts’ Network for Formulating, Implementing and Monitoring a Common Transport Policy” of the “Dalian Initiatives” was discussed. As a result, the formulation of the Asian Transportation Research Network was concluded as an issue in the near future, while the tentative formulation of an experts’ network as an EASTS International Research Group (IRG) 02 Bulletin Board was agreed.

The concrete roles of the Asian Transportation Research Network are considered to be as follows:

- To analyze the present status of international transportation in Asia
- To present socio-economic benefits of formulating an inter-modal transport network in the Asian region by concrete and objective data, etc. for countries and regional societies in Asia.
- To identify bottlenecks on the international transport network in Asia and to develop a method to evaluate the transport policy in each country
- To conduct monitoring of the transport policy in each country from objective views as the standpoint of the third party
- To propose a framework of common transport policy, etc.

For the time being, the experts’ tentative network is being utilized to share information related to the status of the transport statistics project mentioned in 3.2 and to exchange ideas by transport experts and academic experts mainly from EASTS. However, it is not necessarily being concentrated into this project, it is also being utilized to exchange a wide range of ideas, such as how to formulate an Asian Transportation Research Network.

Anyone can be a member of the experts’ tentative network, which is linked with the EASTS IRG02 website.

4. CONCLUSION

For preparing an Asian common transport policy, it is necessary, as a first step, to grasp where and what kind of data exists. Then, it is important to study methods for converting various transport statistics data owned by countries and organizations and to design a system that can share such information with EASTS researchers and related personnel.

It is also necessary, from now on, to implement the approach to capacity buildings for countries necessary to obtain statistical data, to prepare guidelines to obtain data, and to design a system to construct an international transport database. Therefore, we believe that promotion of the project in collaboration with international organizations is necessary. We also believe that sharing information related to these issues and exchanging opinions through the Asian Transportation Research Network are requisites for the smooth implementation of the project.
Therefore, for the time being, we intend to exchange opinions related to the project by using the tentative experts’ network formulated last autumn. Then, we are going to discuss the establishment of the Asian Transportation Research Network, which will be utilized for formulating, implementing and monitoring a common transport policy in Asia.