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UIC launches a taskforce on high temperatures and desertic conditions

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Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humankind this century, with companies in certain regions becoming more frequently and strongly exposed to physical risks. Especially in the long run, they could see a significant share of their capital destroyed if these natural hazards continue to become more prevalent.

To this end, UIC has launched a taskforce to work on the effects of high temperatures and desertic conditions on the railway system. It will run for the entire year, and forms part of the necessary preparation phase for a major UIC project called RERA (Resilient Railways facing High Temperatures).

The taskforce's aim is to share relevant positive experiences and best practices (quick wins), to deliver insights about adapting railway infrastructure to climate change, to monitor train operations during extreme weather events, and develop strategies for breakdown recovery and repair.

The team of experts currently comprises of organisations who are interested in this information exchange, and also welcomes non-UIC members as part of the taskforce's scope to act on behalf of the entire railway community. However, it even goes beyond this, as Working Group 3 below demonstrates.

The taskforce wishes to benefit the railway system through improving resilience, via:

- The identification, management and adaptation of vulnerabilities
- The definition of adequate operational and safety measures
- The upgrading of design parameters and operating principles
- The reduction of lost productivity: recovering time in certain areas to increase possible production time, which accumulates throughout the year and can significantly improve profit
- The enhanced accuracy of investment strategies and policies regarding asset design and operations

The taskforce has three main areas of focus:

Workstream 1 - Physical Railway Assets: the effect of high temperatures and sand upon tracks, structures, rolling stock, the wheel/rail interface, electric systems, and communications systems

Chaired by Andreas Chantzaras (SAR)

Workstream 2 – Operations: the effect on human factors, passenger comfort, operational resilience and failures in higher temperatures

Chaired by Brian Haddock (NRIL)

Workstream 3 – Externalities and Other: climate predictions, forecasting, costs, political and government support

Chaired by Batyr Kotyrev (KTZ)



If you are interested in participating, please contact Frédéric Hénon at

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