

TRB International Trade and Transportation Committee (AT020)

Triennial Strategic Plan: 2016 – 2018, SUMMARY

Committee Scope

The AT020 committee is concerned with research, management, and regional, national or international policy issues associated with international trade and transportation (inter-country movements and their domestic connections); trends and market forces in trade and international transportation; technological, economic, financial, institutional, or managerial innovations; and barriers to international trade in transportation goods and sciences.

Committee Membership Make-up

As of January 2017, AT020 consisted of 29 members, represented by Dr. Michael Bomba who served as the Committee Chair. The Vice-Chair of AT020 was Mr. Juan Villa. The committee chair for the new term starting in 2017 is Mr. Juan Villa and the new Vice-Chair is Ms. Maria Boilé. The committee's membership by type (as of January 2017) includes 18 regular members, one state department of transportation member, six international members, and three young members. AT020's roster also has one Emeritus Member, former AT020 Chair Dr. Mary Brooks. The gender breakdown of the committee membership is 19 male members (66 percent) and 10 female members (34 percent). Member affiliation is spread between the public sector (12 members), the private sector (5 members), and academic faculty, researchers, and students (10 members). One member is an affiliate of advocacy organization and another is unaffiliated with any group. Statistics on AT020's Friends are not currently available.

Committee Future Outlook Statement

The purpose of the triennial strategic plan (TSP) is to provide a seven-year outlook on critical issues relevant to the committee's focus. As a committee, AT020 anticipates that there will be significant changes to global trade and transportation practices and trends over the next decade. As a result, its members seek to better understand the following urgent and long-term issues:

RISKS TO GLOBAL TRADE

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will be renegotiated during 2017 and early 2018. The members of AT020 believe these trade policy changes are important, particularly to define with sound research the potential impacts and future consequences for freight transportation infrastructure investments and operations. AT020 will discuss and research impacts of changes to the global trade agreement environment, so that local, state, and national freight transportation planners can better understand how changes will affect the nation's freight transportation system into the future.

NORTH AMERICAN TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION

North American trade is dependent upon adequate transportation infrastructure and efficient inspections at the ports-of-entry to physically move traded goods. Following and studying border delays have been a long-standing focus of AT020 and it will continue to be over the planning horizon. Other emerging issues that have renewed the committee's focus on border freight planning, include: increasing wages in emerging economies; the prospect of an altered NAFTA; advances in Mexico's manufacturing industries; increasingly partnering in the production of manufactured goods that rely upon multinational supply chains for the movement of intermediate inputs among NAFTA partners and the distribution of finished products to markets; the boom in oil, natural gas, clean coal and shale energy production in the U.S., the expanded Canadian energy production; and the opening of Mexico's energy industry to foreign investment.

IMPACTS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

Many consequences of climate change have the potential to affect freight transportation infrastructure and operations. In addition to the potential consequences of climate change on international trade, AT020 is also interested in promoting activities that identify potential solutions for stabilizing or reducing CO² emissions related to international freight transportation and mitigating their impacts on industry and the general population.

OPENING OF THE PANAMA CANAL EXPANSION AND TRENDS IN THE MARITIME SHIPPING INDUSTRY

Whether the expected demand at Atlantic and Gulf ports materializes or predicted load centers emerge in the Caribbean with the opening of the expanded Panama Canal in mid-2016 is an important issue to follow for the next few years. Other important topics in maritime trade that AT20 is interested in monitoring and studying include: growing ship sizes and their impact on congestion and delays at ports whose infrastructure is geared toward ships with lower capacity; overcapacity in the containership industry and its impact on freight rates and services; consolidation of the container-shipping industry that may result in increased freight rates and reduced services; the movement of LNG and other energy-related cargoes; and compliance with the new International Maritime Organization requirements (i.e., the amended Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention) for providing verified container weight to carriers.

OTHER KEY ISSUES

Other questions or areas of interest to AT020 members can be found at <https://www.trbtradetransportation.org/>.

Committee Three-Year Plan

Over the next three years, AT020 has an aggressive plan to: promote research on international trade and transportation issues; develop research need statements that will lead to funded research projects; maintain strong participation in the committee's activities by members and friends; and recruit new members and friends who are highly motivated to accomplish the committee's goals.

ACTIVITIES

Over the three-year period covered by this plan, the committee will seek to achieve the following two goals, using the strategies outlined below.

1. **Goal 1:** *Foster and contribute to research and public policy discussions on the global trade environment and its impact on international and domestic freight transportation trends.*
 - Strategy 1: Identify critical, cross-cutting issues that affect international trade and transportation.
 - Strategy 2: Encourage, develop, review, and present research on international trade and transportation.
 - Strategy 3: Identify mechanisms to encourage international collaboration in international trade and transportation research.
 - Strategy 4: Work with other TRB committees in the Freight Systems Group and the Marine Transportation Group, as well as other TRB committees, to identify common goals and pursue mutual research objectives.
2. **Goal 2:** Educate transportation system stakeholders on the value and application of research on international trade and transportation issues.
 - Strategy 1: Organize international trade and transportation presentations and sessions for the TRB Annual Meeting and the TRB Summer Meeting where appropriate.
 - Strategy 2: Develop international trade and transportation topics and sessions for specialty conferences hosted by TRB committees or other organizations
 - Strategy 3: Use the Internet and other mediums to improve committee communication and collaboration among Members and friends

Recommended action items for each of the outlined strategies can be found in the full Triennial Strategic Plan at <https://www.trbtradetransportation.org/>.

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION BY SPECIAL CATEGORY MEMBERS

AT020 is well represented by international members (6 members) and Young Members (3 members). The committee only has one state department of transportation member and could benefit from adding another. The gender breakdown of the committee, while not at parity, is similar to many other TRB committees. Likewise, the member affiliation is not heavily skewed toward any one category (e.g. consultants, academics, etc.). Over the next three years, committee members and friends will be strongly encouraged to identify and recruit other high-quality individuals who would be interested in participating in AT020 as a member or friend.