



Procedures for International Ad Hoc Path Request Management

Appendix to the Procedures for designing the annual timetable

Version 4.0

RailNetEurope
Austria Campus 3
Jakov-Lind-Straße 5
AT-1020 Vienna
Phone: +43 1 907 62 72 00
mailbox@rne.eu
www.rne.eu



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Disclaimer, application, and transition period

This document is intended as a handbook for the implementation of the *Procedures for International Ad Hoc Path Request Management* as described by RNE. As neither legislation nor IT-systems are currently adapted to enable all the elements of TTR, individual TTR elements can only be implemented by the infrastructure managers to a limited extent for the upcoming timetable periods, starting in December 2024. If and when the legislation and IT-systems fully enable the implementation of all the elements of TTR, the different RNE handbooks on those elements should be adapted and applied to the process. The exact details for the transitional period are defined in the “*Scope of TTR for Timetables 2025-2028 – Update 2026 v.2.0*”.¹

Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Bodies should adapt their internal processes and their Network Statement in line with the *Procedures for International Ad Hoc Path Request Management* from X-1.25 months, where X denotes the first timetable change referring to the complete roll-out of TTR.

Note that the process described in the Handbook does not fully reflect the targeted TTR elements, it is expected that the handbook will be subject to update or refinement.

¹ Accessible via: <https://rne.eu/downloads/>

Version history

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3.4	Alessandro Bianchi Timetabling Manager	2024-06-26	Inclusion of the process diagram based on chap.5
3.5	Alessandro Bianchi Timetabling Manager	2024-08-16	Inclusion of comments from Legal Matters WG and the RNE JO Legal Team
3.6	Alessandro Bianchi Timetabling Manager	2024-09-23	Inclusion of comments from Timetabling WG and late comments from Legal Matters WG
3.7	Alessandro Bianchi Timetabling Manager	2024-10-15	Inclusion of the remarks raised and discussed during the TT WG meeting
4.0	RNE General Assembly	2024-12-10	Document approved by the RNE General Assembly.

1 Introduction and scope of this document

This handbook describes the process by which applicants (as defined in Article 3(19) of Directive 2012/34/EU) may request and obtain international paths from infrastructure managers and allocation bodies (including via C-OSS) (hereafter IMs) for:

- the next annual timetable, if the request has been placed after the late path requests have been answered (X-1.25) but before the timetable change
- the running timetable, if the request has been placed after the timetable change (X)

The very last running day of an ad hoc train can be on the day before the next timetable change (X+12). This phase is the so-called “**ad hoc path requests period**”.

The requesting process for traffic not crossing an international border is out of the scope of the document and described in Network Statement of each IM. Requests for the transport of dangerous goods, nuclear transport, military transport and exceptional transport do not fall within the scope of this document, unless otherwise stated in the network statements of the IMs. Unless specified, this document is applicable for international passenger, freight, and light engines.

This handbook focuses solely on newly submitted path requests in the ad hoc path request period, the requests for modifications of already allocated paths are out of the scope of the document and covered by RNE in the handbook Procedures for Modification of Allocated International Paths triggered by Applicants.

2 Reference documents

This handbook follows and is based on the principles set down in:

- Directive 2012/34/EU
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 454/2011 of 5 May 2011 on the technical specification for interoperability relating to the subsystem ‘telematics applications for passenger services’ of the trans-European rail system (TAP TSI)
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 1305/2014 of 11 December 2014 on the technical specification for interoperability relating to the telematics applications for freight subsystem of the rail system in the European Union and repealing the Regulation (EC) No 62/2006 (TAF TSI)
- RNE Procedures for designing the annual timetable
- TAP/TAF TSI Sector Handbook for the Communication between RUs/IMs v3.4
- Frameworks for the allocation of the infrastructure capacity on the freight corridors in accordance with art.14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013

3 Path Request System

All request methods shall be published and described in the Network Statement of each IM.

Alongside the national request methods, an internet-based path request system is provided by RNE to optimise international requests and path coordination. Currently, this process is reflected in Path Coordination System (PCS). As soon as bidirectional interfaces between PCS and national IT systems are fully implemented, PCS shall be used as one of the official request tools, without the demand to place a duplicate/copy of the same request via another tool. The PCS functionalities are described in the “PCS Documentation” (<https://rne.eu/it/rne-applications/pcs/documentation/>).

As regards requests for individual train paths, more information on how to submit requests is available in the *Ad Hoc overview - Overview of RNE Members* (accessible via: <https://rne.eu/downloads/>).

4 Overview

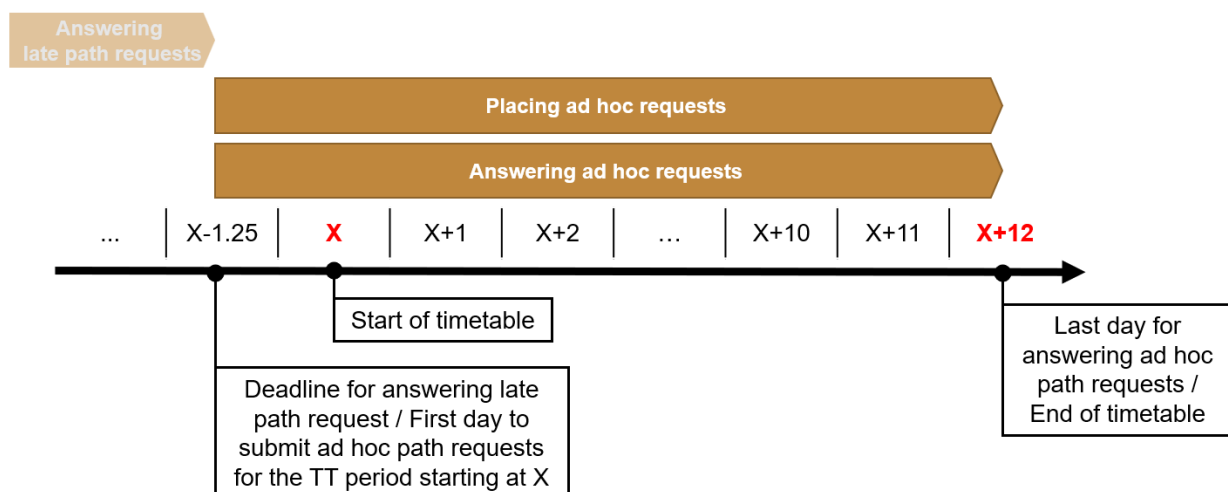
4.1 List of involved stakeholders

Stakeholder	Definition/explanation
Lead IM <i>(only applicable if the request is placed in PCS)</i>	The IM in charge of execution of relevant tasks in PCS (more information at the following link: https://rne.eu/it/rne-applications/pcs/documentation/).
Involved IM(s)	The IMs in charge of capacity allocation on the networks where the involved applicants apply for particular national part of the international capacity.
Lead applicant <i>(only applicable if the request is placed in PCS)</i>	The applicant in charge of execution of relevant tasks in PCS (more information at the following link: https://rne.eu/it/rne-applications/pcs/documentation/).
Involved applicant(s)	Applicants, who in coordination with the lead applicant, apply for a particular capacity in the networks of involved IMs.

4.2 Ad hoc products and path request period

It is possible for applicants to place requests at any time after the late path requests have been answered (X-1.25) and during the running timetable. This period from X-1.25 to X+12 is referred to as the “**Ad hoc path request period**”. As the period is longer than the timetable itself, between X-1.25 and X (overlapping period) it is possible to place ad hoc requests for the running timetable, but also for the next timetable starting at X.

Ad hoc path request period (X-1.25 to X+12)



Capacity requests in the ad hoc period are classified based on:

- Submission time before departure
 - Ad hoc requests: submitted 30 calendar days or more before departure
 - Short-term ad hoc requests: submitted less than 30 calendar days and up to 7 days before departure
 - Immediate ad hoc requests: submitted less than 7 calendar days and up to the same day of departure
- Number of running days requested
 - Requests for a recurrent train path: more than one running day with the same origin, destination, timetable and train parameters (profile, length, etc.).
 - Requests for an individual train path

The applicable process and timeline (expressed in calendar days) differ depending on the ad hoc product:

	Ad hoc (30 days or more)	Short-term ad hoc (From 29 to 7 days)	Immediate ad hoc (Less than 7 days)
Individual train path (one running day)	Process A Request no later than 7 days before departure Offer within 7 days (chap. 5)		Process B³ Offer see annex B (Annex B)
Recurrent train path (multiple running days)	Process A Request no later than 37 days before departure ¹ Offer within 30 days ² (chap. 5)	No internationally harmonised process yet defined	

¹ Timely processing of ad hoc requests for recurrent train paths submitted between 37 and 30 calendar days before departure cannot be guaranteed across all networks.

² IMs applying TT updates may provide two different offers for periods before and after the relevant TT update. For more details, refer to the sub-chapter 5.2.

³ This process will be tested by SBB-I and DB InfraGO in a pilot project developed in cooperation with applicants. The outcomes of this pilot project will be shared with IMs and the members of the RNE Capacity Management Advisory Group. Further adjustments to process B will be made according to the main learnings.

5 Ad hoc/short-term ad hoc requests

This chapter describes the process and the timelines applicable for:

- Ad hoc requests for recurrent train paths
- Ad hoc requests for individual train paths
- Short-term ad hoc requests for individual train paths

5.1 Process A

Preparation of requests

Applicants prepare the path request, which they must harmonise together with each other if there are at least two applicants. The harmonisation of the requests is the precondition for IM acceptance.

The path request shall provide all mandatory data². In case it is not possible to provide all mandatory data, it is recommended to ask the respective IM for information before placing the path request.

Applicants shall apply for a train path from the origin station to the destination or in case of national requests, include the complete route information to all IMs involved in the request. If an applicant has a given contingent of international train numbers in advance, it states the chosen train number in the path request. In other cases, the IMs will allocate the train path with an agreed international train number assigned by the IMs.

Applicants may also use a catalogue path for their path request³, if it is provided by the respective IM. The catalogue of train paths is intended as an aid for preparing requests for paths. However, there is no guarantee that ad hoc requests of catalogue paths will be granted in the allocation process, as the catalogue path requested may already have been allocated to an applicant that has requested earlier.

During the preparation of the request, the applicants are provided with the possibility of pre-acceptance.⁴ If this option is chosen by the applicant, there will be no explicit acceptance phase after path elaboration.

At this stage, the applicants requesting via PCS are also provided with the possibility of a partially harmonised process⁵. If this option is chosen by the applicant, all involved applicant/IM pairs can work on the request in a different phase. For instance, while the first IM is already constructing the path, the applicant in the second network has not yet submitted the request. At the end of the process, the dossier is harmonised in the acceptance phase.

Submitting the path request

Once the request is harmonised (to the extent required), applicants submit the path request to IMs. Requests submitted in the ad hoc path request period are treated based on the “first come – first served” principle, this means that the date and time of submission are essential criteria for the assignment of request priority. This principle applies regardless of submission via PCS or national request methods.

Applicants submitting the request using national request methods are encouraged to place the request in all networks of the train run simultaneously. A hold up to a request risks losing priority in one of the networks to conflicting request submitted in the meantime by a different applicant. If PCS is available for the request, the request is delivered to all IMs of the train run at the same time.

Communication and Request Priority

The relevant IM is in charge of the communication with the applicant that has applied for the path in their network. For paths requested in PCS, the lead applicant⁶ selects the lead IM.

² Mandatory data/parameters are listed in Network Statements of each IM and in case of placing a request using PCS, directly in PCS.

³ According to art.14(5) of Regulation (EU) No 913/2010, IMs might jointly define the reserve capacity for ad hoc requests of international freight trains running along freight corridors.

⁴ This option is provided in PCS for all networks (before a dossier creation) and in national request methods of some IMs for their networks.

⁵ More details at <https://docs.rne.eu/pcs/graphical-user-interface-gui/process-descriptions/#33>

⁶ The applicant that creates the dossier or an applicant selected by the dossier creator from harmonisation phase.

If the request does not provide enough information for path construction, the lead or relevant IM will ask the applicant(s) to provide the missing data. In case the request is not harmonised on the whole route or does not contain plausible information, it might be rejected by the relevant IM – who should always explain why it has been rejected. The IM rejecting the request should inform the other involved IM(s)

Construction and coordination

Requests submitted in the ad hoc path request period should be, by default, elaborated by IMs in the geographical order of the train run. The first IM of the train run is the first to provide a path. When this step has been done, the second IM on the train run provides a path, and so forth. A different order might be asked by the applicants and IMs should take the expressed wish into consideration, but it is up to the IMs to decide which approach will be used in the end.⁷ In case the lead time (time between request and the running first day) does not permit the work in sequence, each IM may decide individually to deviate from the work in a sequential approach.⁸

The IMs might agree in advance when every particular IM will finish the construction process. In the process determining the time frame, it must be ensured that all involved IMs have sufficient time to construct their train path section and that responses to the requests will be provided in due time. The advance agreement does not need to be concluded for each request, it may take the form of general bi/tri-lateral contract/agreement between IMs or for freight traffic a general agreement at the rail freight corridor level.

The IMs in the process of construction also need to take into account infrastructure availability and check it with their partners, as it might be reduced due to temporary capacity restrictions (TCRs). This work needs to be fully integrated into the process of harmonisation. Appropriate communication between IMs and applicants has to take place (e.g. alternative proposals).

If applicable, the IMs may apply the following working methods in the path elaboration:

- Use of catalogue paths
- Use of reserve capacity⁹

If a path request has not received a positive response¹⁰ and no solution can be found, the involved applicant(s) will be informed with detailed reasons for why the offer has not been provided by the relevant IM. Other IMs may adjust the path to another reasonable point on the network (alternative origin/destination) identified in cooperation with applicants, and then offer the path if the applicants are still interested in receiving a harmonised offer on a limited route. This offer should be submitted by the relevant IM(s) only if it does not cause any operational issues (e.g., not applicable in case the intermediate IM(s) cannot allocate the path) on all networks.

⁷ In some cases, the most suitable offer can be provided by IMs if the first IM proving the path is the one with limited capacity.

⁸ The first IM providing the path might also agree with the IM responsible for the subsequent path section on the timetable times at the infrastructure border. The detailed path is provided by the IMs later; this enables earlier involvement of the subsequent IMs into the path construction.

⁹ As defined in Article 14(5) of Regulation (EU) 913/2010 concerning a European rail network for competitive freight.

¹⁰ If the request is submitted in PCS, the relevant IM sets the red light in the system.



Harmonised path request



IM 1 cannot allocate this request. The involved applicants (RU1 and RU2) are informed and confirm their interest to receive a harmonised offer on a limited route



IM 2 adjusts the path with an alternative origin

Conditions: remaining IMs should check if this change does not cause operational issues

Path offer

The path offers for an upcoming TT shall not be sent earlier than after the late path requests are answered.

Once the last IM in the chain of constructing the offer has provided their path section, the lead IM (if the request is placed in PCS) or the relevant IM (if the request is placed in national systems) is in charge of sending the harmonised and consistent offer – with remarks if necessary. Remarks may consist of an indication regarding temporarily uncertain times depending on infrastructure availability (e.g., TCRs).

As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, it is also possible to provide a harmonised offer on a limited route. This means that the requested capacity cannot be offered by all IMs, but the paths offered are coordinated with each other and it is possible to run a train even if it cannot operate on the entire requested route (without causing operational issues on all networks).

Each IM shall inform the applicants and potentially affected IMs as soon as it becomes aware that a train path which has been offered (not yet allocated) to the applicant, is not available any longer due to unforeseen circumstances. If possible, the IM will provide an alternative proposal, otherwise the request will be recalled by the relevant IM.

Path acceptance

If all applicants agree with the offer, the lead applicant sends a formal acceptance (if the request is placed in PCS) and the paths will be allocated accordingly. In case the applicants do not agree with the path offer, they can ask for adaptation¹¹; any corresponding remark will be treated to the extent possible. The IMs will propose an alternative; however, if “No alternatives” are available, the applicants will have to prepare a new request. That means that the process starts again from the beginning with the placing of an entirely new request.

If applicants do not send an answer within the timeline defined in Chapter 5.2, the offer will be withdrawn by the lead IM (if the request is placed in PCS) or the relevant IM (if the request is placed

¹¹ In this case the process starts again from the coordination and construction, including the new timeline for processing. If the adaption has only a little impact, IMs might accelerate the process.

in national systems) and the capacity will be made available for further needs by each IM taking national law into consideration.

If the path has been pre-accepted in the path request, the path will be allocated immediately after placing the path offer.

5.2 Timeline

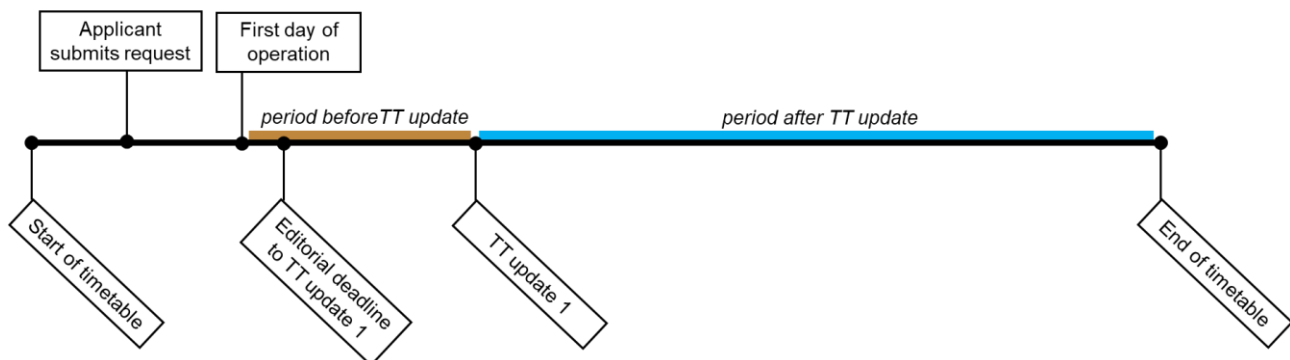
Ad hoc requests for a recurrent path

Some IMs use internationally agreed timetable updates and editorial deadlines, these IMs process differently running days requested by the applicant before the next relevant yearly TT update and after this yearly TT update, but this does not mean that they require applicants to place two separate requests.¹²

Yearly TT update: also called updated TT publication day. The day when the yearly timetable is updated and the recurrent train paths requested before the associated editorial deadline are incorporated into the yearly timetable.¹³

Associated editorial deadline to the yearly TT update: also called ordering deadline. All ad hoc requests for recurrent train paths submitted until the deadline will be incorporated into the yearly timetable with the next associated TT update. If the request is placed after the editorial deadline, it will be incorporated only in the following TT update (see the graphics below).

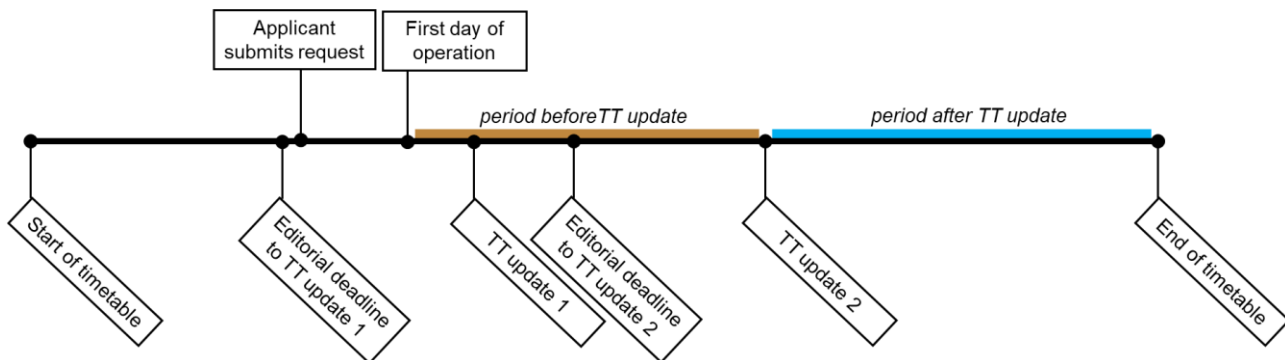
Ad hoc path request for a recurrent train path (example 1)



¹² The map of IMs using internationally agreed deadlines is provided in annex C.

¹³ Some IMs also apply national TT updates to incorporate national ad hoc requests for recurrent train paths into the yearly timetable national. However, national requests are out of scope of the document.

Ad hoc path request for a recurrent train path (example 2)



The differences in the processing of ad hoc requests for recurrent train paths for the period before the TT update and starting from the TT update are explained in the following paragraphs

The IMs not applying internationally agreed editorial deadlines treat both periods in the same manner and as described in the next paragraph “*Processing ad hoc requests for recurrent train path for the period before the next TT update*” (provide the offers for all running days at the same time).

Yearly TT updates and editorial deadlines for each TT are coordinated under the umbrella of RailNetEurope and consulted with applicants in the relevant working groups. These updates and editorial deadlines are published on RNE website: <https://rne.eu/capacity-management/capacity-planning-timetabling/>

Processing ad hoc requests for recurrent train path for the period before the next TT update

Request submission by applicants

The submission of ad hoc requests for recurrent train paths is recommended as soon as applicants have sufficient information to place the request. IMs guarantee proper and timely processing in all networks within 37calendar days.

Response from IMs

IMs shall respond not later than within 30 calendar days.¹⁴ 30 calendar days are to be considered as the maximum response time. IMs should aim to shorten the time needed for the coordination and construction process.

Acceptance of an offer from applicants

The applicants’ acceptance should be sent within 7 calendar days of receipt of the path offer.

Processing ad hoc requests for recurrent train path for the period after the next TT update

This process is used by only those IMs, which apply internationally agreed timetable updates and editorial deadlines.

¹⁴ For IMs using internationally agreed TT updates and editorial deadlines, this applies only for running days before the TT update after the next editorial deadline

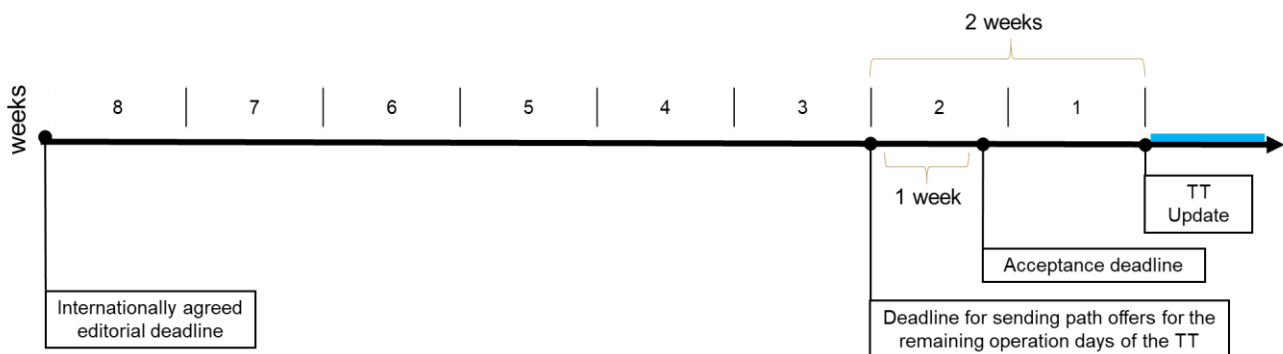
Request submission by applicants

Only those requests for recurrent train paths that were submitted until the editorial (order) deadline of the respective internationally agreed yearly TT update are processed. If the request is placed after the editorial deadline, it will be incorporated in the following TT update.

Response from IMs

IMs send the path offer for the remaining running days after the next timetable update. The offer shall be provided not later than 2 weeks before the respective internationally agreed yearly TT update.

IMs always take into consideration the path that was provided for the period until the TT update (and vice-versa) and try to make them as identical as possible.



Acceptance of an offer from applicants

The applicants' acceptance should be sent within 7 calendar days of receipt of the path offer.

Ad hoc/short term ad hoc requests for individual train path

Ad hoc requests for individual train paths (single running day, spot train) are subject to Directive 2012/34/EU, Article 48(1): "The infrastructure manager shall respond to ad hoc requests for individual train paths as quickly as possible, and in any event within five working days."

Request submission by applicants

Path requests for individual train paths should be submitted at least 7 calendar days before the running day.

Response from IMs

IMs shall respond as soon as possible but not later than in 7 calendar days. The response could be a path offer, alternative path offer, or rejection.

Acceptance of an offer from applicants

The applicants' acceptance should be sent within 24 hours of receipt of the path offer, excluding Saturdays and Sundays.¹⁵

¹⁵ Example: if the acceptance phase starts on Friday at 4.00 pm, it expires on Monday 3.59 pm.

6 Conflicting ad hoc request for individual train path and recurrent train path

An unclear situation might occur when an ad hoc/short-term request for an individual train path (hereafter R2) is placed which is in conflict with another ad hoc request for recurrent train path (hereafter R1) placed earlier. In these circumstances, IMs are obliged by Directive 2012/34/EU to respond to the R2 within 5 working days, but at this time the offer for the R1 will not be available yet. In order to allow for a harmonised reaction to such requests, all IMs shall apply the “first come – first served” principle without exceptions. Within 5 working days, the applicant of R2 shall receive either:

- a) An alternative path offer with an explanation why the request cannot be accepted as submitted
- b) Or notification that the offer as requested cannot be provided due to an earlier ad hoc request for the same capacity and that the applicants can decide whether would like to wait or be provided by an alternative path
- c) Or rejection

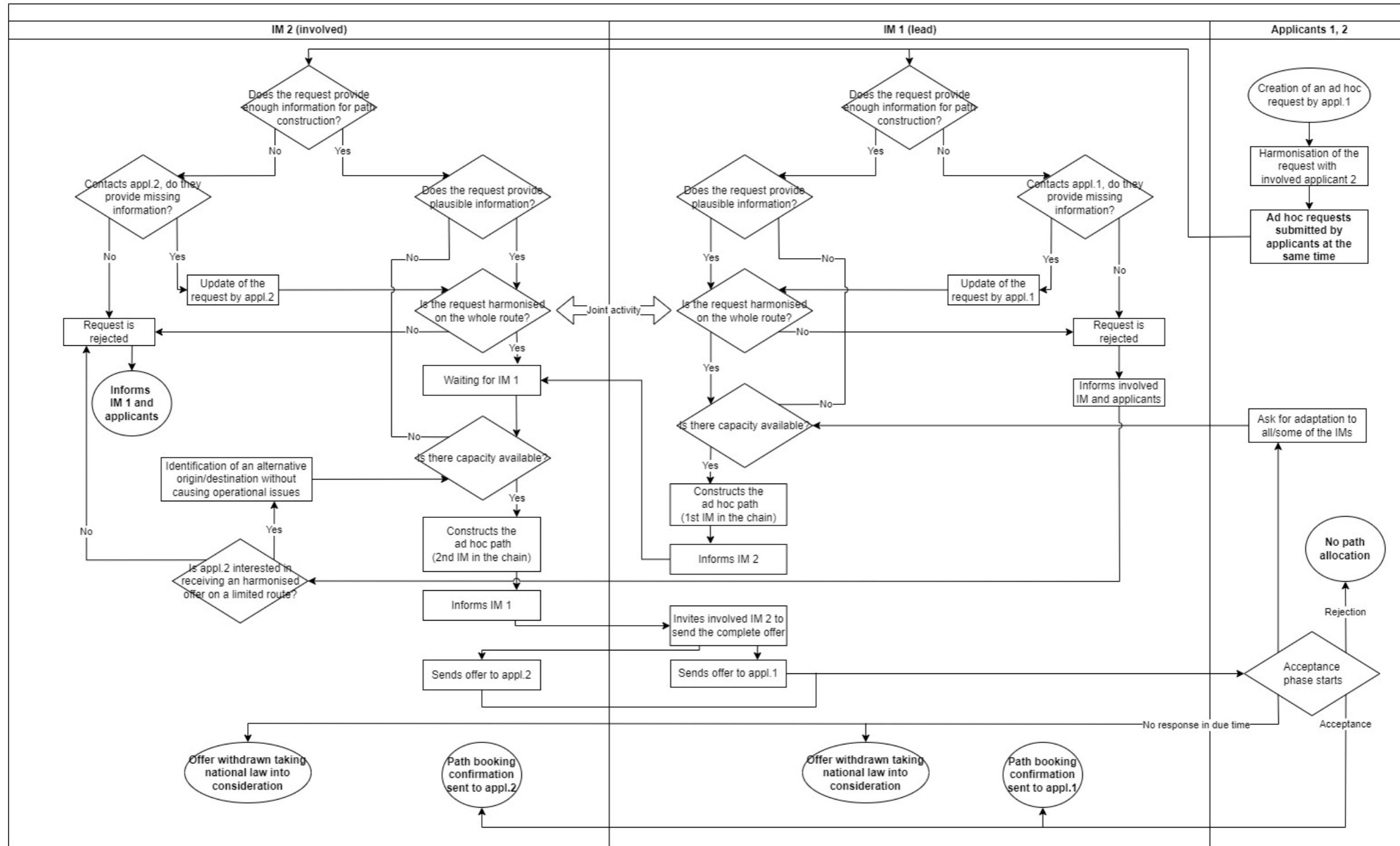
**Each Infrastructure Manager/Allocation Body has set up specific contact points (One-Stop-Shop, or OSS) to ensure efficient handling of the international path requests.
Contact details: <http://www.rne.eu/organisation/oss-c-oss/>**

Annex A – Process A - Diagram

The process diagram below shows a scenario in which a train runs over two networks in order IM1 and IM2. In each network a different applicant has been granted the right to request a path, i.e. applicant 1 for the network of IM1 and so forth. This process diagram is provided solely as a supplementary aid for chapter 5.1 of this handbook. It does not replace the information described in the text.

The diagram is based on the following assumptions:

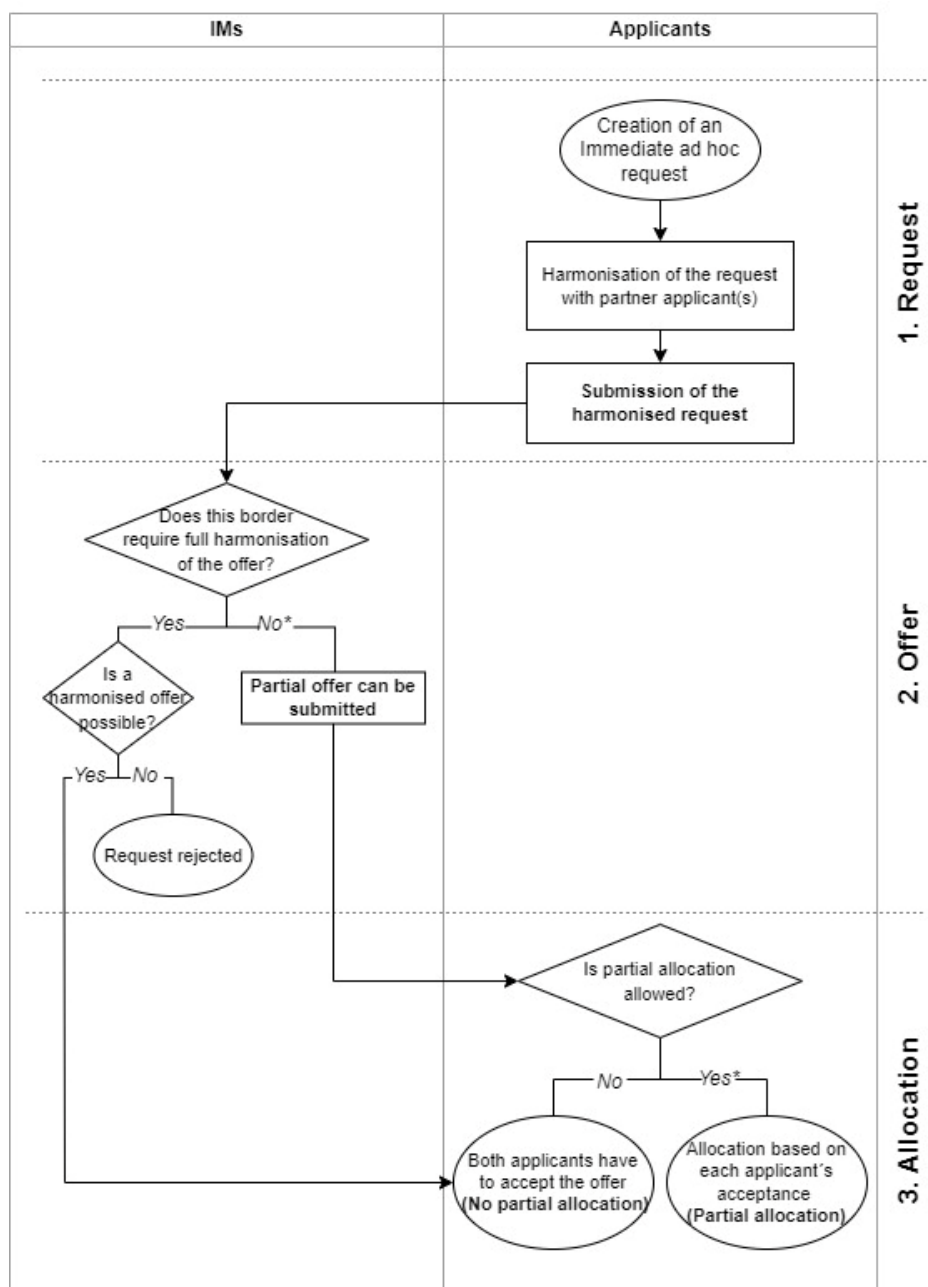
- Harmonised process is chosen by the applicants (all IM/applicant pairs work in the same phase)
- No pre-acceptance of the offer is selected by the applicants
- The request is elaborated by the IMs in the geographical order
- The ad hoc request is submitted after late path requests have been answered



Annex B – Process B – Immediate ad hoc for individual train run

The new version of PCS (so-called “Capacity broker”) will make possible the handling of immediate ad hoc requests for individual train runs. This process will be tested by SBB-I and DB InfraGO in a pilot project developed in cooperation with the applicants. The outcomes of this pilot project will be shared with IMs and the members of the RNE Capacity Management Advisory Group. Further adjustments of process B will be made according to the main learnings.

The process for requesting immediate ad hoc paths for individual train runs (“process B”) is currently applied on a voluntary basis and for some specific borders which are agreed upon by the IMs in question. The application of this procedure should be indicated in the Network Statements of the relevant IMs.



**to be jointly specified by both IMs for each border*

1. Request phase: harmonisation and submission

Applicants must prepare and harmonise their path request. This is the precondition for the IMs to accept the request. The path request shall provide all mandatory data which are listed in the Network Statements of each IM and in case of placing a request using PCS, directly in PCS.

Since this process is about individual train paths, only one running day can be requested by applicants.

Applicants are provided with the possibility of pre-acceptance¹⁶. If this option is chosen by the applicants, there will be no explicit acceptance phase after offer submission.

If the request is submitted in PCS, it must fulfil these additional conditions:

- a. Only freight trains (without dangerous goods/exceptional consignment as defined by the IMs involved) or single locomotive can be requested
- b. Only via enabled border points indicated by IMs in the network statements
- c. Involvement of only two IMs
- d. The path request must be submitted no later than 24h before departure, considering the origin of the train. Shorter times can be agreed by specific IMs.
- e. The order of path construction must be selected by the applicants (backwards or forwards).

2. Offer phase: path elaboration and offer submission

The current way of handling immediate ad hoc requests is heterogeneous across Europe. However, two main approaches can be recognised:

1) Path as “*strict timetable*” – harmonised offer required

Some cross-border sections suffer from congestion, limiting their ability to offer flexible traffic management. For this reason, a fully harmonised offer is strictly required to ensure the smooth running of trains which cannot be parked at or near border stations. This situation is particularly pronounced in Western Europe.

Handling these requests within PCS can enhance the level of harmonisation between applicants (harmonised requests on international level) and IMs (international view of the train run).

2) Path as a “*ticket to ride*” – partial offer allowed

On the other hand, some cross-border sections can provide a high level of flexibility as there are no capacity shortages. Here, full harmonisation of the path is not strictly needed and required by both IMs and applicants. In this scenario, the path is just a “*ticket to ride*”; it ensures the right to run the train even though the minute-based timetable is not a crucial aspect. In this context, the first IM in the chain of construction can submit an offer until the border even if the subsequent IM is not ready to provide a path on its network (so-called “partial offer”).

Managing these requests within PCS can provide the necessary flexibility while ensuring harmonised requests and a clear identification of the train by all involved stakeholders.

¹⁶ This option is always provided in PCS and in national request methods of some IMs for their networks.

Concerning the usage of PCS:

- IMs should jointly specify for which border the full harmonisation of the offer is required. In such cases, the offer must be harmonised between the IMs, otherwise, the request will be rejected
- IMs have a maximum time limit of 8 hours to provide an offer. Shorter times can be agreed by specific IMs.

3. Allocation phase: acceptance and allocation

Each applicant has the right to accept or reject the relevant offer. If the path has been pre-accepted in the path request, the path will be allocated immediately after placing the path offer.

In accordance with the different approaches described in the previous phase, IMs should jointly decide on the best approach for allocating the path for each cross-border section:

1) Partial allocation is allowed

If partial allocation is allowed by the IMs, applicant 1 can accept the offer and applicant 2 can reject it. IM1 will allocate the path until the border or to a reasonable point of the infrastructure, even though IM2 will not allocate any path to applicant 2.

2) Partial allocation is not allowed

If partial allocation is not allowed, then the offer must be accepted by all applicants from origin to destination. If one of the applicants reject/does not answer in due time, then the entire path will not be allocated. Partial allocation is not allowed by default if the border requires full harmonisation of the offer.

Regarding the usage of PCS:

- Applicants have a maximum time limit of 8 hours to accept or reject the relevant offer. Shorter times can be agreed by specific IMs.
- IMs should jointly specify in the network statements for which border partial allocation is allowed.

Annex C – List of IMs applying internationally agreed TT updates and editorial deadlines

The following visual shows which IMs apply the internationally agreed TT updates and editorial deadlines in timetable 2025. Information concerning particular TT periods can be found in the Network Statement of each IM.

