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IRIS Europe II – Implementation of River Information Services in Europe

*Final Technical Report
Part A - General*

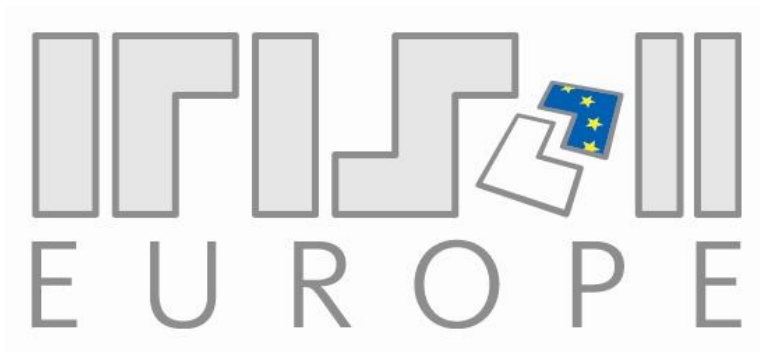
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Abbreviations

Ac	Activity within IRIS Europe II
ACM	Activity Coordination Meeting
FIS	Fairway Information Services
FTR	Final Technical Report
IRIS Europe II	Implementation of River Information Services in Europe (project name)
PMT	Project Management Team
QoIS	Quality of Information Services
RIS	River Information Services
SCOM	Steering Committee
SuAc	Sub-activity within IRIS Europe II
TAA	Technical and administrative agreement, synonym for international RIS data exchange
TEN-T	Trans European Networks - Transport (funding programme of the European Commission)
TEN-T EA	TEN-T Executive Agency
TIS	Traffic Information Services



1 Executive Summary

The project IRIS Europe II – Implementation of River Information Services in Europe II – started in January 2009 and ends in December 2011. The project is co-funded by the European Commission within the TEN-T programme. Partners of 9 EU Member States are actively participating and in addition cooperation partners of 4 more countries are observing and contributing to the project.

The project was structured into activities which were again divided into sub-activities. For each SuAc a leader was nominated who coordinated the work to be done and monitored the results to be achieved. Furthermore the SuAc leader communicated regularly with the Project Management Team (PMT) on the status and next steps as well as on open issues concerning the related SuAc.

A Project Management Team was established in order to monitor the technical and financial progress as well as to identify and initiate necessary steps and action points. Furthermore the PMT was responsible to elaborate the Strategic Action Plan for the project as well as the yearly Action Status Report as required by the TEN-T Executive Agency. The project coordinator via donau was nominated by the TEN-T EA and was responsible for the entire coordination of the project and for the communication with the TEN-T EA.

Furthermore, a Steering Committee (SCOM) was established, consisting of representatives of the national Beneficiaries of the project, in order to monitor and steer, if required, the project on a higher level. Regular project meetings were organised by the PMT, the so-called Activity Coordination Meetings and the Steering Committee Meetings where mainly the status of the SuAcs was presented and the next steps and open issues were identified and discussed. Furthermore, this platform was used to inform each other about national implementations and gave the cooperation partners, and other European Projects, the opportunity to inform about their project to safeguard the alignment of RIS-developments on a pan-European level.

After three years of executing investigations, elaborating specifications and documents, tendering and contracting, implementing, testing and evaluating of pilots as well as documenting all results, the Project Management Team can proudly state, that the project was successfully executed and almost all planned results were achieved by the very actively contributing and motivated project partners.

Some of the key successes are:

- Successful pilot Implementation of the International Data Exchange between member States
- Conclusion of multilateral legal agreements as legal basis for International Data Exchange
- A first attempt to define the quality aspects of RIS-services
- A comprehensive report of the requirements of the logistic stakeholders
- Successful interconnection with European Services (e.g. European Hull Data Base, European Reference Data Management Service)
- Enhancement of RIS-services based on RIS-technologies (e.g. Depth Contours in IENC)

These results supported and will support the on-going harmonised implementation of RIS in Europe towards safe, secure and efficient transport as well as to utilise inland waterways to their fullest potential.



2 Structure of the Final Technical Report

The Final Technical Report (FTR) documents all work that was executed within the project as well as all results that were achieved. Furthermore a lot of conclusions and recommendations from SuAc level up to European level were identified and are documented as well.

Due to the high amount of relevant information to be included into the Final technical Report, the Project Management team decided to split the FTR into the following parts (separate files):

- Part A, General
 - Introduction to the project
 - Conclusions and recommendations on project level
 - Details on Project Management, Dissemination and Liaison with other initiatives
- Part B, Activity 1
 - Details, results, conclusions and recommendations of the SuAcs within Activity 1
- Part C, Activity 2
 - Details, results, conclusions and recommendations of the SuAcs within Activity 2
- Part D, Activity 3
 - Details, results, conclusions and recommendations of the SuAcs within Activity 3
- Part E, Activity 4
 - Details, results, conclusions and recommendations of the SuAcs within Activity 4



3 Introduction

IRIS Europe II as pilot implementation project for River Information Services (RIS) is co-financed by the Directorate General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission within the TEN-T programme (Trans European Transport Networks). IRIS Europe II started in January 2009 and was finished in December 2011.

IRIS Europe II is a multi-beneficiary TEN-T project focusing on further enhancement and fine-tuning of RIS key technologies, services and applications; in particular the (pilot) implementation of new harmonized RIS services especially at the level of fairway, traffic and transport related RIS services, services based upon multilateral legal agreements and definitions of service levels for RIS, the provision of feedback and contribution to the maintenance and amendment of technical specifications.

IRIS Europe II will significantly contribute to a harmonized RIS implementation at European level. IRIS Europe II is based on the work of the RIS Expert Groups and of previous RIS implementation projects. A broad European consortium representing 9 member states and cooperation partners have joined forces to support RIS providers, traffic and fairway authorities in enhancing their RIS services, especially those for logistical RIS users on a European level. A key objective of IRIS Europe II is the involvement of logistics RIS users by means of pilots.

3.1 Main objectives of IRIS Europe II

The emphasis of IRIS Europe II was to facilitate the development of River Information Services in Europe, enabling an international coordinated implementation, provision and enhancement of services as defined in the European RIS Directive 2005/44/EC.

In detail providing the following:

- Further development and pilot implementation of national and international data exchange making use of multilateral legal agreements and this way providing services especially for logistical RIS users
- Contribution to the amendment of the technical specifications for RIS technologies and services and later on implementation of these technical specifications
- Participation in standardization of RIS services and technologies
- Pilot implementation of new RIS services and RIS technologies
- Feasibility studies outlining future services for RIS
- Provide input and feedback to RIS Expert Groups, based on pilot implementation experiences
- Demonstration and evaluation of new RIS technologies and additional services
- Further elaboration and implementation of measures for cross-border exchange of RIS data and other European services
- Definition of quality requirements for operation of RIS



3.2 Geographical scope of IRIS Europe II

IRIS Europe II is a Pan European Project with partners from 9 Member States as well as interested parties from 4 other countries which are integrated as cooperation partners within IRIS Europe II.

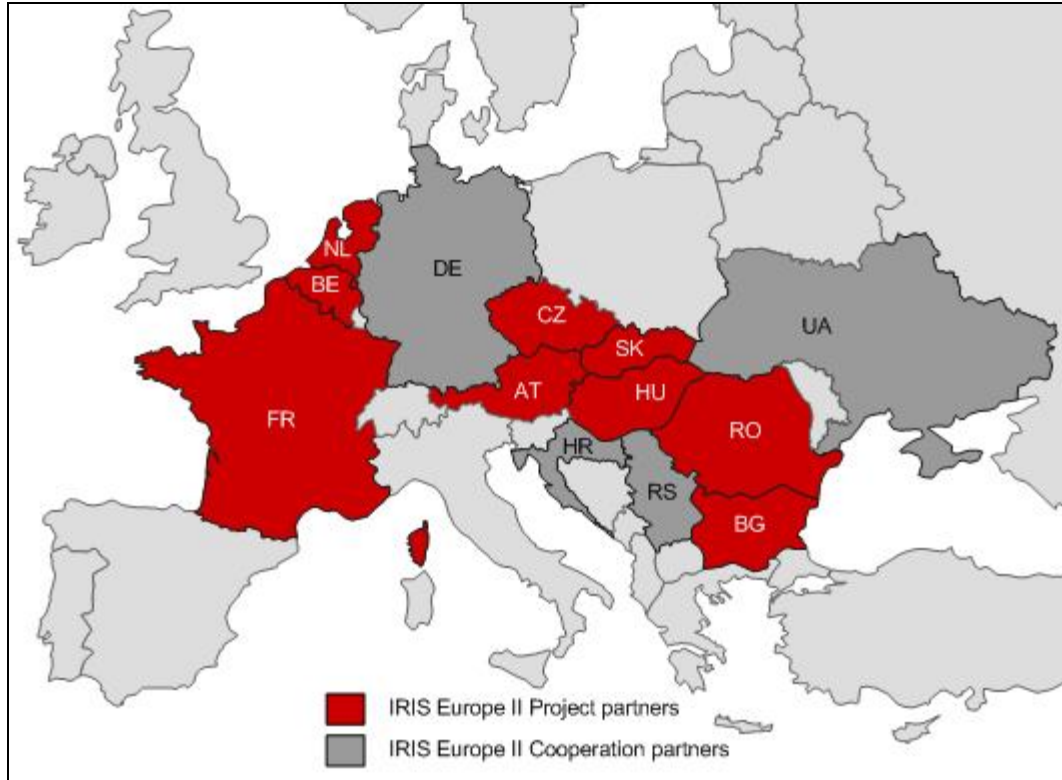


Figure 1: Geographical scope of IRIS Europe II

Project partners are representing the following Member States: Austria, Belgium, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, France and Bulgaria.

Cooperation partners are representing the following countries: Croatia, Germany, Serbia and the Ukraine.

The following regions according to the NUTS 2 nomenclature are covered by IRIS Europe II: Niederösterreich, Wien, Oberösterreich, Prov. Antwerpen, Prov. Oost-Vlaanderen, Prov. West-Vlaanderen, Prov. Limburg (B), Prov. Vlaams-Brabant, Bratislavsky kraj, Zapadne Slovensko, Stredne Slovensko, Kozep-Magyarország, Nyugat-Dunántul, Kozep-Dunántul, Del-Alfold, Del-Dunántul, Bucuresti - Ilfov, Praha, Stredni Cechy, Severovychod, Severozapad, Zuid-Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Overijssel, Noord-Holland, Limburg (NL), Nord - Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Est, Île de France, Severen tsentralen



3.3 Project partners of IRIS Europe II

The table below shows the Beneficiaries and executing project partners from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia.

Country	Name	Beneficiary	Executing organisation
Austria	Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology	X	
	via donau – Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft mbH		X
Belgium	Flemish Government	X	
	Waterwegen en Zeekanaal NV		X
	NV De Scheepvaart		X
Bulgaria	Ministry of Transport	X	
	Ports Infrastructure Company		X
Czech Republic	Ministry of Transport, Navigation Department	X	
	Directorate of Waterways		X
France	Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport, Spatial Planning, Tourism and the Sea	X	
	VNF – Voies Navigables de France		X
Hungary	Ministry of National Development	X	
	RSOE – National Association of Radio Distress-Signalling and Infocommunications		X
The Netherlands	RWS – Directoraat Generaal Rijkswaterstaat	X	X
Romania	Ministry of Transport	X	
	River Administration of the Lower Danube		X
Slovakia	Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications	X	
	VUD – Transport Research Institute		X
	KIOS		X

Table 3-1: Project partners IRIS Europe II



3.4 Work breakdown structure of IRIS Europe II

IRIS Europe II is structured into 5 activities and several sub-activities, so-called SuAcs, which all deal with different topics:

- Activity 1 concentrates on the pilot implementation of selected Fairway Information Services
- Activity 2 focuses on a pilot implementation of traffic and transport Related RIS Services
- Activity 3 deals with pilot implementations of international RIS data exchange
- Activity 4 deals with the definition of Quality of Information Services for RIS
- Activity 5 deals with Project Management and Dissemination

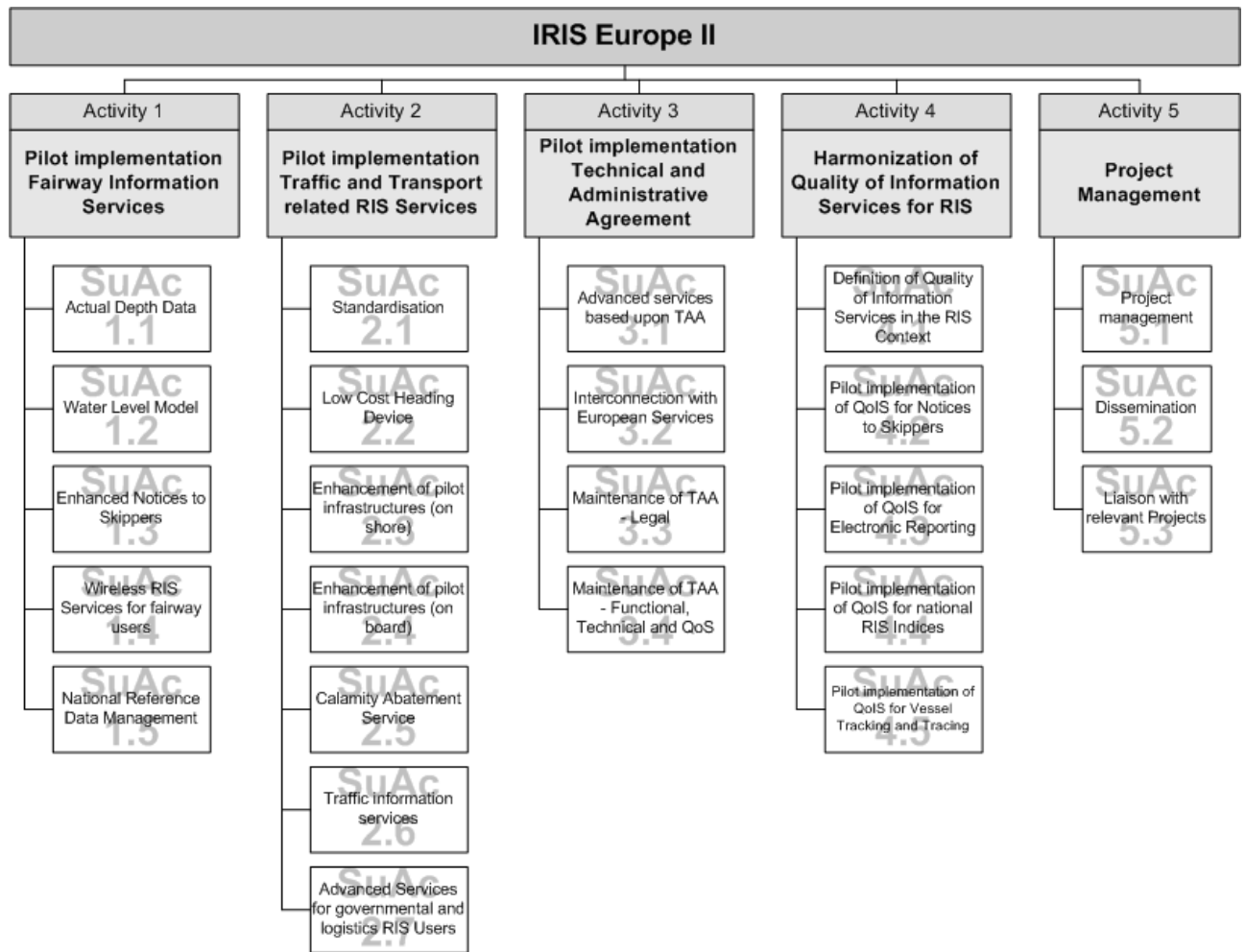


Figure 2: Work breakdown structure of IRIS Europe II



4 Conclusions and Recommendations out of the execution of IRIS Europe II

4.1 Conclusions

Overall it can be concluded that the IRIS Europe II project was a very **successful project** which brought pilot implementation of RIS to the next level, getting it operational, and established international data exchange between Member States and with European Services with the required legal service agreements.

This chapter contains the conclusions and the respective recommendations based on how the project was executed and were given by the national beneficiaries and/or the national coordinator of the project. The conclusions and recommendations of the various sub-activities can be found in part B till E of the FTR.

The **organisational structure** of the IRIS Europe II project and coordination meetings have to be considered as successful. Furthermore it was concluded that the Project Management Team (PMT) is a valuable and powerful instrument to guide the participating Member States through the project and was acting as an executive organisation of the IRIS Europe II Steering Committee (SCOM) which was able to have ad-hoc meetings on short notice and has been approachable accessibility. The PMT decreased the amount of work of the IRIS Europe II Steering Committee. Taken into account that the members of the PMT were often also the National Coordinators and were involved in other related projects, a majority of raised issues were handled by the PMT, such as preparation of the SCOM decision-making based upon the advice of the PMT.

It was concluded that the IRIS Europe II **Steering Committee** could only steer based on consensus among the beneficiaries of the IRIS Europe II project which had some shortcomings due to the fact that the official beneficiaries were not participating in most of the meetings and often were represented by the national coordinators, which are responsible for executing the work. Furthermore, the IRIS Europe II Steering Committee and the IRIS Europe II Active Coordination Meetings were dealing with the same topics with often the same representatives. It was concluded that there were two bodies dealing with more and less the same topics.

The introduction of **sub-activities** have proved their benefits because the project was divided in various smaller projects with each their own objectives and deliverables. The detailed definition of each individual sub-activity within the strategic action plan (SAP) supported the sub-activity leaders to set-up and manage their sub-activity and was the basis for monitoring by the PMT. A downside of a fine breakdown structure by subjects is that it requires more effort by the partners. The partners had to provide one or more sub-activity leaders with project management skills and RIS knowledge, meetings had to be coordinated and combined to reduce costs and travelling time, and it required also more labour power to conduct all the activities due to the number of sub-activities.

It was concluded that the operational **organisational aspects** within the project and the respective sub-activities is a point of attention. via donau as project coordinator provided a set of tools to support the participants (templates for agenda, minutes, reports, deliverables, presentations; project website incl. discussion forum; publication of documents; etc.) but the application of these tools was limited, although these tools were requested by the partners to accommodate them.

During the project it was noted that the **motivation** to participate to the IRIS Europe II project is different for each Member State. Some Member States executed only national implementation during the IRIS Europe II project, others were aiming to implement RIS in a coordinated European way and to enhance their RIS-services. For other Member States it was to ensure alignment with European initiatives. In addition there were also a number of Member States that had also their own National implementation projects, co-funded in a similar way, with the purpose to implement RIS-services and/or participate in other projects. It was concluded that the variety of motivations in combination of conduction simultaneous projects lead often to undesired dependences between projects which



delayed the IRIS Europe II project in some countries. Some of the Member States concluded that this also lead to huge workload and constrains in the prioritisation of the required effort.

A key success was the establishment of the **task forces** which had a clear assignment and were working cross over multiple sub-activities and invited stakeholders outside the project with as result a broad European commitment for the results.

It was observed that **strategic outlook** for further RIS implementations is and was missing to determine the next steps to be taken and how development within IRIS II fits in this outlook.

4.2 Recommendations

The **Steering Committee** is an important body and all the beneficiaries should attend the respective Steering Committee meetings and should steer the project by making strategic decisions. Based on the experiences, it is recommended that Steering Committee meetings should only be organised if there is a real need. Meetings during the project should only be organised if this is required, e.g. dissension is rife among the partners or national coordinators, decision related to contract with TEN-T (final decision), etc.

It is recommended that the participating Member States should consider their participation in European projects based on the **national requirements** and the available resources and ensure that activities in various national, regional or European projects are harmonised.

It is recommended that in next projects the **sub-activity leaders** will have proved project management skills and will have certain level of knowledge about the sub-activity he should be manage.

It is recommended that all participants will use the **tools** for the operational aspects of a project and that the sub-activity leaders will announce meetings on the project website to inform the other sub-activity leaders when and where meetings will be held to reduce travelling costs. Furthermore it was recommended that also the sub-activity leaders are able to upload documents by themselves and that project forums will be used to exchange information and to facilitate discussions.

It is recommended that the technical RIS data exchange **task force** and the legal task force that were established within IRIS Europe II will be continued in order to safeguard the work done and to be done. It is recommended to discuss a possible transition of these task forces with the chairs of the RIS expert groups.



5 Activity 5 – Project Management

Activity 5 is called Project Management but also contains the sub-activities concerning dissemination and liaison with other initiatives. The details and results of these SuAcs are provided in the following chapters.

5.1 SuAc 5.1 Project Management

5.1.1 Background information

IRIS Europe II is an international project. Partners all over Europe work among different topics concerning River Information Services. In order to contribute to smooth activities during the whole duration of the project a structured and good coordination of the project partners was necessary.

5.1.2 Objectives

Main objective of project management is to monitor the status and progress of the project, technically as well as financially.

Furthermore the communication with the TEN-T and EC as well as a harmonised documentation and organisation of meetings was of extreme importance for IRIS Europe II.

5.1.3 Work approach

Within IRIS Europe II a Project Management Team (PMT) was established, consisting out of six partners from participating member states:

- Mario Kaufmann, via donau
- Mario Sattler / Michael Fastenbauer, via donau
- Peter Oudenes, RWS
- Jos van Splunder, RWS
- Robert Rafael, RSOE
- Alaric Blakeway, VNF

To guarantee a successful cooperation between the different countries and project partners, regular meetings were arranged. These meetings were held in regular intervals. In addition constant communication concerning the progress and status of IRIS Europe II was performed mostly via e-mail and telephone. The overall project coordination as well as the main communication with the TEN-T EA and the representatives of the European Commission was done by via donau as officially nominated project coordinator.

5.1.4 Results

First of all the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) was elaborated that defines in detail the work to be done and the results to be achieved on the level of sub-activities. Furthermore the responsibilities per SuAc were defined within the SAP.

In the course of the yearly progress reporting towards the TEN-T EA, the PMT provided detailed templates in order to gather and consolidate the input of the SuAc leaders and the national



coordinators on technical and financial level. The consolidated Action Status Reports (ASRs) 2010 (reporting year 2009) and 2011 (reporting year 2010) were submitted to the TEN-T in time and were satisfying the expectations of the responsible representatives.

Based on the details gathered in the course of the elaboration of the ASRs, the Strategic Action Plan was updated as well based on necessary amendments and changes in the work approach.

During the lifetime of the project the following meetings were organised by the PMT in order to ensure an efficient communication and exchange of know-how as well as to monitor the progress of the activities:

- 10 Project Management Team Meetings: Overview on project status, discussion of critical issues and necessary steps to be initiated, preparation of meetings and project documentation (e.g. SAP, ASR, SuAc Reports, Final Technical Report), etc.
- 6 Activity Coordination Meetings: Presentation of status of work per SuAc (alternatively per country), identification of open issues and next steps to be taken, etc.
- 5 Steering Committee Meetings: Presentation of current status of the project on SuAc level, agreement on progress by the Steering Committee, decisions to be taken, etc.

In addition to overall project meetings, a lot of additional meetings took place on SuAc level whereas the PMT initiated the combination of relevant meetings in order to reduce travel times and costs. This was possible due to the fact that several experts participated in several SuAcs and thus a high efficiency in terms of meetings and travelling was ensured.

In the second half of 2011 the PMT initiated the elaboration of the SuAc reports by providing templates to the SuAc leaders and requiring their input based on a defined deadline. These SuAc reports are consolidated into the Final Technical Report which reflects the final project documentation and has to be submitted to the TEN-T EA and the national beneficiaries for their approval.

5.1.5 Conclusions / Recommendations / Envisioned next steps

Conclusions:

- It was concluded that the Project Management Team is a valuable and powerful instrument to support the participating Member States through the project. The PMT was acting as an executive organisation of the IRIS Europe II Steering Committee and was able to have ad-hoc meetings on short notice.
- It was observed that the PMT mainly contains representatives of the key Member States in the IRIS Europe II project with a significant budget.
- The fine-meshed structure of the Project and the relationship and dependences between the sub-activity deliverables, official deliverables and milestones caused difficulties to monitor the progress of official deliverables and milestones and especially as dependences are cross over the project.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to re-consider the position of a Project Management Team and formalise its position as the official executive body of the Steering Committee with a clear mandate, not only to give advice and guidance but also to enforce activities.
- It is recommended that the PMT is a real reflection of all the partners of the project.



5.2 SuAc 5.2 Dissemination

5.2.1 Background information

IRIS Europe II is multinational project focusing on a very important transport sector with a lot of different stakeholders and interest groups with different requirements and demands. Therefore, marketing of the project towards implementation of River Information Services is considered as very important.

5.2.2 Objectives

Main objective is to create awareness for the project focusing on the implemented and available RIS Services in order to ensure the involvement of relevant stakeholders, to identify their requirements and to get their feedback and recommendations for further improvements.

Another very important objective is to present and demonstrate the work that was done and the results that were achieved within the project in order to justify the effort and budget that was invested into the project for the part three years.

5.2.3 Work approach

A dissemination concept was elaborated by via donau and agreed within PMT. The concept contained the main dissemination activities and defined the responsibilities which were divided among the PMT members.

Relevant content for the dissemination activities was gathered by the PMT from the national coordinators and the SuAc leaders. The content for all dissemination activities (texts, presentations, etc.) were agreed within the PMT before publication.

5.2.4 Results

The main results of the dissemination activities were:

- Implementation and maintenance of the project website (www.iris-europe.net) by via donau
- Layouting, printing and distribution of the first project folder by via donau
- Layouting, printing and distribution of the final project brochure by RSOE
- Organisation of the combined final event together with RISING by RWS

Furthermore, the status and results of the project were exchanged with other initiatives and presented several times at different opportunities:

- Presentations at RIS Expert Groups
- Presentations at the common issues meetings
- Presentations at conferences
- Presentations to specific stakeholder groups



5.2.5 Conclusions / Recommendations / Envisioned next steps

Conclusions:

- Generally the dissemination activities within IRIS Europe II went quite well although not planned and executed by marketing experts.
- Besides the active awareness building for the project website, it is assumed that the partners and other interested parties did not use the website (download meeting documents, make use of the provided forum, etc.). Furthermore, the partners did not provide any articles for the “news” section of the website. Nevertheless, such a website is still considered as inevitable for a project with such dimensions and can be a very useful tool for various issues (distribution of results, news, discussion in forums, etc.).
- The project folder at the beginning of the project describing the objectives and planned work to be done is considered as very important in order to create awareness for the project and to support interested parties to identify their points of interest.
- The common Final Event with the RISING project has to be seen as a successful dissemination activity focusing on the results of the project. The presentations and demonstrations of a subset of the project results gave an impression on the work that was done and justifies the effort that was put into the project.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to elaborate a dissemination concept for similar projects at their starting phase, ideally with support of marketing experts.
- What shall not be missing in the dissemination activities of such projects are a starting folder, a final brochure and a final event as well as a project website and dissemination at certain opportunities (e.g. expert meetings, conferences, meetings of relevant other projects or initiatives, etc.).
- It is recommended to encourage the project partners to provide more information to be put on the project website (news, meeting documents, results, etc.).
- As a basis for all dissemination activities, an inventory of the relevant stakeholders that shall be reached has to be elaborated and ways to contact them shall be identified.



5.3 SuAc 5.3 Liaison with national and international initiatives

5.3.1 Background information

Several RIS implementation projects and initiatives are ongoing with different focus. A selection is provided in the following:

- PLATINA
- RISING
- NEWADA
- RIS Expert Groups

5.3.2 Objectives

Main objective is to ensure harmonised development and implementation of River Information Services in Europe by ensuring efficient coordination and cooperation between the IRIS Europe II project and identified relevant other projects and initiatives focusing on topics of common interest as well as by regular exchange of experiences and know-how in order to profit from each other.

5.3.3 Work approach and results

First of all relevant initiatives and their content respectively their responsibility was identified at the beginning of IRIS Europe II by the Project Management Team. Together with the identified contact points the topics of common interest were identified and the next steps in terms of coordination and cooperation but also towards necessary differentiation and responsibilities in case of common activities.

Regular information exchange was established by the identified contact points by e-mail, telephone and meetings and proved to be essential for a harmonised implementation of RIS in Europe.

5.3.4 Conclusions / Recommendations / Envisioned next steps

Conclusions:

- The cooperation with other projects, (like PLATINA, RISING etc.) and the RIS Expert Groups was successful, although it has to be remarked that the success factor of the cooperation is often based on personal relationships and interests, however it was not always conducted in the most optimise manner. Furthermore it is concluded that the deliverables, provided by parties outside of IRIS Europe II, didn't always meet the requirements of the IRIS Europe II project or were not delivered on time.
- The RIS Expert Groups have not always enough resources (manpower, funding) to investigate new technologies and to implement and evaluate new functional requirements as well as the respective standards by means of empirical validation. IRIS Europe II proved its benefit to implement and evaluate new functional requirements and the respective standards in a pilot environment and provide feedback to the RIS Expert Groups and tried to speed up the developments.
- Furthermore it was concluded that the RIS Expert Groups and the respective Member States have no budget to participate and to follow up all the developments, especially for the Member States not participating in IRIS Europe II. As consequence of this, discussions will be held again in the RIS Expert Groups and will cause a delay in the acceptance and further development.



Recommendations:

- It is highly recommended that the cooperation between projects and the respective RIS Expert Groups are formally established by means of a letter of intent and make clear agreements of each expectations and responsibilities.
- It is recommended to investigate whether it is possible to give the involved RIS Expert Groups a financial funding for the additional effort, especially when partners are involved which are not participating in the respective project.
- It is recommended that the next projects and the RIS Expert Groups draft a transition document how the results of next projects will be transited to the respective RIS Expert Group, or other bodies, in order to ensure continuity.

Envisioned next steps:

- An envisioned next step could be that the chairs of the RIS Expert Groups and the PMTs of the various European Projects will organize a meeting to evaluate the cooperation and determine how the cooperation can be continued and where applicable improved in the future.



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