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RIS support structure workflows

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INTRODUCTION

The European Commission has requested PLATINA to deliver an advise on structural support for the RIS Expert Groups (EGs) in future. From June 2008 onwards (till May 2012) the PLATINA projects has tried to assist the RIS EGs in their work.

About the RIS Expert Groups

River Information Services (RIS) standardisation is essential for coherent implementation of RIS throughout Europe. The RIS Directive 2005/44/EC establishes the framework for harmonized implementation of River Information Services in Europe. Under the RIS Directive the European Commission is assisted by the RIS Committee. The RIS Committee is informally assisted by a number of RIS Expert Groups (EGs) in preparing and updating technical guidelines and specifications for Inland ECDIS, electronic ship reporting (ERI – Electronic Reporting International), Notices to Skippers (NtS) and vessel tracking and tracing (VTT). The deployment of RIS across Europe is an ongoing process of which projects are regularly co-financed by various EU programmes, like TEN-T Programme.

The EGs' proposals for standards on RIS are being offered to various institutions and organizations. The establishment and functioning of the EGs as such is not based on European law or other legal document developed by cross-bordering European organisations. However, existing EU legal provisions attach great importance to the work of the EG's. The four European Commission Regulations related to RIS, contain the following consideration points that relate to the importance attached to the work of the EGs, i.e.:

- “..Should take due account of the work carried out by the expert group on XXX which is composed of representatives of the authorities of the Member States responsible for the implementation of XXX and official members from other governmental bodies as well as observers from the industry.”
- “The technical specifications should correspond to the current technical state of the art. Experiences gained from the application of Directive 2005/44/EC (including its related EC Directives on specific RIS technologies) as well as future technical progress may make it necessary to amend the technical specifications. Amendments to the

technical specifications should take due account of the work carried out by the expert group on XXX.”

Neither these experts nor the (co)chairpersons are being reimbursed for their EG work.

About this report

The European Commission has requested PLATINA to deliver an advice for structural support for the RIS EGs in future. Therefore, PLATINA has executed the following steps:

1. Executed an inquiry in May/June 2011.
2. Draft report on outcome questionnaire with representatives of the EG, including discussion on possible scenario for structural support for the EGs in future.
3. Draft final report based on outcome discussions step 2, including final check by experts.
4. Draft final report disseminated to the EC.
5. Incorporating EC comments into the final report (i.e. elaborating on the strategic added value of the work of the RIS Expert Groups (=justification for possible future financial support) and a description of possible governance mechanisms for the RIS Expert Groups)
6. Dissemination final report to EC.

The major questions of the inquiry are:

- Do the RIS EGs provide Value Added?
- Should the quality of the RIS standards developed by the RIS EGs be improved - especially in view of the ambitions defined by the European Commission in its new White Paper on Transport, i.e. better exploitation of a modern infrastructure? Are the current RIS standardisation processes aligned on an adequate European level?
- How do the Expert Groups work together and reconcile their aims?
- What are the possible options to structurally support the Expert Groups?¹

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The answers are provided in chapter 3.

To execute a sound research, a questionnaire has been developed (annex 1) and discussed. The major findings are incorporated in the report. Annex 2 includes a list of RIS EGs experts, including the experts that contributed to this report. More elaborate results of the questionnaire and its follow up process are presented in annexes 3 and 4. Annex 5 presents a proposal for a Commission set of rules of procedure for structural support to the work of the RIS EGs. This proposal is based on the EC “Rules of the procedure for the Maritime Administrative Simplification and Electronic Information Services, the ‘eMS” Group of 15 March 2011.

The first results of the inquiry were presented and discussed with the (co)chairpersons and several RIS experts on 14 June 2011 in Rotterdam. Based on the results of the questionnaire and the outcome of the discussion on 14 June 2011 this report has been written. On 15 July 2011 the draft final report has been sent for comments to the respondents to the questionnaire and participants in the meeting of 14 June. They have been requested to react before 1 September 2011. Based on these responses a final report was drafted and sent to the PLATINA project coordinator to be disseminated to the EC.

The report covers the following chapters related to the RIS Expert Groups:

1. The state of play.
2. The future.
3. Summary of the finding based on the RIS EG questionnaire.
4. Assessment of the strategic and structural position of the RIS EGs into the EU RIS policy implementation process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

General (EGs strongholds – Value Added)

- The Expert Groups (EGs) are essential for a coherent RIS implementation in Europe, covering a wider area than only the 27 EU Member States, including the specifications and maintenance of the technical specifications.
- Without the works of the EGs the RIS Framework directives could not have been materialized, thus a European RIS dimension would have not been allowed to be established.
- EGs generally cover government and business interests, as well as technical skills and capacity to connect to policy.
- All European countries interested in RIS deployment substantially benefit from the work of the EGs.
- All international organisations in Europe involved in RIS depend on the work of the EGs.

The vulnerabilities in the EGs functioning are:

- The workload is substantial and often depends on just a few people with the required knowledge.
- The work depends on voluntary participation and is not financed other than by national administrations, stakeholders organisations and private companies covering the costs.²
- Structural support on an administrative as well as on a content level is lacking³. The latter could relate to the following items:

² Software companies and application builders are not paid for their contributions to the EGs by stakeholder organisations

³ Remarks: The secretariat of CCNR provides for structural support of working groups. This does not mean that CCNR has to provide the structural support for the EGs, but the work of the chief engineer of CCNR could be used as an example how to provide effective secretarial support.

- Q&A.
 - Preparation of meetings.
 - Preparation and distribution of documents.
 - Web portal.
 - Follow-up of activities.
 - Keeping up-to-date member and distribution lists.
- The period between proposing a new standard and adoption and publication of the standard by the EU (respectively UNECE and River Commissions) is uncertain and often far too long.
 - A close working relationship to the EC, UNECE and the River commissions has not materialized yet.
 - The members of the EGs consistently emphasize the need to remain independent, thereby jeopardizing the opportunity for possible structural financial contribution of an institutionalized organisation.

Proposals for improvements:

Closer involvement of the various European institutions (EC possibly in combination with UNECE and the river commissions) with the work of the EGs is required to allow for a next step in the professionalization of the work of the EGs. A way forward is to include the work of the EGs into a EU legal framework. Within this EU legal framework it should be recognising that the EGs:

- Depend on expertise, which act with a clear mandate of the countries they represent.
- Cover relevant EU Member States (river based) and neighbouring relevant countries such as Croatia, Serbia and Switzerland.
- Are provided with:
 - Necessary financing for secretarial support (content and administration, i.e web-master RIS portal and EGs web applications).
 - Budget to cover travel expenditures and expert participation.

- Arrangements that EG proposals are dealt by EC, UNECE and the international river commissions within an agreed timeframe (according to procedures).
- Primarily support the execution of RIS policy objectives, i.e. assist the work of the RIS Committee and work according to an agreed agenda.

Recommendations

1. The EC officially recognizes the importance of the EGs to the successful implementation of RIS throughout Europe.
2. The EC allocates budget for structural support to the work of the EGs covering structural secretarial support for a minimum 6 year period covering human resources, travel expenses, website maintenance and development.
3. The EC develops a procedure how to incorporate the EGs into its RIS implementation policy proces. This includes formal procedure how to deal with EGs proposals, also in relation to the EU RIS Committee and the issues addressed in 2.
4. The EGs acknowledge that a financial contribution of the EC implies limitations to its agenda setting and the need for a clear representation of the EU Member States and possible EU neighbouring countries in the EGs
5. Discussions between EC, RIS Committee and EGs on the further developments.

Possible EC framework to provide EGs with EU support

The possible EC support to the EGs, including financial support (human resources and travel), could be developed in the context of:

- New EC NAIADES legislation, and/or
- Amendment to the Directive 2005/44/EC , and/or
- EC “Rules of procedure for the Expert Group on RIS”, which will constitute a sufficient legal basis for reimbursement.

1 STATE OF PLAY RIS EXPERT GROUPS

The findings in this chapter are based on the outcome of a questionnaire (see annex), i.e. covering:

- The members.
- The meetings.
- The standards.
- Implementation.

All (co)chairpersons of the RIS Expert Groups and several experts have participated in the questionnaire (the respondents).

1.1 The RIS EG members

There is a consensus in the RIS community that the variety in members during the meeting is reasonable well. Nonetheless, there could be some improvements; - EGs could use some more representatives of the private sector. Also, at times technical expertise without practical knowledge of inland navigation and/or existing standards and procedures can be a bit too dominant. A risk for the EGs, is that the bulk of the work is executed by only a very small core group of people. If one of these people leaves the field, this can cause a tremendous gap. Moreover, it could make it more difficult for the remaining people to keep their motivation high and achieve good results.

In some EGs, it regularly happens that proposals are being refused due to a political agenda of some delegations. Nevertheless, all responders agree that proposals of the EGs should not be about a Member State interests, but should be based on content – the need to act on behalf of RIS interoperability in Europe. Furthermore, all respondents agree that all the stakeholders are involved in the process of making a standard.

A weakness of the EGs which is hard to overcome, is the fact that because of lack of priority or sometimes the lack of budget (e.g. private sector, hired consultants) some people disappear from the group. This can be mostly compensated by some financial support, at least in a way that limits the costs for participating.

Lastly, all respondents feel that the core group of working people of the EGs should receive more appreciation for their work. European harmonization can be in the hands of few, but should be supported by many. Therefore, an improvement in structure and organisation could prevent that the efforts that are being made depend too much on the goodwill of a small core group of working people, e.g. the chairpersons of the Expert Groups and their assistants.

The type of members that are preferably active in the EGs, are members with:

- Technical knowledge, most preferable IT knowledge.
- Practical knowledge (e.g. generation/publication of NtS, generation/publication of electronic reports, chart producers, users of Inland ECDIS, software providers, working with electronic reports in real navigation situation (e.g. Vessel Traffic Services).
- Knowledge of the legal framework.
- Knowledge, management and control of the overall standardisation process. This requires general project management skills and a good knowledge of the complex RIS standardisation environment (RIS EGs, European Commission, EU RIS Committee, Central Commission for Navigation on the River Rhine, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe).
- Knowledge from pilot implementation/operation of draft standards.
- General skills: motivation to contribute to the work of the Expert Groups, not only participating at the meetings.

More specific remarks that were made by respondents on things that can perhaps be improved are stated in annex 1.

1.2 The RIS EG meetings

All respondents agree that following support is needed:

- Financial support for the location (meeting) cost,
- Financial support for travel expenses of the RIS EGs members,
- Preparatory work of all the members,

- Secretarial support to the chairpersons – preparation of meetings, ensuring the follow up progress and support to the management of the Expert Groups besides the official meetings of the EGs are needed.

It was mentioned that some of the financial support (e.g. travel expenses) should be fixed (a fixed compensation). This will make participation in the EG meetings easier to explain to your own organisation. All respondents consent that the European Commission should accommodate this, as the European Commission is the most important stakeholder.

Some of the mentioned risks by respondents for conducting constructive meetings are:

- Lack of preparation of delegations.
- Sometimes political interest interfering with the technical/strategic work of the EGs.
- A lack of discussion among participants.
- Increasing de-motivation of the 'core group' of people and
- (to some degree) Lack of transparency in the decision process.

1.3 The RIS Standards

All respondents agree on the importance of the RIS EGs for harmonized standards (see annex 2). Without the EGs work RIS would be less advanced and implemented, especially from cross-bordering issues and technology developments.

The EG meetings also serve as an important meeting opportunity for project members, private companies and the governmental experts. In the past, the different EGs executed their tasks independently from each other, because the topics were not so interrelated. Nowadays there is more and more need for cooperation between EGs, as applications request an integral approach. Additionally, within some of the EGs a better harmonization on a technical level would be most welcome.

The chairpersons of the four EGs increasingly work together. This is also valid for many EG members (e.g. the set up and operation of the Joint Task Force on the RIS Index Encoding Guide). According to some, this cooperation should become more regular and better coordinated. The 'common issues meeting' has not provided a substantial platform to identify and cover the various common and emerging issues, yet. So attention should remain to achieve

this. Although some things should be improved, all agree that the chairs work very hard and do their utmost to achieve the maximum with the means they have available.

All respondents expressed the strong opinion that the slow procedure of the European Commission in publishing the standards is a big obstacle.⁴ Moreover, there are no defined mechanisms for updating of standards. The European Commission can not adapt automatically the standards nor make references to an external source, without following the legal procedures for the publication of standards. The effectiveness of the EG work is jeopardized by the fact that the EU RIS Committee could not meet on a regular basis. In these meetings strategic and political outlines for the RIS standards could be discussed and proposals for standards can be agreed on, thus being implemented – published - in the EU.

1.4 RIS Implementation

All respondents agree that quite some promotion is done and articles written about the standards. Additional efforts by the EC would be appreciated, as RIS implementation is also dependent on RIS knowledge on a business level (skippers') level. Prompt reaction of the EC to transpose EG standard proposals into EU legislation would substantially contribute to effective RIS implementation, which would probably also enhance RIS awareness in business.

The EG format for proposals is not the same format as the European Commission uses. This is not perceived to be the problem by the EG⁵ chairs for the slow acceptance of the standard by the European Commission, but constitutes a significant part of the problem. Due to a lack of human resources, the European Commission cannot always keep up with the work of EGs

⁴ It has also been remarked that some countries are not so pleased when standards are often revised, as this will cost money

⁵ The European Commission believes however that this constitutes a significant part of the problem together with the fact that the EC is not allowed to automatically adapt the text of a standard to a document developed by a third party.

by way of amending the standard, as an automatic adaption of EU texts to documents developed by a third party is not allowed.

2 THE FUTURE OF THE RIS EGS

The importance of the work of the independent EGs is recognized by all relevant international organizations. Various organizations are relying on the EGs work and share common standards (as far as they have already been published). If this European approach is endangered, it would end up in the situation of non coherent technical and nautical regulations. This will probably cost a lot of additional human resources and could endanger the compatibility of RIS in various regions.

Regarding possible improvements, the current EGs vulnerabilities, possible solutions and a new framework have been identified.

2.1 Vulnerabilities

The major identified threats to the future of the RIS EGs if things continue to be unchanged are:

- No structural (content related) secretarial support.
- Decreasing interest in the work of the Expert Groups by the different stakeholders.
- Decreasing level of commitment towards the work of the Expert Groups.
- Loss of expertise within the Expert Groups.
- Stagnation in the further development and improvement of RIS.
- EU RIS projects no longer allow travel expenses for participation in EG meetings to be financed (compensated)
- If private companies do not voluntarily implement the adopted changes in the digital parts of the standard and there is no funding for this work, it is not possible to maintain the standard.
- The standards for inland and maritime charts might drift apart, which would endanger the compatibility and the recognition of Inland Electronic Navigational Charts by the International Hydrographical Organisation (IHO).

The respondents believe that a too much centralised organization will lead to a disappearance of the independence of its participants. Actually, procedures are not that stringent and allow flexibility.⁶

2.2 Identified solutions

The EGs propose the following solutions to cope with these risks:

- Full recognition of the EC to the work and objectives of the Expert Groups, thereby acknowledging that the EGs substantially contribute to delivering the objective of the EU RIS agenda.
- Definition of a visionary working programme for the Expert Groups (with a possible alignment to a common RIS Strategy 2020).
- Facilitation of compromise solutions for the implementation of Standards (e.g. the national legal situation not always allows a complete implementation of the Standards; gap analysis to be made; recommendations for adaptation of national legal situation to be provided).
- Common issues among all Expert Groups should be identified and covered in an efficient way (e.g. RIS Index).
- Improvement of transparency in the working procedures with the European Commission
- Funding for the production of the digital parts of the Inland ECDIS standard.
- Funding for the maintenance of the Inland ENC domain in the registry of IHO.
- Financial support for the cooperation with various relevant international organisations, i.e. IHO, UNECE.
- Secretarial support for the EGs especially the chairpersons. A permanent secretariat could be set up with sufficient financing, preferably to be financed by the European Commission as this will lead to concerted harmonization,.
- Available reimbursement budget for travel expenses to allow participation in EG meetings.

⁶ This is the generic perspective expressed by the respondents, which follows the idea that the EC should provide the financial means for their work, whereby the EC does not interfere in the workflow management. It is unlikely the European Commission will support this idea.

- Structural solution to publish the standards within a limited timeframe after being proposed by the EG.
- The expert group website could be utilized in a better way to exchange views (community portal), possibly in combination with the RIS portal.
- Not to make new standards, only adjustments and changes on the basis of implementation issues. Try to let the countries come to an equal level of implementation. Actually, some countries cannot cope with the pace of the new implementations. This should be done first (implement → gain experience → evaluate). Only when this has been achieved, one can look if there is a demand for new developments. These new developments should be determined by the users and not by the technical competence.

The RIS EGs Terms of Reference are currently accepted by all expert groups. The existing yearly two meetings (one RIS week) provide a good opportunity for expert to meet officially and also to have side meetings. The Terms of Reference (ToR) are a basic framework for the work of the EGs. As yet, not all respondents believe the current ToR's are sufficient. As yet, no ideas are launched to further elaborate on the existing ToR's.

2.3 Framework solutions

Various ideas have been brought up to provide for an overarching framework to accommodate several of the identified problems. This subchapter identifies:

- EG functioning under auspice of a formal institution
- EG under CEN umbrella

2.3.1 EG functioning under auspices of a formal institution

There appears to be mutual understanding that the RIS EGs could be structured under the auspices of the European Commission - RIS Committee - or under a partnership of River commissions. Respondents said this was possible as well as a combination of the two (European Commission - RIS Committee and a partnerships of River commissions). There seems to be an agreement that the placing under an institution is desirable when certain conditions are met. The conditions mentioned are:

- The EG work covers all relevant European countries, not EU Member States only.

- According to the respondents, the RIS EGs must keep their independence on several areas. The European Commission should not dictate how the RIS EGs should operate. It is important that the experts are free-standing of administrative and political interests. Moreover, the involvement of the River commissions must be ensured.⁷

Furthermore, points that are made are: *“I believe that next to the procedures we should look at the practical needs. Like the ‘safe-sea-net’ model (maritime)... That will better ensure the future of the RIS EGs”* – “It might be a good idea to let an organization set up something that could/should take care about the IWT/RIS/etc. issues such as EMSA in the maritime sector. This could ensure the future operation of some joint results (EU Hull Database, Electronic Reporting and Document Management System, RIS Expert Groups)”. – “We should prevent creating parallel circuits, as a lot of divided discussions lead up to bad compromises and the political agenda could get more influence, currently this it is fine. As regard to content as little as possible should be changed, however process wise some changes can certainly be made.”

2.3.2 EG under CEN umbrella

The respondents are very critical towards the CEN-procedure. They seem to agree that procedures are considerable formalized and the results are often very unconvincing⁸. The current EGs are much more effective. Besides, it is thought that CEN would not solve any of the existing problems of the EGs. Furthermore, an important RIS country like Russia is not a CEN member.

⁷ This is explicitly not the opinion of the PLATINA project: it is the outcome of the questionnaire

⁸ It should be noted that not all respondents are familiar with the CEN procedures and results

3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION BASED ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE (VIEW OF THE EXPERT GROUPS)

Harmonization is the adjustment of differences and inconsistencies among different measurements, methods, procedures, schedules, specifications, or systems to make them uniform or mutually compatible. This is what the EGs do in Europe for River Information Services. A lot of work has been done by a “core group” of people who devote their private time and effort to harmonize RIS in Europe by means of developing standards. In the coming years they will need support to function properly.

Returning to the main questions which were raised in the introduction of this discussion note:

Do the RIS EGs provide Value Added?

Yes. All respondents fully agree on the importance of the EGs for RIS standardisation and harmonization in Europe. Without the RIS Expert Groups, RIS development and implementation would be in an immature phase.

Should the quality of the RIS standards developed by the RIS EGs be improved, especially in view of the ambitions defined by the European Commission in the new White Paper, and are the processes aligned on an adequate European level?

Yes. The quality of the process of making/updating/evaluating (the implementation) of standards can be improved. Certainly, structural support is needed. Risks have been mentioned and possible solutions have been elaborated in the previous chapters. The processes seem to get more and more aligned on a European level as for instance the terms of reference are being made. Yet, still there is much to be improved.

How do the Expert Groups work together, do they cooperate and reconcile their aims?

The chairpersons of the EGs increasingly cooperate, requiring additional efforts. In future more efforts will be needed to invest in cooperation in order to safeguard harmonized RIS implementation across Europe.

What are the possible scenarios for the future of the Expert Groups?

All respondents seem to agree that the RIS EGs could be formally placed under an institution under the condition this would allow the EGs:

- to obtain the institutional/financial support they greatly need.
- to remain independent. This institution cannot tell the RIS EGs exactly how to operate and the RIS EGs must keep their independence on several areas. It is important that the experts are freestanding of administrative and political interests. Moreover, the involvements of the River commissions need to be ensured.
- to ensure that membership is not reduced to the countries represented in the institution (to be open for all interested parties).
- allow every member the same rights.

Recommendations:

In order to structurally safeguard the work of the EGs, the EC is advised:

1. To officially recognizes the importance of the EGs to the successful implementation of RIS throughout Europe.
2. To allocates budget for structural support to the work of the EGs covering structural secretarial support for a minimum 6 year period covering human resources, travel expenses, website maintenance and development.
3. To develop a procedure how to incorporate the EGs into its RIS implementation policy. This includes formal procedure how to deal with EGs proposals, also in relation to the EU RIS Committee and the issues addressed in 2.

The possible EC support to the EGs, including financial support (human resources and travel), could be developed:

- In the context of new EC NAIADES legislation.
- As an Amendment to the Directive 2005/44/EC.
- As EC “Rules of procedure for the Expert Group on RIS”. These could be similar to the Maritime Administrative Simplification and Electronic Information Services, the ‘eMS’ Group of 15 March 2011.

It is recommended to identify what elements should remain independent, when EGs would be working in a more regulated institutional framework. Institutional bodies for RIS (European

Commission, RIS Committee, River Commissions, UN ECE) could perhaps find a common agreement on for example a "RIS Strategy 2020", defining a common work programme for the RIS Expert Groups.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC AND STRUCTURAL POSITION OF THE RIS EXPERT GROUPS INTO THE EU RIS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on final considerations based on the opinion of the DVS PLATINA SWP5.2 team regarding the strategic added value of the RIS Expert Groups and a possible governance mechanism. The previous chapters are based on the opinion and insight of the RIS expert groups members. During the research, the DVS RIS PLATINA team tried to translate the results and conclusions from the previous chapters into a focussed EU RIS governance structure. Various options have been presented and discussed with the most prominent members of the EGs. However, consensus has not been achieved. This chapter elaborates on the DVS RIS PLATINA team insights and ideas as acquired after four year of cooperation with the RIS Expert Groups and the EC.

4.2 EG Expert Group strategic value

The previous chapters have made clear that the main added value of the RIS Expert Groups lies in their status as platforms with the needed expertise to make RIS implementation technically possible on a coherent way.

The strategic value from EU perspective is their power to deliver technical solutions which are accepted by the River Commissions and other international bodies, leading to consistency among EU Member States and between the EU and other relevant countries. It is important to underline that this power relies mainly on the fact that their results are being used by the River Commissions and other international bodies.

4.3 Governance mechanisms

RIS can only be successful if all the stakeholders participate towards the establishment and execution of a coordinated strategy. An effective working governance mechanism strength-

ens leadership and empower stakeholders, increasing their motivation to contribute to the development and implementation of RIS.

An effective governance to include the RIS Expert Groups into the European RIS policy process should incorporate the following features:

- The EC in cooperation with the countries and the stakeholder organisations develop the European RIS policy: the European RIS steering platform⁹
- The EU Member States, the EC and the RIS committee, with representation from national authorities are responsible for implementation of the RIS policy, e.g. RIS framework directive.
- RIS expert groups regularly evaluate the standards and their implementation with the goal to assure coherence among the EU Member States and between the EU and other relevant countries and regions.
- RIS expert groups advise the various international organisations and the RIS Committee on the need to update standards and make proposals when requested based on the agenda setting as established by the RIS steering platform.
- EU Member States and neighbouring countries execute RIS work, often EU co-financed both on strategic and operational level such as RIS policy impact analysis, and realizing European RIS components (i.e. Hull Database). (Multi) national projects implement RIS on corridors and bring the RIS infrastructure to the agreed deployment levels on due time.
- Industry provides instruments to allow for services to the end users: hardware, software and users support needed to connect to the RIS infrastructure and pull there from the services.¹⁰

⁹ According to the EC Staff Working Document Towards "NAIADES II", Promoting, greening and integrating inland waterway transport in the single EU transport area - Brussels, 31.5.2012 SWD(2012) 168 final, the EC intends to establish a RIS joint steering platform. This platform should be chaired by the European Commission with the support of TEN-T EA and composed of representatives of the Member States, stakeholders, River Commissions and the UN/ECE and should be set up for this purpose with the following tasks:

1. to follow the RIS policy evaluation and to act upon its recommendations; to elaborate a joint RIS implementation strategy, setting out cooperation mechanisms for streamlined governance and implementation monitoring mechanisms;
2. to monitor the international data exchange systems and to provide guidance for their further development;
3. to elaborate a strategic RIS investment perspective 2014-2020 which will be updated on a yearly basis and which should feed into the CEF instruments;
4. to discuss annual work programmes for RIS expert groups and to provide strategic orientation.

4.4 Incorporating the RIS Expert groups into the EU RIS governance mechanisms

Consolidated action between the EC and the EU Member States and the relevant neighbouring countries is essential for developing sustainable RIS governance including the work of the RIS Expert Groups

Regarding the institutional framing of the RIS Expert Groups, whatever the EC chooses as solution, the most important conditions, to be met are:

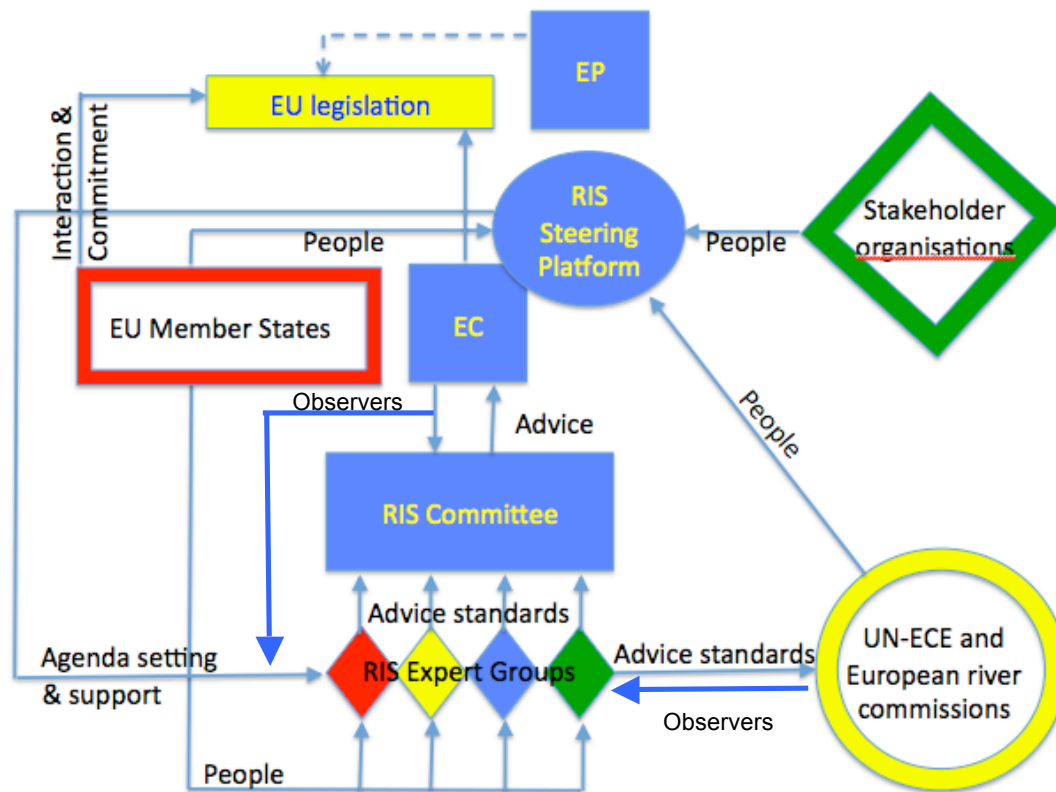
- The recognition of the Expert Group's work by all the River Commissions and other international bodies.
- Remedy the vulnerabilities of the Expert Groups (non substantial structural support, agenda setting at random, focus on independence, indecisive legislative procedures after recommending standards, absence of reimbursement procedures)
- Long term, common view to allow full stakeholdership in RIS EG participating interest.

The RIS governmental structure as proposed is illustrated hereunder¹¹

¹⁰ The PLATINA D 5.4 report provides an inventory on required hardware and software on board of a vessel

¹¹ In the illustration it is not clarified that RIS EGs, and not only the Steering Platform should be populated not only by EU Member State and neighbouring states representatives, but also by the UN-ECE, River Commissions and stakeholders' organisations. It should be further discussed whether this will lead to duplications and how to solve this.

EUROPEAN RIS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE (PROPOSED)



Concerning the RIS Expert Groups legal status, Annex 5 proposes a legal provision: Rules of procedures for the RIS Expert Groups on standardization and harmonization of the River Information Services, the “RIS Expert Groups”. (Annex 5 text is inspired by the procedures as established for the eMS group).

ANNEX 1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions relate to the members:

1. What is the variety in members during the meetings?

Are there enough members from the private sector as well as the public sector represented in the EGs.

1. Yes.
2. No,

2. What is the variety in members during the meetings?

Is the division between (technical) expertise and practical knowledge aligned?

1. Yes.
2. No,

3. What kind of people are necessary in the Expert Groups and are these people always involved in the development of a standard (upgrade)?

4. In what way do the EGs select the required members to function properly and be a good representation of the sector (people who are actively involved in the sector, bring expertise, and/or are willing to make an effort in the realization of a RIS standard).

5. Are all the stakeholders, to whom the standards apply, involved in the process of making a standard (upgrade)?

1. Yes.
2. No,

6. How is the continuity of the composition of the groups secured during the process of developing or upgrading a standard?

7. In what way is the continuity of the composition of the groups sufficiently secured for the future?

Should this be strengthened?

8. What is going well and what needs to be improved?

In addition:

1. What are the obstacles?
2. Are the tasks evenly divided between the members or has the chairman a disproportionate part?

9. Timewise, is the process of developing a proposal for a standard easy to manage?

1. Yes , (because/but).
2. No, (.....).

The following questions relate to the meetings:

1. Why do the RIS EG members come together?

1. This is time/agenda-based (The meetings are planned to exchange information and see each other).
2. This is demand-based (When a stakeholder has an idea for a standard or standard upgrade).
3. Other.

2. What is absolutely necessary for a meeting? Choose one or more numbers:

1. Nothing, the current arrangements work well.
2. Financial support for the location.
3. Travel expenses of the RIS EGs members.
4. Preparatory work of all the members.
5. Support for setting the agenda and chairmanship.
6. An secretary (administrator) who maintains in contact with the members and invites the members for the meetings.

3. Are there obstacles for having constructive meetings?

1. No.
2. Yes, namely

4. Are meetings the right working form for making high-quality standards (upgrades)?

1. Yes.
2. No, a better alternative form could be

The following questions relate to the standards:

1. What are the major arguments for deciding whether a standard should be developed or upgraded?

2. How does a proposal (or upgrade) for a standard originate? Is a proposal (or upgrade) of a standard developed because it is necessary or because members believe something can be improved?

3. How important are the EGs to a coherent RIS in the EU?

4. Do the different RIS EGs cooperate and work together to achieve the best possible standards?

5. What is going well and what needs to be improved?

The following questions relate to the implementation:

1. What happens with the proposals for a standard (upgrade) made by the EGs?

2. Are the proposals written in the right format?

3. How are the proposals explained and to whom?

4. Can stakeholders ask questions about the proposals and to whom?

5. Are the proposals accepted by and implemented (on time) by the EU or/and the River Commissions or/and other organizations?

The following questions relate to the future of the RIS EGs (after PLATINA):

1. What are the coming threats if things continue to be as they are now?

2. What can be improved in the process of making RIS standards (upgrades) to have harmonized RIS across Europe in the future?

3. If the existence of the current RIS EGs is desirable, how can their survival be ensured?

4. Should there be a framework which could allow the EGs an effective working environment?

5. How could a new framework be developed?

The questions 6 until 10 relate to possible options for the future of RIS EGs. Try to ask yourself the following when answering to questions below: Why is this an option or why not? What are the advantages and what are the disadvantages of this solution? What are the risks of this option? How can this option be achieved?

6. Is it an idea to create small task-force groups with members of the four current RIS EGs, and let them report to one general (umbrella) EG?

7. Could the RIS EGs be placed under the auspices of the European Commission - RIS Committee?

8. Could the RIS EGs be placed under a River commission or a partnership of River commissions?

9. Should the RIS EGs remain 'independent'?

1. Yes, because
2. No, because

If so, what is needed?

10. Would the CEN-procedure be an option within the EGs can develop RIS standards (upgrades)?

ANNEX 2 LIST EG MEMBERS

The RIS Experts which contributed to this report have been identified in yellow.

				EG			
				E			
				C			
				V D N E			
				T I T R			
Country	Name		Organisation	T	S	S	I
International	Mr. Cekota	Jaromir	UNECE-Economic Commission for Europe of the UN	X			
	Mr. Gernot	Pauli	CCNR			X	X
	Mr. Lesch	Andreas	Nauticast	X			
	Mr. Margic	Petar	Danube Commission	X	X	X	X
Austria	Mr. Baeck	Andreas	Via-Donau	X		X	X
	Mr. Birkhuber	Bernd	BMVIT- Chair ECDIS	X	X		X
	Mr. Nemeth	Johannes	Via-Donau	X			
	Mr. Plasil	Christoph	Via-Donau			X	X
	Mr. Sattler	Mario	Via-Donau			X	X
	Mr. Schedlbauer	Markus	Via Donau	X			
	Mr. Trogl	Jurgen	Min. Traffic	X			
	Ms. Vladimirova	Ralitza	Via Donau	X			
Belgium	Mr. Benoit	Adam	Transport Maritieme	X	X	X	
	Mr. Botte	Luc	Periskal Group Belgium	X			
	Mr. Collard	Christophe	Waterwegen & zeekanaal NV	X			
	Mr. Creemers	Piet	Waterwegen & zeekanaal NV	X		X	
			Min.de l'Équipement et des Trans-				
	Mr. Ferrara	Gianni	ports	X	X	X	
	Mr. Hacha	Yves	Tresco Engineering	X			
	Mr. Jacobs	Jo	Tresco Engineering	X			
	Mr. Javor	Annick	Binnenvaart	X		X	X
	Mr. Kalfsvel	Wim	Periskal Group Belgium	X			

				EG			
	Mr. Moens	Pascal	MET-DGVH		X	X	
	Mr. Morlion	Gert	Nu de Scheepvaart		X		
	Mr. Persoons	Marc	Periskal Group Belgium		X	X	X
	Mr. Smets	Eric	CETUS		X	X	
	Mr. Torfs	Johan	De Scheepvaart – Vicechair ERI		X	X	
	Mr. Vermeir	Dierik	Alsic – Vicechair NtS		X	X	
Bulgaria	Mr. Dimitrov	Victor	Executive Agency Maritime Admin- stration		X		
			Chief Inspector Inland Waterway Transport				X
	Mr. Ignatov	Ivan	AEDMR- Ministry of Transport and Communications		X		X
	Ms. Ivanova	Desislava	Executive Agency Maritime Admin- stration				X
	Mr. Kirov	Peter	Executive Agency Maritime Admin- stration		X		
	Mr. Kuzmanov	Zlatko	Executive Agency Maritime Admin- stration		X		
	Mr. Marchevski	Pavlin	Executive Agency Maritime Admin- stration		X	X	
			Ministry of Transport and Communi- cations				X
	Ms. Terzieva	Desisslava					X
	Mr. Boflek	Vedran	CRUP		X	X	X
Croatia	Mr. Dropic	Zoran	CRUP			X	X
	Mr. Hrg	Davor	CRUP			X	
	Mr. Milkovic	Zeljko	Sava Commission			X	X
	Mr. Obad	Damir	CRUP		X	X	X
	Mr. Ruzic	Ivica	Rudjer Boskovic Institute		X	X	X
					X	X	X
Czech Republic							
	Mr. Bukovsky	Jan	The Waterways directorate of the Czech Republic				X
	Mr. Dabrowski	Vojtech	Ministry of Transport		X	X	X
	Ms. Finstrlova	Lenka	Vars Brno		X		
	Mr. Robert	Knap	Vars Brno		X		
	Mr. Rychtarik	Miroslav	State Navigation Authority		X		

				EG	
France	Mr. Sladek	Vaclav	RVC- waterways directorate	X	X
	Mr. Biban Le	Pol	Geomod	X	
	Ms. Bironneau	Jacky	SVC	X	
	Mr. Blakeway	Alaric	VNF (Voies Navigable France)		X
	Mr. Cessieux	Camille	VNF (Voies Navigable France)	X	
	Ms. Coppeaux	Julie	VNF (Voies Navigable France)		X
Ger- many	Ms. Leleu	Catharine	VNF (Voies Navigable France)	X	X
	Mr. Kanschine	Andre	VNF (Voies Navigable France)	X	
			EDF- Groupe d'exploitation Hydraulique Rhin		X
	Mr. Roland	Christophe			X
	Ms. Taffin	Virginie	VNF (Voies Navigable France)	X	X
	Mr. Bober	Stefan	WSV-Wasser- und Schifffahrtsverwaltung des Bundes - Chair VTT	X	
	Mr. Brunsch	Michael	WSV-Wasser- und Schifffahrtsverwaltung des Bundes		X
	Mr. Buscher	Michael	Fed. Waterways and Shipping Administration	X	
	Mr. Haberkamp	Hermann	Fed. Waterways and Shipping Administration		
	Mr. Dittmar	Jorg	WVS-Wasser- und Schifffahrtsverwaltung des Bundes		X
	Mrs Elits	Meike	Federal Ministry of transport and Buildings		
	Ms. Fiedler	Swetlana	Seven Cs	X	
	Mr Gehlhaar	Arne	ISL		
	Mr. Gern	Thomas	IN- Innovatieve Navigation		
	Mr. Gund	Stefan	Port of Hamburg		X
	Mr. Haberkamp	Hermann	Fachstelle fuer Verkehrstechnik	X	
	Mr. Jaberg	Heiko	IN- Innovatieve Navigation	X	
	Mr. Klein	Oliver	ISL		
	Mr. Lietzau	Roger	WVS-Wasse- und Schifffahrtsverwal-		X

				EG		
		tung des Bundes				
	Mr. Lutz	Alexander	University Stuttgart	X		
	Mr. Mong	Eivind	Jepessen	X		
			WVS-Wasse- und Schifffahrtsverwal-			
	Mr. Polschinski	Mathias	tung des Bundes		X	X
	Mr. Rink	Wilfried	Fachstelle fuer Verkehrstechnik	X		
	Mr. Rottmann	Eric	Seven Cs	X		
	Mr. Sandler	Martin	IN- Innovatieve Navigation			
			Fed. Waterways and Shipping Ad-			
	Mr. Steinhuber	Ludwig	ministration	X		
	Mr. Vetterlein	Hans-Uwe	Fachstelle fuer Verkehrstechnik	X		
			WVS-Wasse- und Schifffahrtsverwal-			
	Mr. Wepper	Heinz	tung des Bundes			X
	Mr. Zentgraf	Rolf	BAW	X		
	Mr. Zimmerman	Reinhard	IN- Innovatieve Navigation	X		
Hungary	Mr. Bago	Gyorgy	RSOE	X		
	Mr. Bellyei	Csaba	National Transport Authority	X	X	X
	Mr. Farago	Csaba	RSOE			
	Mr. Kojnok	Robert	National Transport Authority		X	X
	Mr. Kovacs	Csaba	RSOE	X	X	
	Mr. Mayer	Istvan	Vituki		X	
	Mr. Mezo	Gergely	general Inspectorate of Transport			X
	Mr. Pal	Erno	KTI		X	
	Mr. Radoczy	Akos	KTI		X	X
	Mr. Rafael	Robert	RSOE- Chair VTT	X	X	X
	Mr. Redly	Laszlo	Vituki		X	X
	Mr. Szilard	Sarkozi	Transportation Safety Bureau		X	X
Italy	Mr. Crose	Luca	ARNI	X		
	Mr. D'Aquino	David	Jepessen Marine Italy	X		
Luxem- bourg	Mr. Schmidt	Michel				X

				EG		
Nether-lands The	Burgt van					
	Mr. der	Therry	Rijkswaterstaat		X	
	Mr. Haag van	Nick	Bureau Telematik			X
	Mr. Gils van	Jeffrey	Rijkswaterstaat	X		
	Heijden van					
	Mr. der	Wim		X		
	Mr. Hoekstra	Daniel	Rijkswaterstaat			X
	Mr. Jeeringa	Bert	QPS		X	
	Mr. Kouwenberg	Hans	Noordersoft		X	X
	Ms. Kluytenaar	Pieta	Serendipity – Vicechair ECDIS	X	X	X
	Mr. Laar van	Henk	Bureau Telematik			
	Leeuw van					
	Mr. Weeben de	Jan	Rijkswaterstaat			X
			SVC Rijkswaterstaat (Global Solu-			
	Mr. Lijster de	Lex	tions)			X
	Mr. Nefkens	Pieter Jan	Nefkensadvies	X		X
	Mr. Oudenes	Peter	Enovation - SVC Rijkswaterstaat			X
	Schwarz-					
	Mr. berg	Peter	CARIS		X	
	Mr. Snoek	Willem	Port of Rotterdam		X	
Splunder						
Mr. van	Jos	Rijkswaterstaat - Chair ERI	X	X	X	
Mr. Stuurman	Peter	Rijkswaterstaat – Vicechair VTT	X			
Mr. Ven van de	Ron	Rijkswaterstaat			X	
Mr. Visser	Rene	Ministry of Transport		X	X	
Weerd van						
Mr. de	Chris	Havenbedrijf Rotterdam N.V.			X	
		Faculty of Navigation, Maritime Uni-				
Poland	Mr. Kazimierski	Witfold	versity of Szczecin	X	X	
			Faculty of Navigation, Maritime Uni-			
	Mr. Lisaj	Andrzej	versity of Szczecin	X	X	X

				EG
Romania	Mr. Stateczny	Andrzej	Faculty of Navigation, Maritime University of Szczecin	X X X
	Mr. Apostol	Silviu	Romanian Naval Authority	X
	Mr. Blede	Christian	Ministry of Transport	X
	Mr. Dumitrescu	Dorin	ITS Romania	X X X
	Mr. Dutu	Claudiu	AFDJ Galati	X
	Mr. Ghiba	Mihai	Romanian Naval Authority	X
	Mr. Lazar	Robert	Teamnet	X X
	Mr. Niculescu	Mihai	ITS Romania	X X
	Mr. Pricop	Laurentiu	Romanian Naval Authority	X X
	Mr. Soare	Romeo	AFDJ Galati	X
Russia	Mr. Tanasescu	Teodor	AFDJ Galati	X
	Mr. Sekachev	Vladimir	Transas ZAO and authorized by MoT	X
	Mr. Spigar	Sinisa	SAVA-Internationaal Sava River Basin Commission	X X
Serbia	Mr. Stosic	Tihomir	Plovput	X
	Mr. Vladanka	ovic	Acimovic-Raspopovic University	X
	Mr. Zoran	Lukic	Plovput	X X X X
	Mr. Chalupka	Stefan	SPS - State Navigation Administration	X X
	Mr. Chochula	Michal	KIOS, s.r.o.	X X
Slovak Republic	Ms. Jakesova	Bozena	SVP - Slovak Water Management Enterprise	X
	Mr. Moravcik	Jozef	SPS - State Navigation Administration	X
	Mr. Polhorsky	Stefan	SVP - Slovak Water Management Enterprise	X X
	Mr. Vanicek	Martej	Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunication	X

				EG		
	Mr. Zitnasky	Peter	VUD - Transport Research Institute	X	X	X
Switzer- land	Mr. Buhler	Max	Department for Transport	X		
			UNECE-Economic Commission for			
	Mr. Jaimurzina	Azhar	Europe of the UN	X	X	
	Mr. Sauter	Peter	Schweizerische Rheinhafen		X	X
Ukraine	Mr. Gladkykh	Igor	ONMA	X	X	X
	Mr. Sizov	Konstantin	Nikolaev Commercial Sea Port	X	X	X

ANNEX 3. THE MEMBERS: MORE SPECIFIC REMARKS THAT WERE MADE ON ELEMENTS THAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- In the EG VTT, expertise on traffic management is lacking.
- In the EG NtS meetings no real user representatives (e.g. skippers association) are present.
- In the EG ERI the mandate of a representative it is not always clear to everybody.
- It could be perhaps beneficial to clarify with the different delegations what their role is, regarding NtS and ERI.
- Technical discussions rarely take place during the plenary ERI meetings. These discussions are outsourced to sub-working groups, where only a limited amount of people participate. This leads sometimes to difficulties in acceptance by some delegations.
- The EGs can sometimes lack an efficient follow up progress. Many actions points remain unfulfilled for such a long time until they are skipped.
- The documents for the EG meetings, also subgroups, are regularly distributed on a too short notice, which leaves too limited time for proper preparations.
- Distribution of meeting documents should be done well in advance (4 – 5 weeks for comprehensive documents requiring a decision, 1 – 2 weeks for small amendments).
- Agendas are provided well in advance with the possibility for each delegation to propose changes / amendments to the agenda, but it should be clearly indicated (in the agenda) where important decisions are required.
- In case sub-groups don't provide results, measures should be taken to improve the performance, or in the worst cases even stop the existence of the sub-group.
- There should be clear assignments of the sub-groups defined.
- A roadmap / working programme for each Expert Group should be defined, covering topics of common interest / needs (e.g. bi-annual work programme).
- Work in the Expert Groups should be aligned with the requirements of the RIS Committee.
- Expert Groups should support the European Commission in the elaboration of standards; and the European Commission should allow the support of the Expert Groups.

- There should be fixed agenda items for each meeting of the Expert Groups, covering the business as usual (e.g. change requests on the existing standards).
- Structure of the agendas should be aligned among the Expert Groups.
- Sub-Groups should provide their results to the Expert Group and receive feedback on their work from the experts in the Expert Group.
- Budget for the expert groups: the chairpersons should be able to contract for example external studies (might be difficult because of required public procurement procedures); also the involvement of external advisers/experts could be facilitated this way.
- A quality management team should support the chairpersons in maintaining a follow-up progress of the work in the Expert Group and to ensure a sound quality of the documents.
- Action point lists should be monitored more efficiently.
- Meeting minutes could deserve quality improvements and a faster distribution (1 – 2 months after the meeting is definitely too late).
- Alignment with the standardisation activities within the CCNR, DC and UN-ECE are sometimes not clear.
- The share of experts should be improved within the expert groups
 - Official representatives (with mandate) of the branch organisations with a clear mission statement.
 - Technical experts (IT experts, experts from standardisation).
 - Representatives of the fairway / traffic authorities making use of the RIS standards in their day-to-day work.
 - Representatives of the industry (producers of electronic reporting software).

ANNEX 4 THE MAJOR ARGUMENTS FOR DECIDING WHETHER A STANDARD SHOULD BE DEVELOPED OR UPGRADED

- Costs for the implementation in the national infrastructure of a change in the Standard (countries with a bigger waterway network can easily compromise the upgrade of a standard or a new standard).
- If a standard does not meet the requirements of the Member States or the users (e.g. if there are objects in a country, which are relevant for navigation, but are not covered by the existing Inland ECDIS standard), it has to be upgraded.
- EU Directive was agreed on in 2005. Standards are upgraded when there is practical experience with standards.
- The functionalities versus the costs.
- A standard is developed to address a need or when there are juridical grounds. The maintenance of the standards is inherent to this. Use and necessity always need to be the reason/basis.

ANNEX 5. PROPOSAL FOR RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE EXPERT GROUPS ON STANDARDISATION AND HARMONISATION OF RIVER INFORMATION SERVICES, THE RIS EXPERT GROUPS

All respondents to the questionnaire have indicated to favour structural EC support to the work of the RIS EG's, under certain conditions. The EC "Ruled of procedure for the Expert Group on Maritime Administrative Simplification and Electronic Information Services, the 'eMS' Group of 15 March 2011 was identified as a possible way to go. Based on this document the following text – which has not been agreed on by the various Expert Groups – has been drafted by PLATINA. The text serves as a proposal:

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE EXPERT GROUPS ON STANDARDISATION AND HARMONISATION OF RIVER INFORMATION SERVICES, THE 'RIS EXPERT GROUPS'

Article 1

Subject matter and scope

1. The RIS expert groups should help to develop specifications, standards and other documents for effective implementation of River Information Services on the European inland waterways networks. The RIS Expert Groups also provide proposals for updates of RIS standards and harmonisation issues.
2. To encourage the electronic data sharing and services within administrations and businesses.
3. The expert groups will assist the European Commission in its implementation of the RIS framework directive (2005/44/EC)
4. The Commission will ensure coordination of the work of the RIS Expert Groups with the EU RIS Committee on all matters falling under the competence of the latter.

Article 2

Tasks

1. Monitors the development of technical opportunities to implement River Information Services (RIS)
2. Provides expertise to the Commission and other international organisations when drafting RIS legislation
3. The specific tasks of the four expert groups relate to the following activities:
 - a. The Inland ECDIS standard provides a uniform basis for the use of electronic inland navigation charts and for the use of telematics applications like Inland AIS transponders or other methods of identifying, tracing and tracking of vessels on inland waterways. It contains the technical and operational requirements, testing methods and required test results for Inland ECDIS applications. Moreover, the ECDIS EG makes sure there are proposals for an update when a standard can or needs to be improved.
 - b. The Electronic Reporting International (ERI) standard describes the messages, data items, codes and references to be used in electronic reporting for the different services and functions of River Information Services (RIS). Moreover, the standard contains the basic and most important recommendations for electronic reporting. Some rules and recommended practices for special measures have to be complemented after further experience has been gained. The ERI standard also addresses the relation between private parties (shippers, skippers, terminal operators, fleet managers) and public parties (waterway authorities, public ports). The relationship between private parties without involvement of public partners (e.g. the relationship between skippers and terminal operators) is not addressed. Moreover, the ERI EG makes sure there are proposals for an update when a standard can or needs to be improved.
 - c. The Notices to Skippers (NtS) standard provides automatic translation of the most important content of notices in all the languages of the participating countries. Also, the standard provides a harmonized structure of data-sets in all the participating countries to facilitate the integration of notices in voyage-planning systems. Furthermore, the NtS standard provides a standard for water level information and weather information, is compatible with the data-structure of Inland ECDIS to facilitate integration of notices to skippers in Inland ECDIS, and facilitates data-exchange between different countries. Moreover, the NtS Expert Group makes sure there are proposals for an update when a standard can or needs to be improved.
 - d. Vessel Tracking and Tracing (VTT) Expert Group provides a harmonised vessel tracking and tracing standard for inland navigation. The standards and procedures for inland shipping are compatible with already defined standards and procedures for seagoing navigation. Advanced Information System (AIS) is a cooperative procedure. Both standards and harmonised procedures are required to ensure the safe interoperability of AIS devices from various manufacturers. The standardisation of tracking and tracing for inland navigation includes both the Standard and

Test Standard of Inland AIS. These standards define the functional and technical requirements for Inland AIS devices, specification of AIS messages for the exchange of messages between Inland AIS devices via radio and specification of AIS data sets for data exchange between Inland AIS devices and connected applications.

Article 3

Selection procedure

1. The RIS Expert Groups shall be composed of members, from government and business, and observers.
2. In order to ensure the functionality of the groups, the Commission will maintain the right to control the size of the group based on topics under work.
3. Each Member State and other European countries can send one representative as a member of the group and one as an observer.
4. The European Commission has the rights to invite on ad hoc basis RIS experts on a subject to participate in the work of an Expert Group or sub-group.
5. The RIS chairpersons have the rights to invite on an ad hoc basis RIS experts on a specific issue on the agenda to participate in the work of the Expert Group or sub-group.
6. In coordination with the RIS Expert Group chairpersons, the commission will appoint a secretariat to assist the RIS Expert groups in their work (see article 10)

Article 4

Reimbursement of expenses

1. The members of the RIS Expert Groups are reimbursed for their travel expenses, one representative per country, plus the chairmen of the Expert Groups.
2. The experts mentioned in article 3(3 and 4) can be reimbursed, if the commission considers this necessary.

Article 5

Convening a meeting

1. Meetings of the RIS Expert Groups's are convened by the chairpersons in coordination with the RIS Expert Group secretariat.
2. Joint meetings of the RIS Expert Group's with other groups may be convened to discuss matters falling within their respective areas of responsibility.

Article 6

Agenda

1. The secretariat of the RIS Expert Groups shall draw up the agenda under the responsibility of the chairpersons and send it to the group members.
2. The agenda shall be adopted by the group at the start of the meeting.

Article 7

Documentation to be sent to group members

1. The secretariat shall send the invitation to the meeting, the draft agenda and any consulted document to the group members no later than 14 calendar days before the date of the meeting.
2. In urgent or exceptional cases, the time limits for sending the documentation mentioned in 1 may be reduced to seven calendar days before the date of the meeting.

Article 8

Opinions of the group

1. As far as possible, the group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus.
2. The Terms of Reference on Proceedings developed by the Expert Groups are prevailing.

Article 9

Sub-groups

1. Joint Task Forces may be installed under the auspices of the Expert Groups.
2. The Joint Task Force shall report to the responsible Expert Groups

Article 10

Secretariat

The Commission shall provide secretarial support for all RIS Expert Groups, including support for work to be executed by Joint Task Forces.

Article 11

Summary minutes of the meetings

Summary minutes on the discussion on each point on the agenda and the opinions delivered by the RIS Expert Groups shall be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the chairpersons. The minutes shall not mention the individual position of the members or observers during the group meetings, unless requested by the member or observers to do so..

Article 12

Attendance list

At each meeting, the secretariat shall draw up, under the responsibility of the Chairpersons, an attendance list specifying, where appropriate, the authorities, organisations or bodies to which the participants belong.

Article 13

Correspondence

1. Correspondence relating to the group shall be addressed to the secretariat of the RIS Expert Groups
2. Correspondence for group members and observers shall be sent to the e-mail address, which they provide for that purpose.

Article 14

Access to documents

All important documents of preparations of meetings and outcomes of meetings will be placed on the RIS webportal (www.ris.eu).

Article 15

The RIS webportal

The webportal – <http://www.ris.eu> - will be maintained by the secretariat of the Expert Groups, under the responsibility of the chairpersons. Members will provide part of the input that is needed to the secretariat.

Article 16

Time frame

The Expert Groups shall be assisted based on these Rules of Procedure starting 2013 till 2020. An evaluation shall be conducted in 2018-2019 to decide on continuation of the Commissions supporting activities.

**ANNEX 6. RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE EXPERT GROUP ON MARITIME
ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATION AND ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SERVICES,
THE eMS GROUP**

Brussels, 22 June 2011

D(2011)

**RULES OF PROCEDURE
FOR THE EXPERT GROUP ON MARITIME ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICA-
TION AND ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SERVICES,
THE 'eMS' GROUP**

Article 1

Subject matter and scope

1. The group should help to develop specifications and services for the electronic data exchange and single windows for the EU Maritime transport; to liaise with national stakeholders, paying also attention to multimodal and multidisciplinary aspects.
2. To encourage the electronic data sharing and services within administrations and businesses.
3. The group will coordinate the implementation of Reporting formalities directive (2010/65/EU) as specified under Article 3 of the directive.
4. The Commission will ensure coordination of this group with the SafeSeaNet High Level Steering Group on all matters falling on competence of the latter.

Article 2

Tasks

1. Monitors the development of national policies and the enforcement of EU legislation by national authorities.
2. Provides expertise to the Commission when drafting of implementing measures, i.e. before the Commission submits these draft measures to a committee.
3. Coordinates with Member States.

Article 3

Selection procedure

1. The group shall be composed of members and observers.
2. In order to ensure the functionality of the group, the Commission will maintain the right to control the size of group based on topics under work.
3. Each Member State can send two representatives as members of the group.
4. The organisations which are either obliged by the EU legislation to use the services under discussion or are providing these services will be invited by the Commission to participate as an observer. The maximum number of organisations is limited to 15. The Commission will ensure the balanced representation among these stakeholder groups.
5. The observers are appointed for a period of one year. Their term of office may be automatically renewed.
6. The Commission maintains rights to invite on ac hoc basis experts with specific competence in a subject on the agenda to participate in the work of the group or sub-groups.
7. The observers who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the group's work may be replaced for the remainder of their term.

Article 4

Reimbursement of expenses

1. One member per Member State will be reimbursed for the travel expenses.
2. The appointed observers mentioned in Article 3(4) will not be reimbursed.
3. The experts mentioned in Article 3(6) can be reimbursed, if the Commission considers this necessary.

Article 5

Convening a meeting

1. Meetings of the group are convened by the Chair.
2. Joint meetings of the group with other groups may be convened to discuss matters falling within their respective areas of responsibility.

Article 6

Agenda

1. The secretariat shall draw up the agenda under the responsibility of the Chair and send it to the group members and observers.
2. The agenda shall be adopted by the group at the start of the meeting.

Article 7

Documentation to be sent to group members

1. The secretariat shall send the invitation to the meeting, the draft agenda and any consulted document to the group members and observers no later than 15 calendar days before the date of the meeting.

2. In urgent or exceptional cases, the time limits for sending the documentation mentioned in 1 may be reduced to five calendar days before the date of the meeting.

Article 8

Opinions of the group

1. As far as possible, the group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus.
2. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by a simple majority of the Member States taking part of the vote.

Article 9

Sub-groups

1. In agreement with the services of the Commission, the group may set up sub-groups or workgroups to examine specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by the group; such sub-groups or workgroup shall be disbanded as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.
2. The sub-groups or workgroups shall report to the group.

Article 10

Written procedure

1. If necessary, the group's opinion or recommendation on a specific question may be delivered via a written procedure. To this end, the secretariat sends the group members and observers the document(s) on which the group is being consulted.
2. However, if a simple majority of the Member States asks for the question to be examined at a meeting of the group, the written procedure shall be terminated without result and the Chair shall convene a meeting of the group as soon as possible.

Article 11

Secretariat

The Commission shall provide secretarial support for the group. Secretarial support for sub-groups created under Article 9(1) above will be decided on ad hoc basis.

Article 12

Summary minutes of the meetings

Summary minutes on the discussion on each point on the agenda and the opinions delivered by the group shall be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the Chair. The minutes shall not mention the individual position of the members or observers during the group's deliberations, unless requested by the member or observer to do so.

Article 13

Attendance list

At each meeting, the secretariat shall draw up, under the responsibility of the Chair, an attendance list specifying, where appropriate, the authorities, organisations or bodies to which the participants belong.

Article 14

Correspondence

1. Correspondence relating to the group shall be addressed to the Commission. This correspondence can be done by e-mail send to a functional mailbox.
2. Correspondence for group members and observers shall be sent to the e-mail address which they provide for that purpose.

Article 15

Access to documents

Applications for access to documents held by the expert group will be handled in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001¹² and detailed rules for its application¹³.

Article 16

Protection of personal data

All processing of personal data for the purposes of these rules of procedure shall be in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001¹⁴.

¹² Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43).

¹³ Commission Decision 2001/937 of 5.12.2001. OJ L 345 of 29.12.2001, p. 94.

¹⁴ Regulation (EC) 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. (OJ L 8, 12.1.2001, p. 1).