

11 THE WORLD INTERCHANGE NETWORK

11.1 Concept of the World Interchange Network

The World Interchange Network (WIN) was created in 1995 on the occasion of the World Road Congress in Montreal, Quebec (Canada) and was integrated in the World Road Association as part of the activities of the Technical Committee on Technological Exchanges and Development (C 3) in March 2000 under the name 'WIN project'.

WIN aims to promote the technological transfer of knowledge in the road sector for the particular benefit of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. It puts people with questions in contact with relevant experts free of charge, via the internet.

11.2 Organisation of the World Interchange Network

WIN falls under the guidance of the Technological Exchanges and Development Commission who appoint a manager for the WIN project.

PIARC member countries are invited by the Secretary General to appoint one or more national relays. These relays put users in contact with experts by means of the internet application developed on the associations' website. Ultimately, it is desirable that all PIARC member countries associate themselves with the WIN and count themselves as a relay.

The WIN is openly accessible via the PIARC website. It permits users to:

- find the relays most pertinent to their information needs according to the continent, the language and the required area of expertise. The areas of expertise cover the full range of road infrastructure and road transport fields.
- complete an online request for expertise.

The WIN can be consulted in French, English and in Spanish.

11.3 The Relays

11.3.1 *The Appointment of the Relays*

The first delegate appoints one relay (or more if required) in their own country or region. This can be done in consultation with a PIARC National Committee where one exists.

A relay can be identified in an existing centre for technology transfer in transport or at any other existing non-profit organisation that is interested in the exchange of knowledge in the road sector. The relays are organisations recognized for their expertise in multiple disciplines associated with roads and road transport such as: centres for technology transfer, research institutes and public ministries of transport. The relays are able to communicate in at least one of the three languages of the WIN.

11.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities of the Relays

For the WIN to function successfully, each relay must:

- prepare and update a form of introduction on the WIN internet site;
- permit online access to information and documents of its own choosing (reports, guides, articles etc.) via this introduction page;
- receive online request forms for expertise and address them as soon as possible by:
 - responding to the request directly where the required competency exists;
 - or transferring the request to an expert in the field concerned;
 - ensuring that the expert responds within a fixed timeframe.
- if the request requires some preparatory work, the relay must inform the requestor of the particular conditions in which a response will be given or even that it is not possible to give a response within the scope of the WIN.

The WIN is not aimed at offering free engineering services nor will the relays undertake specific studies. Above all, it should allow access to technical reports, guides and articles etc. (or simply provide references to them) which would normally be freely accessible to the public, in order to provide information related to the submitted question.

- be attentive in the transmission of questions to chosen experts so as to avoid creating a situation of unfair competition and to oversee the responses provided by the experts so as to ensure the responses are not of a commercial nature;
- be attentive not to place an expert in a situation of conflict of interest.

The relays have access to an archive of the questions and responses within the member's area of the PIARC internet site.

11.3.3 The Experts

The experts are designated by the relays according to their competencies. They all have a desire to contribute towards the improvement and dissemination of knowledge.

In the WIN, the experts have the following responsibilities:

- to respond online to the questions that are transmitted to them, freely, impartially and within the timeframe fixed by the relay.

The responses must not be of a commercial nature. Generally they are short; consisting mainly of indications to technical documents (reports, guides, articles etc) which are accessible to the public, or simply to the reference for these documents.
- to immediately advise the relay in the cases where they are unable to respond to a request or if they find themselves in a situation of conflict of interest.

11.4 Management of the WIN project

The Manager of the WIN project, selected by the Technological Exchanges and Development Commission has the responsibility of:

- maintaining contact with all of the relays and ensuring that they are correctly fulfilling their roles;
- proposing activities that promote the WIN;
- providing an annual report for the TED Commission, taking stock of the activities of the network, from the archive of questions and responses and from information provided by the relays.

11.5 The PIARC General Secretariat

The PIARC General Secretariat is responsible for the software development aspects of the WIN project on the associations' website and also for the maintenance of the application in accordance with the decisions made by the Executive Committee on the proposals of the TED Commission.

The General Secretariat of PIARC is one of the WIN relays.