



Permanent Working Group 1 River Information Services (RIS)

Terms of Reference

Historical background - Definition of the problem

In the last few years there has been seen a growing political and environmental interest for sustainable development in transport. Inland navigation is regarded as an alternative means of transport for road transport as it is a more environment friendly means of transport and on some major transport connections there is still some spare capacity in the waterway infrastructure.

To enable safe and smooth navigation some countries have introduced inland VTS (Vessel Traffic services) systems. Some of these systems have already been in operation for over 15 years. To make inland navigation an even more attractive transportation mode than at present, research and demonstration projects have been initiated to construct so-called VTMIS¹ systems (Vessel Traffic Management Information Systems). These VTMIS should enable a wide variety of users to comprehensively plan resources used in inland navigation thus making possible "just- in-time" transport and making inland navigation a perfectly fitting partner of integrated transport chains. Currently within the EU, VTMIS is specified as RIS (River Information Services).

The development of VTS and VTMIS in inland navigation however is mainly being executed on a national basis. The European Union published in 2005 a directive on River Information Services (RIS). Implementation of these services will be effective in European countries in 2007/2008.

It can be an important role for a PIANC working group to make an update of developments on a regular basis and to give recommendations for the application of specific techniques, systems or services in non-European countries and to provide an interface with maritime information systems such as AIS.

Objective of the study

- observing the development of River Information Services (RIS),
- submitting a short annual report on the status of operating, implementing and/or developing RIS in different parts of the world to the INCOM Commission, including lessons learned from implementation and standards,
- reviewing the "Guidelines and Recommendations for River Information Services",
- giving feedback to European and international standardisation groups.

¹ VTMIS is also used for other systems. Therefore it might lead to misunderstanding. Here it is used in its original definition.

Earlier reports to be reviewed

The Permanent Working Group on River Information Services started in 2003 after it was clear the RIS directive should be published by the European Commission. For the last few years the group has not been active any more. This is an update of the Terms of Reference to provide a new start of this working group.

Matters to be investigated

All services being described in the PIANC RIS guidelines as well as new services which can be added to the existing ones.

The provision of a common interface with other electronic transport database systems

Suggested final product of the working group

- annual report
- worldwide catalogue of services in operation
- proposals for new services (security, logistics, environment)

Desirable disciplines of the members of the working group

- a new chairperson should be elected
- membership with a maximum of 3 years
- special attention for members of non-European countries

Relevance for countries in transition

The development of RIS is also a change to bring safety and reliability on a higher level in countries in transition. Especially countries with large inland waterways will have to be involved in this permanent working group.