



## Model Highway Initiative: Regional Infrastructure Fund



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The IRU's MHI is presented in this booklet as the logical follow-up to the IRU's wide breadth of activities targeting the development of Eurasian trade, transit and road transport. The MHI will operate through international investment mechanisms and dovetail the facilitation of transit transport as well as the development of roadside infrastructure with the national government commitments to improve border crossing procedures. The trade and transport facilitation provided by this initiative will greatly benefit national economies by assisting the creation of jobs and wealth through the development of small and medium-size enterprises.

The IRU is certain that the IRU MHI is a cost-efficient instrument for developing Eurasian trade and road transport, and driving progress, prosperity and ultimately peace along the ancient Silk Road!

**Martin Marmy**  
**IRU Secretary General**



The MHI project envisages further development and improvement of ancillary roadside infrastructure to raise the level of quality to make international road transport arteries attractive for freight transport, while considerably enhancing the work and rest conditions for drivers. TRACECA countries have a stake in the successful implementation of the Model Highway Initiative due to their commitments in implementing the AETR Agreement.

Today, the Model Highway Initiative ranks among the most promising projects. We expect that the methods of stage-by-stage implementation of the Initiative and its results will serve as an example to follow in mapping out a course of reforms in other regions of the world with the aim of developing transport communications, including in countries along Euro-Asian lines.

**Eduard Biriucov**  
**TRACECA Secretary General**

## 1. Model Highway Initiative: Basic Information about the Project

### 1.1. MHI: Foundation for future high growth of transport and trade

The International Road Transport Union (IRU) has over 60 years of experience and expertise in facilitating and securing trade and international road transport through its global network of 170 Members in 74 countries. Indeed, under UN mandate, the IRU manages the UN TIR System.

Experience has shown that where governments work in partnership with the IRU in implementing the key UN trade and transport facilitation instruments, such as the Harmonisation and TIR Conventions, inter-regional trade is in the order of 70% of the region's trade. However, in regions where governments have failed to date to work in public-private partnership with the IRU's national Member Associations under the IRU umbrella, trade in those regions is limited to only 5% in Latin America and in ECO countries and 17% in BSEC and the Eurasian Customs Union.

Based on these trade discrepancies, in 2008 the IRU launched New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative (NELTI) which have to date monitored and scientifically analysed over 200,000 border crossings on several trade routes between the Far East, Central Asia, the CIS, the Middle East and Europe.

The NELTI results demonstrate all too clearly that over 40% of transport time is lost at borders due to inappropriate procedures and that some 38% of the transport cost is attributable to illicit payments. These major impediments have transformed the ancient Silk Road, which used to be the world's main trade artery, into a trade route for less than 1% of global trade on the Eurasian landmass.

The aim of the IRU is to facilitate trade to allow international road transport to interconnect every business in every country along the ancient Silk Road to every major world market and, in doing so, driving progress, prosperity and ultimately peace.

To achieve this, the IRU has developed various IT tools, such as the Border Waiting Times Observatory (BWTO), TIR Electronic Pre-Declarations (TIR-EPD) as well as TIR-EPD Green Lanes at border crossings. The aim of the BWTO is to allow customs to meet the requirements of the UN Harmonization Convention to inform trade

operators of the waiting times at their borders. Regrettably, this international requirement is only partially met by the customs authorities. The objective of the TIR-EPD is to allow pre-arrival risk assessment by the customs to reduce border waiting times and to further facilitate and secure trade and international road transport along these routes.

In order to address the problems unveiled by NELTI, the IRU also developed with its Members the Model Highway Initiative (MHI). This IRU solution, which was presented in Tashkent in May 2010, also gained the support of numerous governments and financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank.

The main objective of the MHI is to promote development of ancillary roadside infrastructure along the main road routes linking Europe and Asia in accordance with international standards and best practices. The second objective is to give an impetus to administrative reforms aimed to facilitate international road transport operations and border-crossing procedures.

MHI will be geared by a Regional infrastructure fund (MHI RIF) which is to finance the development of ancillary infrastructure assets on the basis of public-private partnership (PPP) mechanism.

The implementation of MHI will give an opportunity for creation of “development corridors” along the major highways passing through the territories of transit Eurasian countries, which will stimulate growth of regional businesses and employment.

**“The Model Highway is a chosen section (2-3 stretches) of an internationally rated trunk road of 1500 – 2000 km in length, crossing territories of several Eurasian countries and being of strategic importance for interconnection and promotion of Eurasian trade and transit by road to major world markets.”**

A Coordination Meeting between Heads of international organisations and financial institutions that took place in June 2011 in Tbilisi issued a mandate for further activities related to the implementation of the Model Highway Initiative.

In accordance with this mandate 3 meetings of the Experts Group on ancillary infrastructure were held in Yalta, Batumi and Astana and one special meeting on the MHI investment mechanism in Thessaloniki (Greece).

Two potential sections for creation of the Model Highway have been identified in the South Caucasus and in Central Asia.

## 1.2. Model Highway in the South Caucasus

The South Caucasian stretch of the Model Highway (MHI-SC) goes from **Baku, to Trabzon via Tbilisi and Batumi**, coinciding with the section of the Black Sea Ring Highway (BSRH) and the main Transcaucasian motor route in the Eastern part of the Black Sea Region. It serves trade and tourism between Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, the European Union, and other economic regions, as well as transports practically all internal goods flows by the South Caucasus. This route has a significant whilst unused potential in terms of commercial road transportation from Central Asia and Western China to Europe via ferry crossing on the Caspian Sea <sup>1</sup>.

The total length of the MHI-SC is 1135 km.



*Map 1. MHI section in the South Caucasus*

In the October 2011 ministers of transport of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC) member states at their meeting in Moscow agreed to include MHI in the future BSRH Master-Plan and to cooperate in preparing the MHI Feasibility Study.

The Pre-Feasibility Study “Development of the Baku-Tbilisi-Batumi-Trabzon Model Highway” was prepared by a Greek company Egnatia ODOS S.A. (acting as the BSRH Joint Permanent Technical Secretariat) on the request of the IRU and the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB). During 30 October to 14 November 2012 presentations of the Pre-Feasibility Study were held in Baku (Azerbaijan), Tbilisi (Georgia), and Ankara (Turkey).

<sup>1</sup> The Government of Turkmenistan is studying the possibility of extending the South Caucasian Model Highway section up to Ashgabat including the Ashgabat-Turkmenbashi Highway and Turkmenbashi-Baku ferry crossing.

During the BSEC Ministerial Conference on 28 November 2012 in Izmir (Turkey), the Ministers of transport from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey adopted a Trilateral Statement on the creation of MHI-SC, which envisages further concrete steps for MHI implementation.

At the same meeting the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia Mr. Giorgi Kvirikashvili proposed to create a Technical Secretariat of the MHI Ad-hoc Working Group, envisaged in the above Trilateral Statement, in Tbilisi.

### 1.3. Model Highway in Central Asia

Bearing in mind the extreme importance of roads for the development of trade and transit in the Central Asian land-locked countries, the Model Highway stretch in Central Asia (MHI-CA) includes the following main route **Kzylorda – Shimkent – Almaty – Khorgos** (1478 km), known as the “Western Europe – Western China” Road corridor, and branch **Kordai – Bishkek – Dushanbe – Nizhniy Panj – Pol-e Xomri** (1772 km).



Map 2. MHI section in Central Asia



MHI CA provides for trade and economic relations between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. This is also part of the TRACECA transport corridor. In near future the Model Highway will be very important having in mind of future integration of China (XUAR) into the system of regional and Eurasian transport links.

The preliminary results of the Pre-feasibility study on the development of the Central Asian Model Highway were prepared by the Kazakhstan's Transport Research Institute (NIITK) and presented in September 2012 in Kazakhstan (during the UN OHRLC Conference in Almaty), Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (during the IRU Secretary General's visits to these countries).



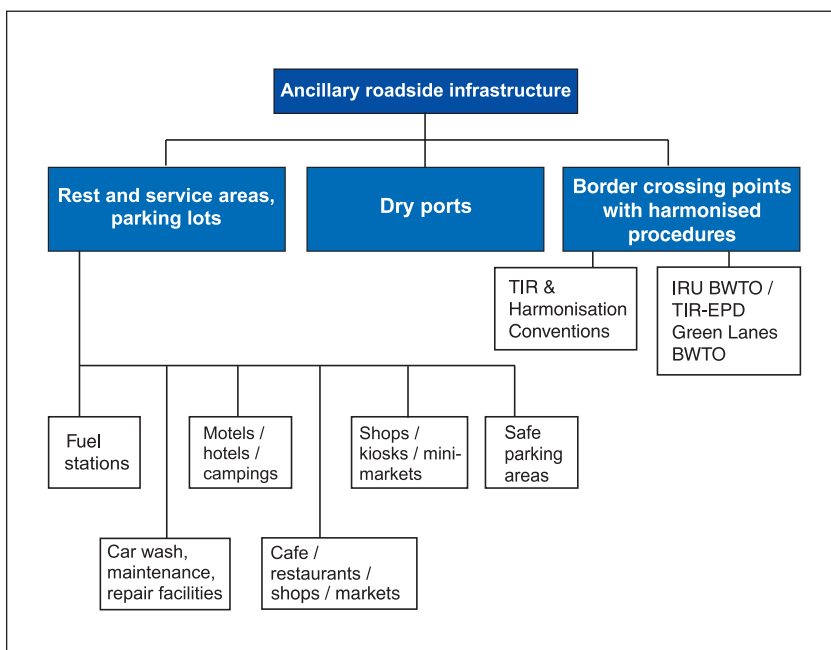
*In connection with the fact that 40% of the transportation time is being lost at the borders, the Government of Tajikistan undertakes measures on improvement of the situation, supporting realization of the Model Highway Initiative (MHI), launched 2 years ago by the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and aimed at creation of modern ancillary roadside infrastructure along several stretches of the Central-Asian transport corridors. This initiative has been officially supported by Governments of Central-Asian states.*

*It is necessary to mention that realisation of MHI in Central Asia and, in particular, at the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan will not only contribute to the trade development and economic growth, but will also provide a wide range of political effects and commercial advantages and will lead to creation of a “development corridor.”*

**Akil Akilov,**  
**Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan**

## 2. Ancillary roadside infrastructure

The **ancillary roadside infrastructure** includes, on the one hand, harmonised border crossing procedures based on the key UN multilateral trade and transport facilitation conventions such as TIR, Harmonization Convention, ADR, etc. to improve the control and speed up formalities at the border. On the other hand, it should also include rest and service areas to provide night rest, water, food and articles of daily necessity for drivers as well as refuelling, maintenance and secure parking areas for vehicles. Logistics centres, or “dry ports”, and border crossing points (BCP), with the IRU IT tools such as BWTO and TIR-EPD Green Lanes, are also included in the ancillary infrastructure (Chart 1).



*Chart 1. Ancillary roadside infrastructure classification*

Table. 1. Roadside infrastructure criteria

Object	Facilities	Location	International standards and recommended practices	Users (consumers)
Rest area type 1	1) Fuel station 2) Cafe / restaurant (international or national brand chain) 3) Shop / kiosk 4) 24h toilet and water supply 5) Phone / wi-fi 6) 10-30 parking places for cars and 4-12 places for trucks or buses Each rest area must be provided with acceleration and deceleration lanes, road signs and markings	15-20 km between rest areas	- TEM Standards and Recommended Practice - German standards (Richtlinien für Rastanlagen an Strassen) - Guide for Development of Rest Areas on Major Arterials and Freeways, USA	- Drivers and passengers of private cars, buses and coaches - Tourists - Drivers of trucks
Rest area type 2	1) Fuel station 2) Resting place, tourist info. centre, space for cultural events 3) Cafe / restaurant (with traditional local meals) 3) Shop / mini-market of local foods and handicrafts 4) Parking space for private cars, trucks and buses	Near populated localities	- Michi-No-Eki Concept, Japan - TEM Standards and Recommended Practice	- Drivers and passengers of private cars, buses and coaches - Tourists - Drivers of trucks - Local farmers and producers community
Service area	1) Fuel station (accessible for trucks and buses) 2) Car wash, maintenance, soft repair facilities 3) Cafe, restaurants (international or national brand chains) 4) Different shops, kiosks 5) 24h toilet, water supply 6) Phone / wi-fi 7) separated parking places for cars and separated stop places for trucks or buses 8) Bus / coach station 9) Motel / hotel / camping 10) Rest and entertainment places Each service area must be provided with acceleration and deceleration lanes, road signs and markings, outside lighting system	30-50 km between service areas	- TEM Standards and Recommended Practice - German standards (Richtlinien für Rastanlagen an Strassen) - Guide for Development of Rest Areas on Major Arterials and Freeways, USA	- Drivers and passengers of private cars, buses and coaches - Tourists - Drivers of trucks - Local population

Object	Facilities	Location	International standards and recommended practices	Users (consumers)
Parking lot	1) Secured and separated parking for trucks or buses 2) Fuel station for trucks or buses 3) Washing, disinfection, maintenance, soft repair facilities for trucks / buses 4) Motel / hotel for drivers with additional facilities (washing machines, phone, internet, rest area) 5) Cafe Each parking lot must be provided with acceleration and deceleration lanes, road signs and markings, lighting system	300-600 km, near cities, TIR-EPD Green Lanes, dry ports	- Best practices of Road Transport Associations (Asociacion del Transporte Internacional de Espana - ASTIC, ASMAP-UA, JTA, etc)	- Drivers of trucks  - Drivers of buses and coaches
BCP with IRU BWTO and TIR-EPD Green Lanes	1) TIR-EPD Green lanes, separated lanes for trucks (with TIR-EPD), buses and cars 2) IRU BWTO 3) Gates and checking points (customs and other state services) 4) X-Ray Scanners and other required equipment 5) Secure places for waiting trucks 6) Fuel station 7) Duty-free shops	- Land border crossing points;  - Border crossing points in trade sea ports (ferry terminals)	- Best practices of GTA TOBB, Turkey	- Drivers and passengers of private cars, buses and coaches - Drivers of trucks
Dry port (logistics centre)	1) Warehouses and other facilities 2) Secured territory 3) Places for waiting trucks 4) Cargo loading / unloading equipment, etc	Near ports, airports, multimodal transport hubs	- EU, US and Japanese standards and best practices	- Road transport carriers - Cargo owners

All the mentioned types of assets may be united into two groups in accordance with a nature of the investment that will be attracted by MHI RIF:

1. New ancillary roadside infrastructure assets (new construction, green field investment).
2. Extension, modernisation and rehabilitation of existing assets: replacement of equipment, extension of the services' list, modernisation of production capacities and technologies.

### 3. MHI Regional Infrastructure Fund (MHI RIF)

#### 3.1. Investment needs

Separately, objects of roadside infrastructure would never come into the focus of international financing. But projects involving development of dozens of single-type assets, such as service areas, rest areas or standard motels, can become attractive for foreign investments.

Total investment in the creation of the Model Highway South Caucasus is estimated at 600-650 million euro (source: Pre-Feasibility study on the creation of the Model Highway Baku – Tbilisi – Batumi – Trabzon), and in the Model Highway Central Asia – 0.8-1.0 billion US dollar (Source: Pre-feasibility study on the creation of a Model Highway in Central Asia).

A more detailed investment volume will be calculated in the relevant full-fledged feasibility studies (Master Plans) on the creation of the Model Highway in two regions which are planned to be made in 2013.

“ Coupled with the focus on regional integration and current trends of shifting from financing infrastructure development by public funding to PPPs or purely private sources, we are proposing that two Regional Infrastructure Funds (RIF) should be created for the Black Sea Region and the Central Asian Region to implement the MHI Project.”

(from “MHI Finance Mechanisms” prepared by Eurasia Transit System, Inc., New York USA)

### 3.2. Types of investments that can be attracted to the Model Highway Initiative

Along with the traditional sources, based on the predominantly private funding, the following types of investment can be attracted for Model Highway creation through the Regional Infrastructure Fund (Chart 2).

<b>Investment in the stock capital</b>	Investment in the stock capital of the Fund.
<b>Commercial ("senior") loans</b>	As a rule, borrowed capital will become the main source of funding the development of ancillary roadside infrastructure assets.
<b>Subordinated ("junior") debt</b>	Borrowed capital for interim financing: in some cases creditors providing subordinated debt may receive a chance to directly participate in a profit out of the invested capital with options and warrants to convert into shares or bonds, or subscription of concessioner's shares at preferential price.
<b>Institutional investments</b>	Loans from finance companies, investment funds, insurance companies, collective investment schemes (for example, unit investment funds), pension funds. The main reason for attracting institutional investment is the interest of the mentioned groups in receiving profit (including protection of resources from inflation) and in diversification of the long-term investment.
<b>Multilateral financial resources</b>	Financial resources from international finance institutions, development banks, export agencies and investment promotion agencies.
<b>Insurance companies' resources</b>	Financial resources from insurance companies, including accident insurance of infrastructure, machinery and equipment, casualty insurance, etc.
<b>Warrantee funds' resources</b>	Political risk guarantees, warrantee funds and other forms of multilateral agencies guarantees.
<b>Financing through capital markets</b>	It may envisage listing RIF on recognized stock exchanges after certain periods of operations.

*Chart 2. Possible funding resources for MHI implementation via MHI RIF*

### 3.3. What is MHI RIF: functions and structure

The MHI Regional Infrastructure Fund (MHI RIF) is a multilateral mechanism through which the regions of the South Caucasus and Central Asia can “forward fund” major infrastructure schemes, in situations where anticipated public or private funding for the scheme will not be available in full, at the time when infrastructure is needed for support of the planned growth or development<sup>2</sup> (in particular, for the purpose of increasing volumes of international road transportation and transit and realisation of the existing potential of the UN AH Network, TRACECA and GUAM corridors, NELTI Central Route and Black Sea Ring Highway).

In this case, the cost of the capital investment would then be recovered from pre-determined public and/or private funding streams as they become available. MHI RIF also provides an effective mechanism for progressing projects from outline proposals to regionally prioritised schemes with a robust financial, economic and business oversight.

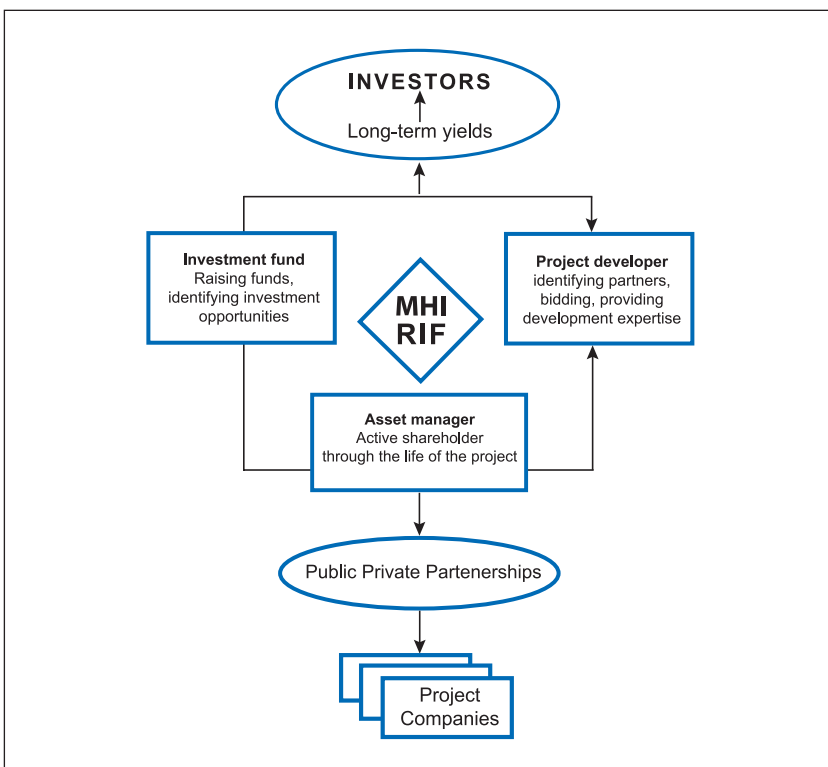


Chart 3. The MHI RIF role

<sup>2</sup> Model Highway Initiative: Worldwide Investment and Funding Mechanisms. A Study Prepared by International Project Development Group, LLC and Eurasia Transit Systems Inc., New York, USA, 2012.

## Functions of MHI RIF:

- **accumulation of financial resources** from different sources;
- **distribution of these financial resources** for the implementation of particular projects related to the development of ancillary roadside infrastructure, divided by groups of assets (rest areas, service areas, parking lots, border crossing points, etc.);
- **supervision over the ongoing construction, rehabilitation and modernisation works** of all ancillary infrastructure assets' groups;
- **coordination of the Model Highway creation and function issues** with governments of the involved countries, international organisations, financial institutions, and businesses;
- **management of ancillary roadside infrastructure assets groups** prior to the return of investment made into their construction and rehabilitation (through established project management companies);
- **provision of the initially invested funds repayment** to all the investors (international financial institutions, commercial banks, businesses).

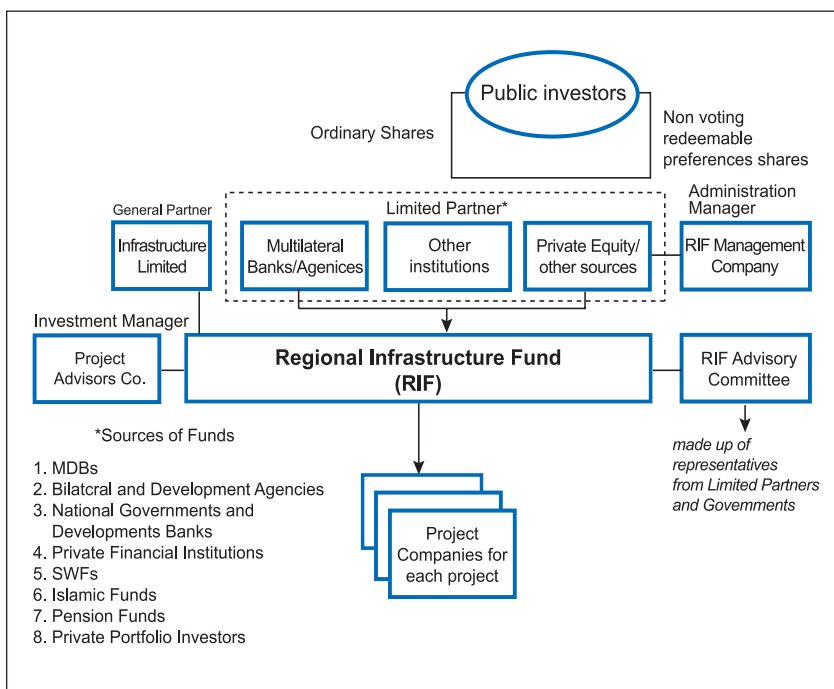


Chart 4. Proposed organisational structure of the MHI RIF



### 3.4. MHI RIF partners

Parties with whom MHI RIF is to interact (Chart 5):

- interested international organisations and financial institutions, (regional development banks);
- creditors and private investors;
- service providers (fuel companies, catering companies, car service providers, hotel chains, internet providers, retail chains, including duty free goods suppliers for BCP, TIR-EPD Green Lanes etc.);
- insurance companies;
- construction companies;
- governing bodies (at national and local levels);
- groups of ancillary services consumers (road transport carriers and their associations), and the others.

MHI RIF will invite experienced and reliable companies to participate in the creation of the Model Highway, including world leaders in the field of construction and operation of ancillary roadside infrastructure assets and will also work with leading commercial banks, transnational contractors and local business.

MHI RIF will be an active participant on the boards of directors of ancillary infrastructure managing companies (project companies), will take part in the election of their governing bodies and will supervise their activities to maximally improve their work.

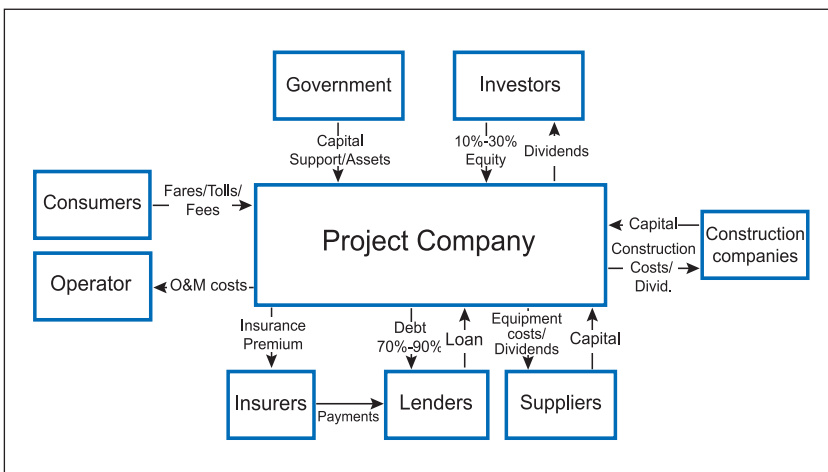


Chart 5. Financial transactions of the MHI RIF

### 3.5. Legal status and governance

The exact legal status, jurisdiction and corporate management of MHI RIF will be defined at a later stage after conducting a special survey that should be undertaken along with the development of a full-fledged MHI Feasibility studies (Master Plans).

The international experience, in particular, the experience of establishing a regional fund by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2011 to finance major infrastructure projects across the region, demonstrates that it can be a limited liability company.

MHI RIF will be governed by the Board of Directors. Its main tasks will be to establish the MHI RIF priorities, execute the study and adopt the criteria for selecting a project to be financed by the Fund. It also has to identify the projects' priority offered by the MHI RIF's Consultative Council comprising Government representatives from the involved countries and shareholders of the Fund.

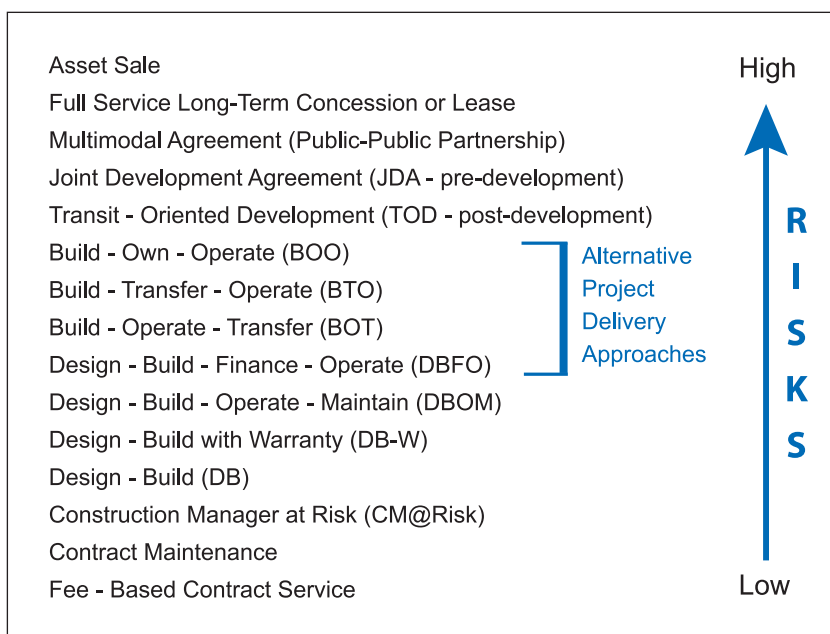
As expected, the MHI RIF capital's structure will include its own and borrowed assets that will be used to finance the states' projects within the public-private partnership and later, after a few years of work and reporting of certain financial results on the activities, they may be supplemented with different hybrid sources of capital, including accessing capital markets.

Taking into consideration the fact that the ancillary roadside infrastructure assets are more commercially profitable, MHI RIF can be established within the period of 12-24 months unlike the funds financing "more time consuming" infrastructure, such as roads, energy and water supply.

### 3.6. PPP Mechanism

MHI RIF represents public-private partnership (PPP) and will function based on its principles. Since different types of PPP exist, in practice the issue of choosing among them the type that will be used for establishing MHI RIF and particular companies operating ancillary roadside infrastructure will have to be studied in the future.

While dividing the responsibility and resources in the course of realisation of public-private partnership projects, both the public and private sectors will divide the potential risks and benefits from the realisation of particular projects or operation of ancillary roadside infrastructure assets' groups in accordance with their responsibilities (Chart 6).



*Chart 6. Main types of PPP that can be used for implementing projects related to ancillary roadside infrastructure*

### 3.7. Contribution from the Governments

The second key aspect of MHI is the effective implementation of the key UN trade facilitation instruments, such as the TIR Convention and Annex 8 to the 1982 International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods which create favourable conditions for trade and road transport development.

To effectively reduce border waiting times and in so doing eliminate the environment conducive to illicit payments, the appropriate tools exist. Governments should harmonise procedures on the basis of the UN Harmonization Convention and have their customs undertake the appropriate risk assessment, prior to the arrival of the truck, on the basis of the information provided by the TIR-EPD and provide TIR-EPD Green Lanes for those trucks which satisfy the customs requirements thus allowing customs to target their control efforts.



Also governments can contribute to the Model Highway creation by the following mechanisms:

- provision of state guarantees on investment into certain assets of ancillary infrastructure located at their national territory;
- simplification of the roadside land allocation procedures for ancillary roadside infrastructure assets;
- application of a favourable tax regime for businesses operating ancillary infrastructure assets prior to the return on investment;
- contributing land and other hard assets owned by the State to the Fund on special terms;
- implementing the key UN multilateral conventions for trade and transport facilitation, such as the Harmonization and TIR Conventions, etc.;
- implementing the IRU IT facilitation and security tools such as BWTO and TIR-EPD Green Lanes.

The effective implementation of the Model Highway, despite representing only a very small portion of the infrastructure investments, will nonetheless allow Governments to significantly enhance their return on investment and boost the economic and trade potential of their overall infrastructure investments by effectively contributing to national and regional economic growth.



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