Global Green Freight Corridors Initiative

OVERVIEW

The Global Green Freight Corridors Initiative (GGFCI) builds on the momentum generated by the first Global Transport Connectivity Forum (GTCF), convened by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Türkiye in Istanbul in June 2025. The Forum provided an important platform for advancing international cooperation on more integrated, sustainable and resilient global transport networks. The Initiative also draws on related international efforts, including the discussions on sustainable and digital transport corridors initiated by Azerbaijan at COP29 in Baku in November 2024. The proposed launch of the GGFCI at COP31 in Türkiye seeks to translate this momentum into concrete, coordinated action.

Global freight transport is facing the dual challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to increasingly complex and disrupted global supply chains. While the technological decarbonization of individual transport modes will progress at different speeds, evolving geopolitical and trade dynamics are already reshaping global freight routes and creating new corridor opportunities. GGFCI seeks to harness this transformation by promoting greener routing and modal integration, translating existing transport and climate initiatives into corridor-level implementation, and identifying and addressing zero-emission missing links that prevent seamless low-carbon freight movement.

NATURE OF THE INITIATIVE

The GGFCI will be a voluntary, country-led and implementation-oriented collaborative platform aimed at accelerating the development of greener, more resilient and better-connected international freight corridors.

The Initiative will not create new legally binding obligations. Rather, it will provide a flexible framework through which participating countries, international organizations, multilateral development banks, development partners and private sector stakeholders can cooperate on the planning, development, financing and implementation of sustainable international freight corridors.

Initially, the initiative will focus on facilitating cooperation, identifying implementation priorities, supporting pilot corridors, mobilizing investment and promoting knowledge sharing and coordinated policy development among participating countries and partners.

Building on existing regional initiatives, international transport agreements and ongoing corridor development efforts, the GGFCI will provide an implementation layer through which existing climate and transport initiatives can be connected and operationalized at corridor level, while avoiding duplication of existing mechanisms.

In particular, the GGFCI will build on the extensive ongoing work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Inland Transport Committee (ITC), notably its Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), whose mandate encompasses inter-regional transport connectivity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable transport infrastructure planning and development. The Initiative will also draw on relevant work of other ITC working parties and intergovernmental bodies, and the international legal and regulatory framework developed under their auspices. It will seek to contribute to relevant UNECE objectives, including those set out in the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport, through practical action at corridor level, including modal shift towards lower-emission transport, improved infrastructure and operational efficiency, deployment of low- and zero-emission freight technologies, digitalization of multimodal transport, and climate resilience.

Relevant UNECE instruments and systems include the infrastructure agreements covering international road, rail and combined transport networks (AGR, AGC and AGTC), supporting coordinated infrastructure development; the TIR Convention and the eTIR international system, facilitating customs transit and digital information exchange; and the CMR Convention and its Additional Protocol concerning the electronic consignment note (eCMR), providing uniform rules for international road carriage and enabling electronic consignment notes.

Given WP.5's existing mandate and workstreams, it is proposed that the Initiative be anchored in the Working Party, subject to approval by its member States, with regular reporting on progress and implementation priorities. This would promote coherence, build on existing cooperation mechanisms and avoid duplication of efforts.

In line with the objectives of the GGFCI, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has also recently developed the *Framework on Sustainable Road Transport Corridors* to support the development of greener, more resilient and more efficient freight transport systems across the Asia-Pacific region. The Framework places particular emphasis on strengthening connectivity for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and their transit partners alike, while addressing challenges related to emissions reduction, climate resilience, digitalization and cross-border transport efficiency. The Framework is structured around five pillars: low-carbon freight, climate-resilient infrastructure, digitalization and data interoperability, seamless cross-border operations and regulatory harmonization, and safe and inclusive corridor development. Supported by measures relating to governance, financing, capacity development, innovation and performance monitoring, it provides a practical and flexible approach for advancing sustainable road freight corridors and strengthening regional connectivity.

In addition, any potential synergies between the GGFCI and activities developed under the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network, the Trans-Asian Railway Network and on Dry Ports will be captured, while relevant intergovernmental working group meetings will be leveraged to support a more coordinated approach to international transport corridors development through common data tools, substantive policy frameworks and exchange of best practices.

For the maritime dimension, the Initiative will also seek to support implementation of the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, including through the uptake of low- and zero-

emission technologies and fuels and greater integration of maritime transport into sustainable multimodal freight corridors.

The Initiative will be formally launched at COP31 through a joint statement by an initial group of participating countries, expressing their shared commitment to advancing greener, more resilient and better-connected international freight corridors. The joint statement will also extend an open invitation to other interested countries and international partners to join the Initiative and contribute to its further development and implementation.
Following COP31, interested countries and partners will be invited to indicate their areas of interest and potential contributions, helping to shape the Initiative's initial priorities and subsequent implementation activities.

KEY PILLARS OF THE INITIATIVE

GGFCI will be structured around four mutually reinforcing pillars:

Pillar I — Green and Sustainable Corridor Development

Identification and prioritization of international freight corridors with potential for green transformation, including the preparation of corridor-specific green freight strategies and implementation roadmaps.

In addition to greening individual corridors, this pillar will explore opportunities to reduce the overall carbon intensity of international freight movements through greener routing and greater integration of maritime, rail and road transport. Where supported by corridor-level emissions assessments, this may include shifting freight flows towards lower-emission route and modal combinations, taking advantage of existing and emerging transport corridors.

This pillar will support participating countries in identifying priority actions related to infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, cross-border cooperation, operational efficiency and climate resilience.

Pillar II — Clean Energy and Technology

Promotion of zero-emission and low-emission freight transport solutions, including alternative fuels, electric freight transport, charging and refuelling infrastructure, railway electrification and other relevant clean technologies.

The pillar will encourage cooperation on technology deployment, infrastructure planning and the development of interoperable energy and refuelling systems along international freight corridors. Particular attention will be given to identifying, mapping, financing and addressing “missing links for low- or zero-emission connectivity” that prevent seamless connectivity.

Pillar III — Digital and Multimodal Connectivity

Promotion of digital freight transport solutions, data sharing, intelligent corridor management systems and enhanced integration between different transport modes.

The objective will be to improve the efficiency, transparency and resilience of international

freight movements while facilitating seamless multimodal connectivity across borders.

Pillar IV — Investment and Climate Finance

Mobilization of sustainable finance and investment for green freight corridor development.

The Initiative will seek to facilitate engagement with multilateral development banks, development partners, climate finance institutions and private sector investors, with a view to developing a pipeline of bankable projects related to sustainable freight infrastructure, clean energy, digitalization and multimodal connectivity. In this regard, the Initiative will draw on the UN International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO) to support the identification, mapping and prioritization of corridor infrastructure projects and investment needs. Its geospatial information and analytical tools can inform infrastructure planning and climate-risk assessment, helping participating countries present investment priorities and engage with multilateral development banks, development partners and potential investors.

PILOT CORRIDORS

At the time of its launch at COP31, the Initiative may highlight a number of illustrative global freight pathways to demonstrate how greener routing, modal integration and corridor-based cooperation could contribute to reducing the carbon intensity of international freight movements. Such pathways would be presented for illustrative purposes and would not constitute formally designated GGFCI pilot corridors.

Following the launch of the Initiative at COP31, interested participating countries will be invited to identify international freight corridors that could serve as pilot or demonstration corridors under the GGFCI. Pilot corridors would be identified in consultation with the countries and relevant partners concerned; and regularly address at Global Transport Connectivity Forum (GTCF).

Selected pilot corridors may provide an opportunity to translate the Initiative's common vision into practical implementation.

For each selected corridor, participating countries and partner organizations may jointly develop corridor-specific implementation roadmaps, addressing, as appropriate:

- Sustainable and climate-resilient transport infrastructure;
- Zero-emission and low-emission freight transport solutions;
- Alternative fuels and charging/refuelling infrastructure;
- Railway electrification and multimodal connectivity;
- Digitalization and data-sharing solutions;
- Regulatory and operational harmonization;
- Customs and border facilitation; and
- Priority investment projects and financing requirements.

The experience generated through pilot corridors could subsequently support the replication and scaling-up of successful approaches in other international freight corridors.

FROM COP31 LAUNCH TO IMPLEMENTATION

GGFCI is intended to evolve from a political commitment at COP31 into an implementation-oriented platform supporting concrete action on international freight corridors. Following its launch, participating countries and partner organizations would progressively move from political endorsement towards corridor identification, implementation planning, investment mobilization and periodic review.

Phase 1 —Launch and Partnership Building

COP31 | November 2026

The Initiative will be launched at COP31, bringing together an initial coalition of participating countries and international partners around a common vision for greener, more resilient and better-connected international freight corridors.

Phase 2 — Corridor Identification and Implementation Frameworks

First Half of 2027

Interested participating countries will identify potential pilot or demonstration corridors. For selected corridors, countries and partner organizations may work together to identify relevant international organizations, existing legal and regulatory frameworks, agreements and initiatives that could support their development and implementation. Based on this assessment, corridor-specific implementation roadmaps may be prepared, covering infrastructure, clean energy, digitalization, multimodal connectivity, regulatory cooperation and investment needs.

Phase 3 — Project Development and Investment Mobilization

Second Half of 2027

Building on the identified corridor priorities, participating countries and partners may develop pipelines of priority investment projects and engage multilateral development banks, climate finance institutions, development partners and private sector investors to support Project preparation and implementation.

Phase 4 — Review, Scaling and Expansion

From COP32 onwards

Progress and implementation experience may be reviewed at appropriate high-level international meetings, including COP32 and subsequent editions of the GTCF. The GTCF is envisaged as a biennial platform, with its second edition planned for 2027, providing a timely opportunity to review early progress under the GGFCI, share implementation experience and further advance international cooperation and investment.

PARTICIPATION

The Initiative will be open to countries and relevant international partners wishing to contribute to the development of sustainable international freight corridors.

Participation will remain voluntary, open and inclusive. Countries endorsing the joint statement at COP31 will form the initial group of participating countries, while other interested countries will be welcome to join subsequently. Governments, international organizations, multilateral development banks, development partners, climate finance institutions and relevant private sector stakeholders may contribute to the Initiative according to their respective mandates and areas of expertise.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Ministerial Steering Committee

A Steering Committee is proposed to provide strategic and political guidance to the Initiative and meet biennially in conjunction with the GTCF. This arrangement would help ensure continuity between the broader policy dialogue on global transport connectivity facilitated by the GTCF and the practical implementation of the GGFCI. It will provide overall direction, review progress and help identify strategic priorities for cooperation.

GGFCI Secretariat

The Secretariat functions of the Initiative will be carried out by the GTCF Secretariat, with possible advisory support from UNECE and ESCAP, drawing on their respective mandates, expertise and institutional networks. This arrangement will ensure continuity with the GTCF while anchoring the Initiative within the broader United Nations framework for sustainable transport and regional connectivity.

The joint Secretariat will support the implementation of the Initiative, facilitate cooperation among participating countries and partners, provide technical and analytical support, and promote synergies with existing international transport agreements, intergovernmental mechanisms and corridor development initiatives.

Subject to approval by WP.5, progress and proposed implementation priorities will be presented regularly to the Working Party for consideration and guidance, promoting coherence with its programme of work and avoiding duplication of efforts.

Coordination Group

A Coordination Group may be established with experts from the participating countries and partner organizations to support the implementation and coordination of the Initiative. The Coordination Group will facilitate communication among partners, coordinate meetings and technical work, support engagement with development banks and financial institutions, and monitor progress against agreed implementation priorities. Its activities will be supported and coordinated by the joint GGFCI Secretariat.

CONTRIBUTION TO PARIS AGREEMENT GOALS

The Initiative directly contributes to Paris Agreement objectives by accelerating the decarbonization of international freight transport through international cooperation and implementation-focused partnerships. It supports the transition towards zero-emission logistics systems, enhances climate-resilient transport infrastructure, promotes clean energy deployment, strengthens regional connectivity, and mobilizes climate finance for sustainable transport investments.

GGFCI seeks to complement long-term technological decarbonization with near- and medium-term system-level emission reductions achieved through greener routing, modal optimization and the removal of zero-emission missing links.

The initiative also reinforces the role of transport as an enabler of global climate action while contributing to sustainable trade, economic development and resilient supply chains.

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