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Agreement reached on border crossings for Trans-Asia Railway

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - All countries linked by the proposed Trans-Asia Railway have agreed on their common border crossings, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today.

Laos and China have agreed to have their crossing point at Dali, while Vietnam and Cambodia will have their crossing point at Lok Ninh, he said.

The project, which stretches over a distance of 5,513km, was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the fifth Asean Summit in Bangkok last December.

It will run from Singapore through Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Aranyaprathet, Poipet, Sisophon (all in Thailand), Phnom Penh and Lok Ninh (Cambodia), Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (Vietnam) to Kunming in China. A connecting line will pass through Laos and Myanmar, he said.

Speaking at a Press conference after meeting a 10-member delegation from Yunnan Province, China, Dr Ling said the decision was reached during a meeting involving participating countries recently.

Malaysia has allocated RM2 million for the initial feasibility study.

KTM Bhd which has been appointed as project manager of the Trans-Asia Railway (Singapore-Kunming Link) has identified two local consultants to undertake the feasibility study.

One of the consultants will undertake the engineering while the other will carry out the economic feasibility study, Dr Ling said.

On the time frame for the consultants to carry out the feasibility studies, Dr Ling said:

"Realistically, we will give them one year to get details of economic, technical and cross-border facilitation procedures.

"A thorough economic study is also required to help us forecast the amount of loan and costing for the project to be privatised," he said, adding that the project could only take off "after meeting economic justification".

Dr Ling said another meeting would be held in one or two months.

"The Yunnan delegation has even invited us to make their capital Kunming as the next venue.

"Yunnan has the engineering capabilities and technical know-how to construct railways and has even offered to construct the link that runs through their province," Dr Ling said.

Members of the delegation included the province's Railway Construction Headquarters Director-General Pan Yingsheng and its deputy Director-General Wang Xuebin.

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