

Original article

A Delphi Study on the Potential Benefits and Obstacles of Interstate Short Sea Shipping in Archipelagic Southeast Asia *

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to identify the potential benefits and obstacles of the interstate Short Sea Shipping (SSS) operation in the archipelagic Southeast Asia sub-region. Although literature has addressed a myriad of benefits and obstacles that were caused by the SSS operation as an alternative mode to unimodal land transport, it has been recognised that each SSS corridor may have its own peculiarities. Therefore, the identification of the potential benefits and obstacles through a Delphi survey among sub-regional expert respondents is expected to inform the countries of Southeast Asia on how to direct their limited resources to address the obstacles identified in order to enable a viable interstate SSS operation. The initial review of the benefits and obstacles of SSS operations will focus on case studies performed in Europe as the breadth of literature on SSS outside Europe is still limited. Hence, this study addresses the gap in the literature by focusing on SSS in archipelagic Southeast Asia particularly those involving interstate Ro-Ro operations and extending the usage of Delphi technique to the realm of interstate SSS.

Keywords: Archipelagic Southeast Asia (ASEA); Delphi technique; Qualitative Content Analysis; Ro-Ro; Short Sea Shipping (SSS).

I. Introduction

Southeast Asia is a region within Asian continent located with the Pacific Ocean to the East, and the Indian Ocean to the West and the South. The region also shares its northern land boundary with China. The countries that are situated in the region are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The region could be further divided into two sub-regions namely mainland Southeast Asia and archipelagic Southeast Asia (ASEA). The states of Cambodia, Laos, Peninsular Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam formed mainland Southeast Asia whilst all the other countries together with the eastern part of Malaysia are considered as ASEA. Although Singapore is an island nation, its close proximity to Peninsula Malaysia with efficient road and rail connections through a causeway and a bridge means it is considered as more of a continuation of mainland Southeast Asia rather than ASEA. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has characterised ASEA as a unique sub-region with more than 24,000 islands with long distances between them that demands a special approach to physical connectivity (ADB, 2010). The location of the Southeast Asian countries can be seen from Figure 1.

Until now, there is no strict definition of short sea shipping (SSS) from the aspects of the types of vessel used, distance travel or types of cargo or passenger transported. However, from the official definition adopted by the European Commission and the Maritime Administration (MARAD) of the United States (U.S.), the focus of the SSS concept in both the European Union (E.U.) and the U.S. is for the movement of cargo whilst at the same time the services could be utilised for the efficient movement of passengers through coastal waters and inland waterways (European Commission, 1999; MARAD, 2014). However, gleaning through the literature on SSS, it can be generally defined as “the movement of goods and people within internal and coastal waters that does not involve a transit through the ocean”. From the preceding definition, SSS services may involve all types of vessels such as feeder container vessels, tug and barge system, Roll-on Roll-off (Ro-Ro) vessels, passenger ferries, handy size bulk carriers and tankers as well as other suitable vessels.



Figure 1: Southeast Asian Countries
Source: Aseanup (2016)

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