

PRESS RELEASE



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NEW PIANC PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

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The World Association for Waterborne
Transport Infrastructure

Title: **'Development of a Proposal of Inland Waterway
Classification for South America'**

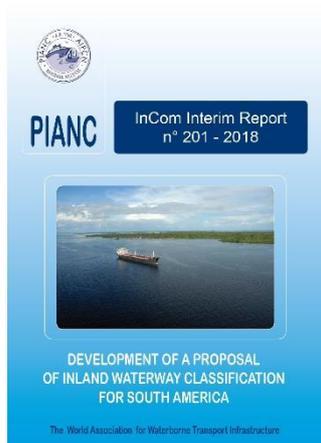
This document is an INTERIM REPORT of Working Group (WG) 201. The PIANC-ECLAC WG chose to issue an early interim report to alert the South American Countries of the proposed methodology to establish an inland waterway (IW) classification in South America. The WG decided that it was important to inform as early as possible prior to the completion of the final report version. The value of this WG and report(s) is in the proposed methodology. It is not for the PIANC-ECLAC WG to finalise a South-American IW classification(s) as that is a matter for the South-American countries and local policy makers.

Author's: InCom Interim Working Group 201

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Introduction:

The fluvial network in South America is known for having one of the highest densities and widest geographical coverages in the world, but, despite this natural endowment, inland navigation still plays a rather marginal role in the transport of goods and passengers in the region.

South America has not yet taken full advantage of its extensive system of navigable waterways and needs to better integrate them into the region's transport network in order to cater for the ever-increasing demand for cargo and human mobility. Although the evolution of international transport in inland navigation has been positive over the last decade, the modal shares of inland shipping in the region's international transport are less than one percent in terms of value and volume.

Inland waterways are not only used for transport between the countries of the region, located along the river basins, but also are the first leg of international transport flows with other regions of the world. Examples of the latter are the natural resource exports (soybean products, aluminium, and oil related products) from the Paraguay-Paraná, Amazonas, Plata, Orinoco and Magdalena river basins that are destined for Europe, the US or Asia. In these cases, seagoing vessels are directly deployed from the ports along these river systems. While the values of these exports have more than tripled since 2002, in some waterways the volumes have shown a decreasing tendency over the last years but hopefully not everywhere as in Paraguay-Paraná IW.

In South America, there are several independent inland waterway systems, which have different levels of development. For some of these systems and from a macro perspective view, the uses of the inland waterway systems in the region are challenged by various factors. These factors include:

- Low level of investment in the construction and maintenance of waterway infrastructure and inland ports
- Incomplete, outdated or absent national and regional(*) norms and regulatory frameworks
- Poor administrative structures and institutional capacity
- Limited use of navigational services and technologies, such as navigation aids, including updated maps, electronic charts, AIS (Automatic Identification System) and other RIS (River Information Services) technologies
- Lack of qualified labour and institutions for capacity building and formation/training of quality labour

(*) The term 'regional' should be understood as a supra national/continental meaning, and not as a part of a country.

These challenges limit the past, current, and future potential of inland navigation and the current situation affects not only the wider use of this mode of transport, but also its integration with other modes, generates inefficiencies, such as higher costs of transport at local, regional, and national level, higher environmental externalities or cargo losses.

A common inland waterway classification for south America could be one of the ways to support the development of inland navigation in South America, given that experiences in other regions of the world have shown that such classification can be powerful and dynamic tool for supporting and implementing inland waterways policies and projects as it enables the identification of the limitations and the economic potential of navigable waterways in the region and can encourage and monitor the development of their capacity for transport of goods and people [Jaimurzina et al., 2016].

In October 2016, at the occasion of the ECLAC/PIANC/ANTAQ Seminar on inland navigation and a more sustainable use of natural resources: networks, challenges, and opportunities for South America (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), the representatives of the South American countries with interest in inland navigation and the PIANC experts from Europe, Northern America and Asia supported the idea of elaborating a regional classification for inland waterways in South America and recommended the creation of a dedicated Working Group on the issue. As a consequence, in 2017, PIANC and ECLAC launched WG 201 for the elaboration of a common classification for South America which would promote a more efficient, transparent and sustainable use of inland water transport and logistics services, in general.

NOTE: The objective of this report is to provide information and recommendations on good practice. Conformity is not obligatory and engineering judgement should be used in its application, especially in special circumstances. This report should be seen as an expert guidance and state of the art on this particular subject. PIANC disclaims all responsibility in case this report should be presented as an official standard.

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