

10. ROAD TRANSPORT SERVICES (CENTRAL ASIA)

Geographic Focus:	Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan
Project Budget:	EURO 700,000
Contractor:	Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners
Implementation timetable:	March 1996 through October 1997

Background

Central Asian countries inherited from the FSU a freight transport system which favoured the rail sector. Entrepreneurial skills had not been encouraged, trucks were antiquated, and tertiary distribution systems weak. It was necessary to introduce new ideas and to improve the operating environment for road freight transport companies, as well as to provide technical assistance to the companies to assist in the development of their business.

Objectives

- To carry out studies leading to determination of the present level of activity in the trucking industry including the truck fleet owned by the Partner States and the structure of that ownership.
- To evaluate the structure and capabilities of the automotive supplies industry
- To enter into close contact with selected enterprises and credible entrants to the industry and mount collaborative pilot projects.
- To formulate recommendations for operator licensing (carriers) and vehicle certification, based on EU standards and DG7 recommendations.
- To conduct seminars and an EU study tour:
- To bring together enterprise managers and officials from across the Region and within the EU in the interests of harmonisation and establishment of contacts for business development.

Key Issues

The existing truck fleets in the region date mostly from the FSU. They are old and technically obsolete. The capacity of the fleets, at least for small loads over modest distances is adequate or even excessive. For longer heavier hauls, foreign truckers with modern equipment dominate the market. Progressive rectification of these imbalances in the road haulage industry must involve regulatory, management and investment issues.

Achievements

There has been success in the regulatory aspect of the programme with the introduction of Certification of Professional Competence (CPC) training for transport operators. This is a considerable achievement as it starts to align the TRACECA states regulatory environment with that of the EU. In the commercial field much work has been done with local companies to introduce them to EU management concepts and to introduce them to potential EU commercial partners.

A comprehensive overview of the present state of equipment of the trucking industry in the region was presented. This covered numbers, model types, and age. It is an invaluable indicator of the potential market for new trucks.

Several initiatives were taken to introduce potential EU truck manufacturers to the region, and to assist potential local partners to develop the business skills to work with EU suppliers. Interest was shown by Volvo, Scania, and Iveco, and contacts were promoted.

Seminars were held on commercial and regulatory aspects, introducing EU industry representatives to local managers and authorities.

The project was extended to allow for the development of pilot projects, which have been successful in one regional centre so far and are to be transferred to other centres.