



Guidelines for Pre-arranged Paths Version 3

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1 Glossary / Abbreviations

Term or abbreviation	Explanation
AB	Allocation Body In this document, only the term Infrastructure Manager (IM) is applied. It refers to IMs and also – if applicable – to Allocation Bodies (ABs).
Catalogue path (CP)	Any kind of published pre-constructed path if it is not a pre-arranged path on a Rail Freight Corridor according to Regulation 913/2010.
Corridor-OSS (C-OSS)	A joint body designated or set up by the RFC organisations for applicants to request and to receive answers, in a single place and in a single operation, regarding infrastructure capacity for freight trains crossing at least one border along the freight Corridor (EU Regulation No 913/2010, Art 13).
Dedicated capacity	Capacity which has to be foreseen by the Corridor Organisations to fulfil the requirements of Regulation 913/2010. It refers to pre-arranged paths and reserve capacity.
Feeder and Outflow path	Any path/path section prior to reaching an operation point on a RFC (feeder path) or any path/path section after leaving the RFC at an operation point (outflow path). The feeder and/or outflow path may also cross a border section which is not part of a defined RFC.
Flexible approach	When an applicant requests adjustments to a pre-arranged path, e.g. different station for change of driver or shunting which is not foreseen in the path publication. Also if the applicant requests feeder and/or outflow paths connected to the pre-arranged path and/or a connecting path between different RFCs, these requests will be handled as flexible approach.
Handover point	Point where the responsibility changes from one IM/AB to another.
IM	Infrastructure Manager In this document, only the term Infrastructure Manager (IM) is applied. It refers to IMs and also – if applicable – to Allocation Bodies (ABs)
Interchange point	Location where the transfer of responsibility for the wagons, engine(s) and the load of a train goes from one RU to another RU. Regarding a train running, the train is taken over from one RU by the other RU, which owns the path for the next journey section.
Network PaP	“Network PaPs (in short “NetPaPs)” are PaPs designated to foster the optimal use of infrastructure capacity and address the needs for capacity in specific geographical relations or of market segments with special requirements in train path characteristics. They may be offered on a single RFC or on two or more

	connected RFCs. "Network PaPs" consist of contiguous PaP sections linked together and are identified by a special ID or marker in PaP catalogues and IT tools.
Pre-arranged path (PaP)	A pre-constructed path on a Rail Freight Corridor according to Regulation 913/2010. A PaP may be offered either on a whole RFC or on sections of the RFC forming an international path request crossing one or more international borders.
Pre-constructed path product	Any kind of pre-constructed path, i.e. a path constructed in advance of any path requests and offered by IMs; applicants can then select a product and submit a path request. Pre-constructed path products are either: - Pre-arranged paths (PaPs) on Rail Freight Corridors - Catalogue paths (CPs) for all other purposes
Reserve capacity (RC)	Capacity - e.g. Pre-arranged paths - kept available during the running timetable period for ad-hoc market needs (Art. 14 (5) Regulation 913/2010).
RFC	Rail Freight Corridor. A Corridor organised and set up in accordance with Regulation 913/2010. A "List of initial freight corridors" is provided in the Annex of the Regulation.
RFC-Handbook (DG MOVE working document)	Handbook on Regulation concerning a European rail network for competitive freight
X-11 (months)	Deadline for publication of pre-arranged paths (Annex - Annex VII (4) Directive 2012/34/EU)

For further definitions, please turn to the RNE Network Statement Glossary:
www.rne.eu/index.php/ns_glossary.html

2 Target Group and Scope of this Document

These guidelines describe all topics related to pre-arranged paths, starting from the principal philosophy until the handling of the PaPs by the C-OSS.

These guidelines are addressed to all levels of RNE; it is relevant for all members of RNE, the RNE Working Groups and the Joint Office. They also constitute a supporting document for the corridor organisations (Regulation 913/2010).

3 Background Information

In 2007 RNE members approved the “Guidelines to Construction, Marketing & Sales Principles of Pre-Constructed Paths”. In 2010 the European Union’s “Regulation concerning a European Rail Network for Competitive Freight” (913/2010) set rules covering various issues related to pre-constructed paths which had not been part of the existing RNE guidelines. This document is thus a further development of the previous guidelines taking into account the new legal requirements.

4 Definitions

The Regulation 913/2010 envisages the supply of capacity on the Rail Freight Corridors in form of

- 1) Pre-arranged paths (PaPs) and
- 2) Reserve capacity.

Pre-arranged paths address primarily medium- to long-term capacity needs, while reserve capacity addresses temporary capacity needs at rather short notice. Capacity for ad-hoc traffic shall be reserved in accordance with Art. 48 (2) of Directive 2012/34/EU. In order to respond to the applicants’ capacity needs in an optimal way it is suggested to establish three different processes:

- Requests for the annual timetable: till X-8 months before timetable change
(till 2nd Monday in April)
- Late requests: X-8 till X-2
- Ad-hoc requests: X-2 till X+12 (covering the running timetable period)

While the requests for the annual timetable and the late requests are covered by the pre-arranged paths, the ad-hoc requests are covered by the reserve capacity.

Source: EU Handbook on Regulation concerning a European rail network for competitive freight

Remark: if the term “pre-arranged path” is used in this document, it refers also to “reserve capacity”

5 Objectives of Pre-arranged Paths

The creation of pre-arranged paths is not only a legal requirement but also pursues a wide range of internal and external oriented aims.

Internal aims (IM/corridor oriented)

- Ensure best use of the available capacity, especially on sections with bottlenecks, with help of standardization
- Ensure market-oriented dedication of capacity
- Contribute to the efficient construction of harmonized international paths and to the provision of international path offers
- Involvement of terminals at handover points
- Ensure more efficient handling of international path requests
- Provide reserve capacity for the ad-hoc traffic as required by Art. 48 (2) of Directive 2012/34/EU

External aims (customer-oriented)

- Display the capacity offered to the freight customers in a transparent way
- Ensure fast response times to path requests for ad-hoc traffic
- Enable customers to place PaP requests - including feeder/outflow paths (e.g. terminals) in a single step
- Provide integrated international path offers

6 Legal Status of dedicated Capacity

The Corridor OSS shall display infrastructure capacity available at the time of request (Art. 13 (2), 913/2010). During the planning phase of the annual timetable, it is essential that the displayed dedicated capacity is protected in the IMs planning system/tool against major changes (dislocation, shifting, etc) due to other path requests during the allocation phase performed by the Corridor OSS.

In particular this concerns unilateral changes of border crossing times after publication in the path catalogue at X-11. The published hand-over times have to be guaranteed; they should only be allowed to be modified at a later stage in exceptional cases and with agreement of all IMs concerned.

The Corridor Executive Board shall define the framework for the allocation of the infrastructure capacity on the freight corridor in accordance with Article 14 (1) of Directive 2001/14/EC.

The Corridor Management Board – together with the relevant IMs and ABs – shall promote the coordination of priority rules relating to capacity allocation on the freight corridor. The outcome of this coordination task should be a list of criteria that enables a C-OSS to allocate paths in case of conflicts between requests for the same PaP.

7 Coordination and Cooperation between Corridors

7.1 Philosophy

It is not necessary to coordinate the philosophies of handling PaPs (see also 8.1) between corridors as long as they are not in contradiction to each other.

As regards overlapping corridor sections, there should be a general alignment by the involved corridor organisations regarding the responsibilities and planning set-ups for PaPs. It has to be ensured that identical timelines and milestones will be applied.

7.2 Planning pre-arranged paths

If during the preparation phase (planning of PaPs) some congestion is detected on an overlapping corridor section (where 2 or more corridors are involved), the relevant IM(s) will inform the relevant Corridor Management Boards. The Corridor Management Boards will have to take a decision regarding the available capacity in Networks PaPs on the overlapping section(s) at the planning phase. Before the publication of reserve capacity for ad-hoc traffic at X-2, the situation should be analysed once again, on the basis of the available remaining capacity.

8 Creating Pre-arranged Paths

8.1 Introduction

The first step is the definition of a common philosophy between involved IMs (e.g. within a Rail Freight Corridor organisation) regarding PaPs.

The partners have to jointly agree on various issues

- How much capacity can a corridor offer? The conclusion of the transport market study (see 8.2) serves as an important indicator.
- Does the corridor offer only short or long path sections or a mixture of both?
- Processes (e.g. involvement of Terminals and RUs/Applicants (via advisory groups))
- Planning and construction principles (e.g. responsibilities, quality aspects)
- Timelines (e.g. start of planning, involvement of partners)
- Definition of cooperation with other corridor(s), if interferences exist

8.2 Transport Market Study

Regulation 913/2010, Art. 9 (3) and the RFC-Handbook (section 4.4.1) specify in a self-explanatory way the aim, procedure and periodicity how a transport market study might be carried out.

8.3 Definition of pre-arranged paths

Based on past and current transport requirements, the conclusion of the transport market study, framework agreements, the inputs of the advisory groups (RUs and terminals) and the user satisfaction survey, the IMs and/or the corridor organisation shall specify the detailed needs for PaPs and reserve capacity.

- **Geographical definition of path sections:**
 - national and cross-border sections within the corridor
 - sections may end/start at a border station, interchange point, hub/node, terminal
- **Quantity:**
 - estimate the number of PaPs needed per hour, day, direction and section
- **Path parameters:**
 - planning of PaPs should take most commonly used parameters (weight, length, profile, stops, etc) of a train into account.
 - if the market need shows not only one typical type of train in relation to parameters but two or even more types, the variety of PaPs offered should reflect these requirements.
- **Infrastructure restrictions/possessions**
 - have to be taken into account at the beginning of the planning process.

8.4 Involvement of terminals

The following text refers to Terminals if acting in the function of an IM, independent of the legal status/entity (even owned by an RU).

The terminals defined by the corridor organisation can be involved in the preparation phase of PaPs by the relevant IM.

The type of connection/link between a Terminal and the relevant corridor node/station/hub is dependent on the results of the transport market study as well as the characteristics of the (multi-)terminal and the connection (e.g. distance). As regards the origin and destination of PaPs in a terminal, departure and arrival points are required. All activities within terminals (loading, train preparation, shunting) are the Terminal's responsibility and not included in the timing of a PaP.

As a pre-condition, the above-mentioned times and activities shall be published in the Terminal Documents (and Corridor Information Documents) in order to support the applicants with the planning of their transports movements.

8.5 Schedule/timelines for creating pre-arranged paths

In order to secure a harmonised approach, all corridor organisations should agree on common deadlines, which are the following:

- X-19 Results of transport market study and customer survey (when scheduled)
- X-19 ⇒ X-18 Analysis of the results
- X-18 ⇒ X-17 Alignment of transport market study and customer survey results with RU Advisory Group and IMs own capacity requirements (possessions)
- X-17 Decision of the Corridor Management Board: concrete figures (quantity) for the various corridor sections
- X-16 ⇒ X-12 Planning (construction) of PaPs and harmonisation at handover points. Decision onresponsible C-OSS in overlapping RFC sections
- X-11 Publication/display of PaPs for the next annual timetable. PAP on overlapping sections will be published by nominated responsible C-OSS for allocation of Network PAP according to the decision made at the planning phase.
- X-4 / X-3 Planning (construction) of PaPs and harmonisation at handover points for ad-hoc traffic based on remaining capacity
- X-2 Publication/display of PaPs for ad-hoc traffic (running timetable)

Benefits of harmonised deadlines:

- IMs involved in more than one corridor can conclude all above-listed tasks at the same moment for all corridors they are involved in
- The path application process is made easier for customers; all applications (e.g. also for feeder/outflow paths) can be placed at the same time

8.6 Planning of pre-arranged paths

8.6.1 PaPs for the next annual timetable (incl. late path request)

Once the characteristics and quantities of the PaPs scheduled for publication at X-11 have been defined by the corridor organisations and the IMs belonging to the corridor, the planning/construction of PaPs can be launched. This planning should be based on a detailed schedule (timelines) and defined responsibilities (see 8.1 and 8.5).

The path planning/construction itself is done by each IM. The Corridor Management Board shall specify the principles regarding responsibilities and results of this planning process of the different sections on the corridor. The Corridor Management Board shall also supervise the fulfilment of these tasks, including compliance with timelines.

The IM must recognise the need for capacity of other types of rail transport, including passenger transport throughout the planning phase.

The IMs have to ensure that the times are harmonised at the handover points. RNE provides a function in their Path Coordination System (PCS) that enables IMs to coordinate and harmonise the setting-up of the PaPs.

8.6.2 Planning of pre-arranged paths for ad-hoc trains (running timetable)

The planning of Reserve Capacity by IMs for ad-hoc trains (e.g. PaPs) starts after the annual timetable has been finalised and if justified by market needs. This activity usually starts at X-4 months and should be finalised until X-2 months.

8.6.3 Influences of framework agreements

An IM that has signed framework agreements should take the requirements of these agreements into consideration when planning and publishing the PaPs.

8.7 Path identification

Each international PaP should be identified by a unique code. This code should be created at the initiation of the PaP planning.

This code should contain information about the rail freight corridor, the travelling direction, the pre-arranged path ID and, if applicable, about specific sections of the path.

8.8 Publication/display of the pre-arranged paths

Even if, from the legal point of view, the C-OSS is in charge of publishing the PaPs, the process for publishing/displaying has to be defined on each corridor by the Corridor Management Board.

PaP requests that run on several RFCs should be visible for all involved RFCs.

It had been agreed within RNE that PCS is used for presenting the PaPs. The biggest advantage of this solution is the fact that the displayed PaP data may be used for creating a path request dossier – without any manual copying.

It is up to each corridor organisation to create any other additional mode of publication and display (e.g. folder, Excel-sheet). This might cover the period from X-11 (PaP publication) until X-8 months (2nd Monday in April; path request deadline), as the allocation of the PaPs starts after the path request deadline.

After the path request deadline, the principle “first in – first served” will be applied for late and ad-hoc path requests. Late path requests will be allocated after the final offer at X-4.

Ad-hoc path requests will be allocated as soon as possible by the C-OSS, starting from X-2. An allocated path has to disappear from the available capacity overview immediately. The modification and upload of an Excel-sheet after each allocation of a late or ad-hoc path request might be handled in some way or other, but the continuous revision of a folder would be too much effort.

If an IM discovers that an already published – but not requested – PaP is affected by a restriction in case of force majeure, including urgent and unforeseeable safety-critical work, the relevant paths has to be withdrawn for the appropriate time period. The withdrawal has to be communicated to the relevant C-OSS(s).

9 Administration/management of Pre-arranged Paths

9.1 Making available of the pre-arranged paths to the corridor OSS

The C-OSS is responsible for the PaPs at the latest in the event of official publication/display, at X-11 months.

9.2 Management

The administrative and management functions of the C-OSS cover the following activities, after the PaPs have been published:

- Collection of all requests for PaPs in the period between X-11 (publication) and X-8 months (2nd Monday in April; path request deadline)
- Verification of the right to place a path request
- Allocation of PaPs for requests placed before 2nd Monday in April
- Handling of conflicts if a PaP has been requested by more than one Applicant
 - according to Articles 45 and 46 of Directive 2012/34/EU and
 - according to the priority rules stipulated in the RNE Guidelines for Corridor OSS.
- Informing the customer if its request for a PaP cannot be met (no suitable alternative PaP available) by the C-OSS and forwarding the request to the competent IM(s) in order to find a solution in the annual timetable
- In case there is a need for a flexible approach, forwarding requests to competent IM(s) at latest two weeks after the path request deadline (2nd Monday in April)
- If not all published PaPs have been requested at X-8, the Management Board of the RFC will decide which of the non-requested PaPs will be returned to the IMs at X-7,5.

The IMs may then use the capacity for other requests received at X-8 or in the late path request phase, thereby ensuring the availability of sufficient reserve capacity at X-2 if justified by market needs.

- Updating the published/available capacity following the MB decision and the allocation of PaPs
- Reception of late path requests (between X-8 and X-2 months) referring to the PaPs kept by the C-OSS and forwarding them to the competent IM if a PaP cannot be offered by the C-OSS
- If the returned non-requested PaPs will not be used by the competent IMs, the remaining non-requested PaPs can be forwarded again to the C-OSS to be used for late path requests at X-4
- Allocation of late requests for PaPs (between X-4 and X-1 months) following the principle “first come/first served”
- Reception and allocation of ad-hoc requests for reserve capacity (between X-2 months and X and as well as for the running timetable period)
- Allocation of RC for ad-hoc requests referring to PaP(s), starting from X-2 during the running TT period, according to the time limit decided by the MB.
- Forwarding the ad-hoc path requests to the competent IM if a PaP cannot be offered by the C-OSS and there is no other/suitable alternative PaP or if the request is rejected or if a flexible approach is needed

- Constant updating of the published/available capacity following the allocation of the late and ad-hoc requests for PaPs
- Constant updating of the published/available capacity in case the IM informs the C-OSS that one or more already published PaPs or reserve capacity will not be available during a certain period due to the IM's own requirements such as urgent and unforeseeable safety-critical work or in any other case of force majeure.
- If an applicant withdraws a request or cancels an allocated PaP, it should be republished, except in case of rules of Art. 14 (5) 913/2010 are applied.
- Informing the competent IM of the applications and the decisions taken without delay
- Keeping a register of all request (Art. 13(5), 913/2010)
- Allocating operational train numbers. The tools and procedures of the responsible IMs have to be used (e.g. the International Train Numbering Database ITNDB)

Annex A to this document contains an overview regarding the responsibilities of the corridor OSS and the IM(s).

9.3 Allocation decision

In case of complaints regarding the allocation of PaPs (e.g. due to a decision based on the priority rules for allocation), the RU/Applicant may address the respective regulatory body.

9.4 Adaptation of an allocated path

Under Art. 14 (8) 913/2010, the IM is responsible for offering an alternative to the path owner if an allocated path is no longer available. Details on how to involve the neighbouring IMs – in case they are affected as well – are described in the RNE “Capacity Restriction Management Handbook” and also in the TAF-TSI process “booked path not available”.

9.5 Deadline for returning non-requested reserve capacity

Art. 14 (5) 913/2010 mentions that PaPs for ad-hoc traffic shall be reserved until the time limit before its scheduled time as decided by the Corridor Management Board. This time limit shall not exceed 60 days. However, after the agreed deadline, the remaining reserve capacity is given back to the competent IMs. As RUs not only operate on one single corridor, it would be in the interest of the RFCs as well as the IMs to have a common deadline all over Europe.

From the point of view of market needs, the publication should not stop at 60 days before the day of operation.

10 Congested infrastructure

In case of already occurred congestion or network sections already heavily used – independently of permanent or temporary congestion – the responsibility for the planning of PaPs for ad-hoc (Reserve Capacity) traffic depends on the rules laid down by the responsible IM. The Corridor Management Board shall decide how to communicate that the number of ad-hoc paths is limited to all involved parties (Executive Board, applicants, etc).

From a legal point of view, the capacity needed for the corridor traffic should be “blocked” in advance, in accordance with Art. 14 (5) 913/2010.

ANNEX A Pre-arranged paths – responsibilities of C-OSS and IMs

Date/period	Activity	C-OSS	IMs
X-11	Publication of PaPs provided by the IMs	X	
X-8	Deadline for submitting path requests	X	
X-8	The Management Board of the RFC may decide on the form under which remaining (non-requested) PaPs shall be published during the late request phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication in PCS with a legal disclaimer regarding availability and modifications of published timings, with one update or remaining PaPs at X-4 • Publication in PCS with a legal disclaimer regarding availability and modification of published timings, with continuous updating 		X X
X-7,5	Forwarding requests with “flexible approaches” to IMs/ABs	X	
X-7,5	If not all published PaPs have been requested at X-8, the Management Board of the RFC will decide which of the non-requested PaPs will be returned to the IMs at X-7,5. The IM may then use the capacity for other requests received at X-8 or in the late path request phase, thereby ensuring the availability of sufficient reserve capacity at X-2 if justified by market needs.	X	X
X-7,5	Update catalogue in PCS for PaPs kept by the C-OSS	X	
X-5,5	Finalisation of path construction for requested flexible approaches and delivering of the results to C-OSS for inclusion in draft timetable (path offer)		X
X-5	Publication of draft timetable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-arranged paths (including sections provided by the IMs for requested flexible approaches) - all remaining paths 	X	X
X-5 – X-4	Observations		
X-4	If some or all of the PaPs returned to the IMs at X-7,5 have not been used by the competent IMs, they can be forwarded again to the C-OSS in order to be used for late path requests at X-5		X
X-4 – X-3,5	Post-processing and final allocation	X	X
X-8 – X-5	Forward late path requests with flexible approaches or in case of unavailability of alternative PaPs to IMs Path construction of flexible approaches and delivery of the results to the C-OSS	X	X
X-5 – X-1	Allocation of late path requests (PaPs and PaPs including flexible approaches)	X	
X-4 – X-2	Planning (production) reserve capacity for ad-hoc traffic		X

X-2	Publication of reserve capacity for ad-hoc traffic	X	
X-2 – X+12	Forward ad-hoc requests with flexible approaches or in case of unavailability of alternative PaPs to IMs Path construction of flexible approaches and delivery of the results to the C-OSS Allocation of ad-hoc path requests (PaPs and PaPs including flexible approaches)	X X	X
X-4 – X+12	Continuous update of PaP publication in PCS		