

WORLD INTERCHANGE NETWORK

Monday 20 October 2003 (1.30 – 5.00 p.m.)

Session Agenda & Introductory Report

Session Agenda

PART 1: Workshop with Relays

1. Summary of the WIN team activities 2000-2003

Ms. Claire MONETTE (Chairperson of the WIN group, C3 member/CANADA-QUEBEC)

2. Presentation about the new WIN concept

Mr. Daniel HARGREAVES
(WIN group French-speaking secretary, C3 member/ CANADA-QUEBEC)

3. Presentations of several WINs activities

Ms. Catherine BERTHOD (Responsible person for Relay, C3 member/CANADA-QUEBEC)
Mr. Fidel C. DELGADO PINO (Responsible person for Relay, C3 member/CUBA)
Mr. Hagai K. S. BISHANGA (Responsible person for Relay, C3 member/TANZANIA)
Dr. Mic  l TILLE (Responsible person for Relay/SWITZERLAND)

4. Discussion

5. Summary

Ms. Claire MONETTE (Chairperson of the WIN group, C3 member/CANADA-QUEBEC)

PART 2: Official opening of the new WIN

1. Welcome

Ms. Claire MONETTE (Chairperson of the WIN group, C3 member/CANADA-QUEBEC)

2. Presentation of the new WIN

Ms. Anne-Marie LECLERC (PIARC Executive Committee member/ CANADA-QUEBEC)

3. Official opening in the presence of First delegates and representatives of the designated Relays

Mr. Olivier MICHAUD (PIARC President/SWITZERLAND)

4. Demonstration of the new site

Mr. Jean-François CORTÉ (PIARC Secretary General/FRANCE)

Mr. Daniel HARGREAVES

(WIN group French-speaking secretary, C3 member/ CANADA-QUEBEC)

5. Perspectives 2004-2007

Mr. Oscar DE BUEN RICHKARDAY (C3 Committee Chairperson/MEXICO)

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	4
AUTHORSHIP.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	6
OBJECTIVES OF THE WORLD INTERCHANGE NETWORK.....	7
THE NEW WORLD INTERCHANGE NETWORK.....	8
RESTRUCTURING STAGES.....	8
THE NEW WIN IN BRIEF.....	9
<i>The relays</i>	9
<i>Functioning of the new WIN</i>	10
SESSION AGENDA.....	11
INTERIM CONCLUSIONS	12

AUTHORSHIP

This report was written under the direction of:

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Mr. Ricardo Diaz-Zoido (Spain), Spanish-Speaking Secretary
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Mr. Daniel Hargreaves (Canada-Québec), French-Speaking Secretary

INTRODUCTION

Created in 1995, the World Interchange Network (WIN) seeks to promote technology transfer in the road and road transportation field, particularly to the benefit of developing countries and countries in economic transition. By means of the Internet, WIN puts people who have questions in touch with experts who can provide the answers.

The WIN concept has been completely modernized, and the session of the WIN Group (World Interchange Network) will be the opportunity to inaugurate the “new WIN” of the World Road Association (PIARC). This session will include a presentation on the concept’s general functioning and an online demonstration of the new Internet site. The session will bring out the full potential of the new WIN, conceived as the preferred worldwide tool to obtain information or a specific answer in the road and road transportation field.

In the second part of the session, workshops will enable relay representatives and participants to share their experiences and propose ways for improving the network in the future.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORLD INTERCHANGE NETWORK

The World Interchange Network (WIN) was created in 1995 in Montréal (Québec, Canada) on the occasion of the XXth World Road Congress. The WIN Secretariat was based in Montréal.

The objectives that motivated WIN's creation are still relevant. The field of road-related knowledge is constantly expanding, technology is evolving very rapidly and specialties are being refined. Researchers and practitioners therefore face problems for which a solution may already have been implemented elsewhere in the world. WIN was conceived to help them find this solution. It is an efficient information interchange network, both at the local level and at the national or international level. Through its Internet site, it puts people with questions in contact with people who have solutions.

WIN seeks to promote access to road expertise, accelerate the dissemination of various technologies, facilitate the evaluation of local practices in relation to international practices, and increase complementary research and development efforts. It serves the road community, particularly countries in economic transition and developing countries.

In 2000, WIN was integrated into the Technical Committee on Technological Exchanges and Development (C3) of PIARC, under the name of WIN Group. At that time, WIN encompassed 75 nodes, including 10 international organizations, in 44 countries.

THE NEW WORLD INTERCHANGE NETWORK

On the strength of the experience of the first few years and the interest generated by the concept, the PIARC decided in 2002 to restructure WIN completely, benefiting from the potential offered by modern technology.

The new WIN is based on relays, which replace the nodes of the former system. Each PIARC member country will count a relay, which will rely on a network of experts to ensure processing of information requests. The WIN Internet site is now totally integrated into the PIARC site.

The World Interchange Network is thus embarking on a new stage in its evolution, to the benefit of all. The PIARC member governments will have an efficient tool to benefit from the experience of experts on all continents. Their relays will enhance the expertise of their country or region at the international level. Through these relays, WIN will foster knowledge exchange activities for the national road community. It will also encourage the sharing of experience between relays and will serve as a true relay forum.

Restructuring stages

Within the C3 Committee, the WIN Group is facilitated by a Chair, Ms. Claire Monette, of the *Société de l'Assurance automobile du Québec* (Canada-Québec), and three Secretaries, Mr. Ricardo Diaz-Zoido (Spain), Spanish-Speaking Secretary, Mr. Bertrand Guelton (Belgium), English-Speaking Secretary, and Mr. Daniel Hargreaves (Canada-Québec), French-Speaking Secretary.

The WIN Group adopted its 2001-2003 action plan in December 2000. The plan involved three objectives:

- integrate WIN's activities into those of the PIARC;
- maintain and extend the PIARC node network to all member governments, with priority to developing countries and countries in economic transition;
- design tools and offer means to these countries to integrate into the network quickly and thus facilitate exchanges between users and experts.

Five actions arose from these objectives:

- revise the node membership criteria;
- establish a communications plan to mobilize involvement of the nodes;
- develop the Internet site;
- design tools and means to reach developing countries and countries in economic transition;
- produce the inventory of similar networks and study the possibilities of cooperation.

Based on this action plan, the WIN modernization stages followed in rapid succession.

In August 2001, the WIN Group held a consultation of the node representatives on WIN's concept, functioning and outlook. This consultation highlighted the needs for restructuring of WIN and its node network. With the cooperation of the C3 Committee, the Communications Commission and the PIARC General Secretariat, the WIN Group then drafted new orientations for the WIN concept and its Internet site. The PIARC Board approved these orientations in October 2002.

One of the key factors in these new reorientations was the restructuring of WIN on the basis of national relays, instead of the nodes of the former structure. Thus, at the beginning of 2003, the first delegates of PIARC were invited to designate relays representing their member governments. The C3 members, the node representatives, the chairs of the national committees and the persons responsible for technology transfer centres were able to lend their assistance in this approach.

In a parallel process, development began on the new WIN Internet site. The new site had to be integrated with the PIARC site, which was then also under revision. It also had to offer all the functionalities desired in the new concept.

The new WIN in brief

The new WIN is structured on the basis of national relays, which in turn rely on a network of experts in each country or region.

WIN users can obtain answers in one of the network's three official languages – French, English or Spanish. Some relays can also communicate with users making requests in another common language.

The relays

Each PIARC member government was invited to designate a relay. The relays are transportation technology transfer centres, research centres or government units.

The relays have expertise in several infrastructure and road transportation disciplines. They are thus able to respond directly or obtain an answer to most requests. For more specialized questions, the relays connect users via the Internet to experts who can provide the answers. They also ensure that an answer is given.

Each relay therefore establishes its own network of experts by field of expertise. This network may include any person who wishes to contribute his or her expertise to the improvement and dissemination of knowledge.

Thanks to the WIN site, the relays can easily track and analyze all of the questions and answers circulating in the network. They can thus better ensure exchanges of knowledge in the transportation field to the benefit of the road community of their country or region, as well as the international road community.

Functioning of the new WIN

The new WIN Internet site is an integral part of the PIARC Internet site. It is accessible to everyone via the PIARC site or the sites of the relays or their associated agencies.

Through the search engine, a user can select the relay or relays most likely to answer the question, depending on the language, the field of expertise, and the continent or country chosen. On this relay's site, the user will find certain information and technical documents accessible online, which may be sufficient to answer his/her questions. For a more specific question, he/she can contact this relay directed at the posted coordinates.

PIARC members can also write an online information request on the WIN site and address it to the chosen relay, which is committed, as a WIN relay, to provide an answer. If necessary, the relay calls one of the experts in its network, who will quickly answer free of charge.

This possibility for a researcher to obtain a quick answer from an expert in any region of the world is the strength and special characteristic of WIN. Its efficiency obviously imposes certain limits on its use. Thus, the questions may not require extensive research. If this is the case, the relay will inform the requesting user that it can only provide an answer on certain specific conditions, or that it is impossible to answer within WIN. Also, WIN remains a public tool and does not handle exchanges of a commercial nature.

SESSION AGENDA

The session will first be the opportunity to inaugurate the new WIN in the presence of many dignitaries, including the First Delegates of the PIARC member countries. It is intended for the relay and node representatives, the experts associated with the relays and any person wishing to discover the new possibilities offered by WIN.

The first part of the session, devoted to the inauguration, will include a presentation of the new concept and an online demonstration of the new Internet site. The outlook for the next PIARC cycle, 2004-2007, will also be proposed.

The second part will be held in the form of simultaneous workshops in each of the three WIN languages: French, English and Spanish. The WIN Group will present the new concept in more detail. Relay representatives will present their activities and their first experiences as relays. The workshops will also include a participant discussion period.

These workshops are very important, because they will be the first opportunity for the newly created relays to meet and exchange ideas with each other and with future WIN users. Each will be able to present its needs and comments directly in one of the network's three languages.

INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

The new WIN will take off after the Durban World Road Congress. Many tasks then await the PIARC. The WIN Group therefore is proposing its three-point action plan for the 2004-2007 cycle:

- Improve the functioning of the new WIN to make it the best technology interchange network in the road and road transportation field.

The first year of operation of the new WIN and its Web site will be the object of an evaluation that will allow improvement of the entire system, particularly the site's functionalities. The relays will also be able to submit their needs and comments as their activities evolve.

- Promote the creation of WIN relays and their networks of experts.

WIN already counts on a significant number of relays at the time of its inauguration in Durban. However, the ultimate objective is for each PIARC member government to participate actively in WIN with its own relay. The creation of new relays will therefore be encouraged.

The PIARC will also promote the sharing of experiences among the relays by organizing seminars and various animation activities within WIN.

- Perfect the administrative conditions of the new WIN within the PIARC.

WIN's responsibility within the PIARC will be established according to the Association's new Strategic Plan.

The proliferation of relays and technology transfer centres in the PIARC member countries, the improvement of the Internet site on the basis of the available technology and the extensive promotion of the network are all factors that will increase the use of the new WIN and its reputation among researchers and practitioners worldwide.