



**RNE Process Handbook
for International Path Allocation
for Infrastructure Managers**

Version 2.0

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Version history

VERSION	RESPONSIBLE	DATE	CHANGES
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0.3	Philipp Koiser Sales & TT Manager	2018-03-15	Inclusion of remarks from the S&TT WG
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1.2	Sebastián Čarek TT & Project Manager	2019-10-16	Revised document finalised by the S&TT WG
2.0	Sebastián Čarek TT & Project Manager	2019-12-04	Approval by the RNE GA

1 Introduction and scope of this document

RailNetEurope is an association of European railway infrastructure managers and allocation bodies (hereafter IMs) for facilitating international traffic on railway infrastructure. Within that scope, RNE must endeavour to facilitate international path allocation work for applicants and railway undertakings (RUs).

The aims of the relating organisation put in place are:

- Setting up and applying specific agreements for international route management
- Being able to manage international path construction in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner
- Identifying RNE mandated partners using national One-Stop-Shop (OSS) in order to respond to any customer request for international paths

Each OSS sets up resources in order to provide any kind of information needed for the use of infrastructure and answers to customers' requests.

The four steps described hereafter are located in the time scale according to the date the new yearly timetable is put in place, which is 00:01 the Sunday after the second Saturday of December. In the following pages of the document, "X" represents the date when the new timetable starts.

The Path Coordination System (PCS) will be the unique tool used by all members for international path request and allocation. The PCS process is described in the "PCS Documentation" (<https://cms.rne.eu/pcs/pcs-documentation>).

Note: Some members may not be in the position to use PCS fully due to technical or organisation reasons. Nevertheless, each member must aim to use PCS fully in the near future and provide adequate alternatives in the meantime. Members should participate in RNE PCS project groups for further development.

This process handbook for international path allocation sets up key process for path management and therefore must be applied by all RNE members.

Unless specified, this handbook is applicable for passengers and freight traffic.

Important notes:

- Based on the EU Regulation 913/2010 Rail Freight Corridors (RFCs) have been established throughout the European railway network. Guidelines to describe the specific processes of the RFCs have been issued by RNE. Particularities of these processes are not covered by this handbook. However, the RFC guidelines have been created in a way to correspond with this handbook and correlate with its contents.
- In May 2017 the RNE General Assembly agreed to gradually implement a newly designed timetabling process as a result of the project "Redesign of the international timetabling process" (TTR). With its gradual implementation, this handbook will be updated accordingly upon implementation of new TTR components and elements.

2 Planning process

The process is organised in such a way that international requests may be presented

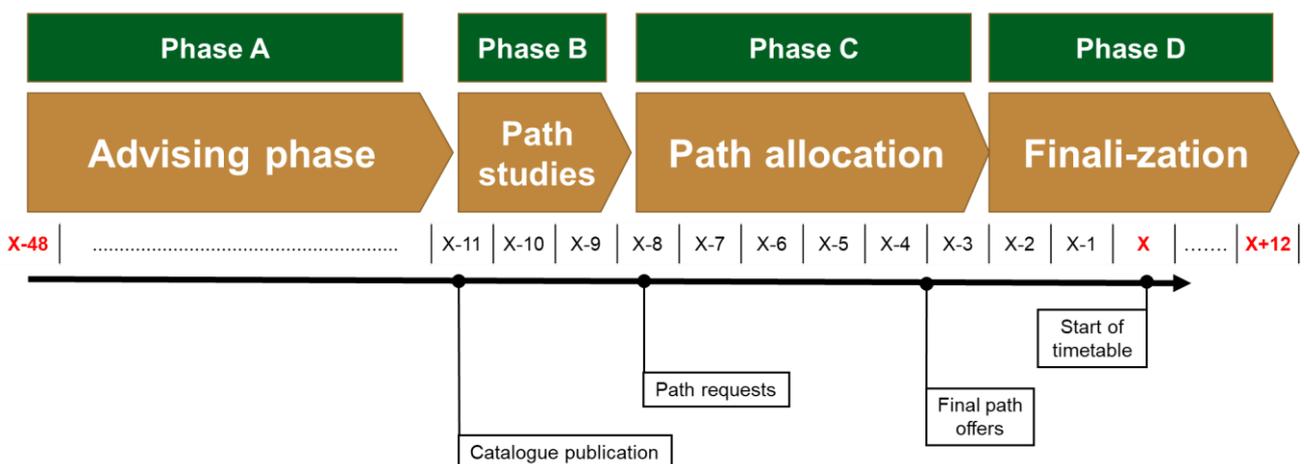
- by a sole RU/applicant for lines where it has rights to operate
- by a group of RUs/applicants acting together for example in the FTE frame, and gathering rights to operate on the specified routes.

Requests are taken into account at specific deadlines (described hereafter) by IMs.

It is open to any RU/applicant, whether it is or not part of an international RU/applicant group or organisation.

As stated in the European Directive the allocation process is non-discriminatory.

Planning process description



2.1 Phase A: Advising phase (X-48 to X-11)

In the advising phase, the RUs/Applicants and IMs/ABs have the possibility to share information on upcoming infrastructure availability compared to the commercial needs. It should provide all stakeholders with an overview of possibilities for the path allocation and makes it possible to detect pressure points in capacity planning in time. All IMs/ABs are required to provide processes and/or platforms to ensure this communication.

If capacity catalogues are being published either for national or international paths (e.g. Pre-arranged Paths of the Rail Freight Corridors) these publications should serve as a baseline for designing this capacity product.

If IMs provide this service at that time, it is also possible to request first path feasibility studies. PCS provides this possibility of starting at X-13.

2.2 Phase B: Feasibility studies (X-11 to X-9)

Feasibility studies are requested in order for applicants to give a good understanding and indication on the manner that paths could fit in the timetable before they place their path order requests. A response to a feasibility study is not a commitment to a path allocation.

International studies can be requested:

- by a single RU/applicant having rights to operate on the total length of the journey
- together by a group of RUs/applicants (for example in the FTE framework) gathering between them the right to operate on the total length of the journey

These requests can be done with the help of IMs. They may be based on catalogue paths or pre-studied scheme proposed by IMs at the early phase A.

IMs must make sure that requests for studies are known by all involved IMs. For better coordination, RUs request feasibility studies in PCS. (See “PCS Documentation”: <https://cms.rne.eu/pcs/pcs-documentation>).

Studies are carried out by IMs using RNE catalogue paths or technical national paths.

As soon as all involved IMs have provided their answers to the path study request, these studies have to be made available to RUs/applicants in order to prepare requests for international paths. These results are available in PCS.

2.3 Phase C: Path request to allocation (requests placed before path request deadline)

From X-12 until X+12 RUs/applicants may place international path requests. The request is distributed under the receiver’s (coordinating IM’s) responsibility to all IMs involved in the request.

- If linked to a feasibility study or path catalogue the request is treated as announced.
- If presented as a new request, it is treated as well as possible in each country taking into account the fact that only a very limited number of studies can be managed during phase C.
- All requests are coordinated, finalised and submitted to the RUs/applicants:
 - In case the request was placed on or before the second Monday of April:
 - until 12 weeks after the path request deadline.
 - In case the request was placed after the second Monday of April and more than 8 weeks before the timetable change*:
 - According to the Late Path Request description (see handbook “Procedures for International Late Path Request Management”)
 - No later than X-1
 - In case the request was placed less than 8 weeks prior to the timetable change:
 - According to the Ad-Hoc Request description (see handbook “Procedures for International Ad-Hoc Path Request Management”)
 - In case of a request changing an already allocated path:
 - According to the path modification handbook (see handbook “Procedures for Modification of Allocated International Paths”)

**) Until the full implementation of Commission delegated decision (EU) 2017/2075, some IMs may provide the possibility to request paths after the path request deadline only as ad-hoc requests starting after the second Monday in April.*

X-8 to X-5: Path elaboration phase

At X-5 IMs publish the draft working timetable. In order to provide well-harmonized offers, the following steps shall be applied:

- Communication with neighbouring IMs:
To ensure harmonised paths at the border, each IM informs the neighbouring IM about all train crossing the border until one week before the RNE Technical Meeting. This

information is used for checking paths (i.e. times, calendars, other path details) at borders and as preparation for the RNE Technical Meeting in June.

- **RNE Technical Meeting**

This meeting is organised by the RNE Joint Office and starts 3 weeks prior to the publication of the draft working timetable. IMs meet to fulfil path requests as close as possible to the requests in a harmonised way. They endeavour to make sure remaining problems are sorted out and check that all paths match at borders. If orders have not received any positive response and no solution is to be found, RUs are being informed at national level with detailed reason for the refusal.

Additional paths requested late by RUs can be considered at this meeting. However, these additional paths will be allocated only in the remaining capacity according to the late request handbook. This, naturally, depends on the available capacity of each IMs.

X-5 to X-3: Observation phase, post-processing phase and final offer

Based on the draft working timetable provided by the IMs at X-5, RUs have the possibility to cross-check the path offers with their request and place their observations as comments until one month after the provision of the draft working timetables.

IMs may adapt the offers within another 2 weeks after the observation phase has ended (post-processing phase) and publish the adapted timetable as a final offer. If the RUs/Applicants agree to this final offer, the paths will be allocated accordingly.

2.4 Phase D: Finalization and path allocation in remaining capacity (X-3.5 to X)

After providing with final path offers, path requests issued after X-8 can be taken into account. Paths will be worked out using either national “technical” paths or the remaining capacity. Remaining capacity means capacity left within paths already allocated as well as planned temporary capacity restrictions.

The timetable shall be adapted accordingly and published again at X-1 including all late path requests. The processes for short term allocation and for late path requests are described in separate handbooks (“Procedures for International Late Path Request Management” and “Procedures for International Ad-Hoc Path Request Management”)

2.5 Path allocation in the remaining capacity during running timetable (X-1 to X+12)

In any case, path allocation from X-1 to X+12 is done in the remaining capacity.

Requests can be sent to IMs via PCS, which enables them to respond quickly to any request for international path having solution.

Changes of already allocated paths can be clustered as follows:

- Request for a change at the national level with no consequence at border. No information to neighbouring IMs is needed.
- Request for a change at the national level with consequences at border, information is given to IMs concerned to coordinate their work.

The process for short term allocation is described in a separate handbook (“Procedures for International Ad-Hoc Path Request Management”)

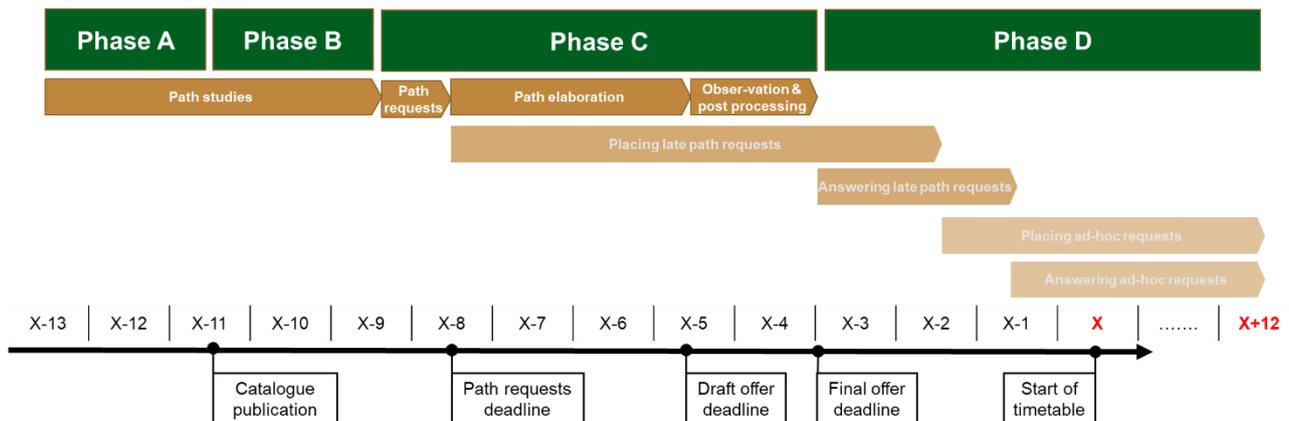
2.6 Path alteration (after allocation until X+12)

In some cases, IMs need to alternate, adjust, replace or withdraw already allocated paths. This activity is the so-called “Alteration of an Allocated Path” (or short “Path Alteration”). The process is described in a separate handbook (“Procedures for Alteration of Allocated International Paths”)

3 Timeline of the planning process

The timeline of the planning process provides a general overview of the phases and milestones in the process.

Planning process description (X-13 to X)



The exact dates of all specific phases, milestones and deadlines have to be issued by RNE for each TT period (“Timetabling Calendars”). The RUs/applicants shall be consulted before fixing the timetabling calendar.

The table below shall provide the means to calculate the milestones. However, in case there are reasons to refrain from the calculation like European-wide bank holidays, RNE in consultation with RUs/applicants can decide on other dates.

No	Time in process	Main milestone/deadline	Milestone/Deadline for late path requests ¹	Milestone/Deadline for ad-hoc path requests ²	Calculation of date	Remark
1	X-13	Start of path study requests			To coincide with PCS major releases	
2	X-11	Last day for publishing catalogue paths			2 nd Monday in January	Also, the day for publishing Pre-arranged Paths of the RFCs
3	X-11	Last day for feasibility study requests			3 rd Monday in January	Feasibility study requests can be placed individually after this deadline – not described in this handbook
4	X-9	Limit for answering to path study requests			8 weeks after milestone 3	
5	X-8	Last day for submission of path requests in time			2 nd Monday in April	Also called “Path Request Deadline”
6	X-8		First day for submission of late path requests		First day after milestone 5	
7	X-5.5	Start of RNE Technical Meeting			Three weeks prior to milestone 8	
8	X-5	Last day for publication of draft working timetable			12 weeks after milestone 5	Also called “Draft Offer Deadline”
9	X-5	Start of observation phase			First day after milestone 8	

No	Time in process	Main milestone/deadline	Milestone/Deadline for late path requests ¹	Milestone/Deadline for ad-hoc path requests ²	Calculation of date	Remark
10	X-4	Last day to provide observations by RUs/applicants; start of post-processing phase			One month after milestone 9	
11	X-3.5	Last day for IMs to provide final offers			3 rd Monday after milestone 10	Also called "Final Offer Deadline"
12	X-3.5		First day for IMs to answer late path requests		First day after milestone 11	
13	X-2		Last day for submission of late path requests		54 days before timetable change	
14	X-2			First day for submission of ad-hoc requests	First day after milestone 13	
15	X-1		Last day for IMs to answer late path requests		4 weeks after milestone 13	
16	X	Timetable change			Sunday following the second Saturday in December	

1) Detailed description to be found in handbook "Procedures for International Late Path Request Management"

2) Detailed description to be found in see handbook "Procedures for International Ad-Hoc Path Request Management"

4 RNE Technical Meeting

1. Basics

- Goal of the meeting: IMs check that paths provided in the draft working timetable are harmonized at the border.
- RailNetEurope is responsible for organising the RNE Technical Meeting.
- Only Infrastructure Managers (IM), Allocation Bodies (AB) and Corridor One Stop Shops (C-OSS) are participating to the platform.
- Passenger and Freight paths are concerned in the meeting.
- English should be the common language.

2. Organisation

- Planning of meetings is worked out by RNE and distributed by RNE JO before meetings take place.
- The meeting is scheduled to start three weeks prior to the publication of the draft working timetable.
- As far as it is possible, a list of paths must be sent at least one week prior to the RNE Technical Meeting to all IMs concerned. This enables IMs to discuss and focus only on remaining problems for trains at borders. It is advisable that IMs endeavour to sort out major problems or discrepancies which may occur before the RNE Technical Meeting.
- Depending on the workload and the number of trains involved, passenger and freight meetings may take place at the same time. However, when necessary, meetings will be organised separately.
- Small meetings are organised by RFCs or group of countries for passengers and freight. Smaller bilateral meetings can be organised in order to IMs to deal with one border at a time.