

PATHFINDER PROCESS GUIDELINES

(For path requests for the running timetable 2010 and the annual timetable 2011)

Version: 1.1 / 17.2.2010

Updates

Every alteration in this document is reported in the following list of alterations

Nr.	Date	New (item, content)	Notes
1	17.2.10	New e-mail address and opening hours for support	

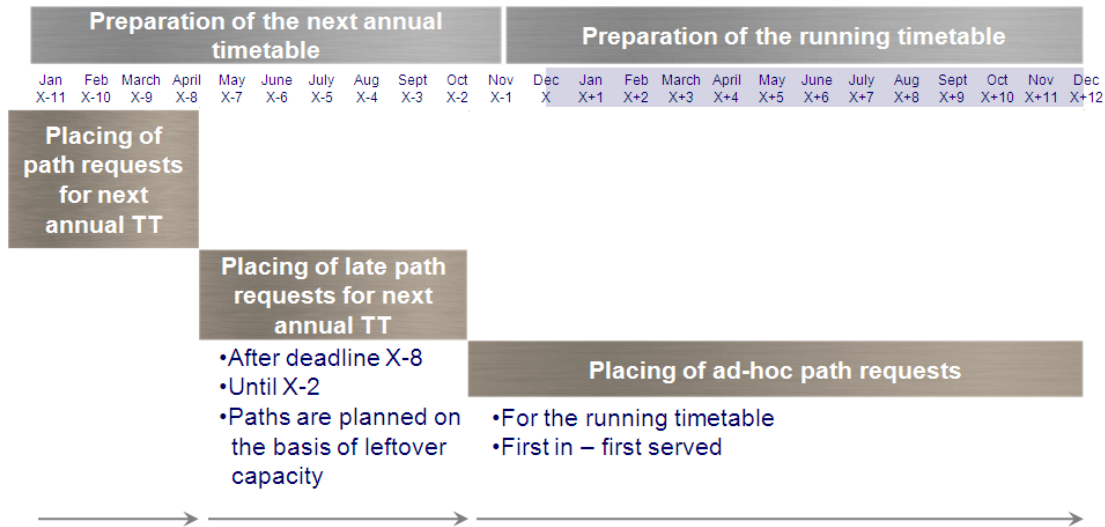
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0. NEW SET-UP OF PATHFINDER

A new Pathfinder version was realised on 1 November 2009. The major improvement is the set-up of a harmonised and standardised workflow. The development of Pathfinder was carried out in various steps in the past years. The currently available features for placing path requests before and also after the deadline of the 2nd Monday in April and for feasibility studies were designed as a parallel workflow. The new release has merged these procedures into one single workflow. The applicants treat a case always in a standard dossier for all paths. The date of

submitting a path request to the Infrastructure Managers/Allocation Bodies (IMs/ABs) and the requested timetable period will define now if it is a path request placed in time for the next annual timetable, a late or an ad-hoc path request. In addition, the inclusion of the IMs/ABs in the consultation phase for preparing a path request has been arranged in a more comprehensible way. Newly there is a clear procedure for receiving from the IMs/ABs either just a consultation or a detailed path feasibility result.



1. INTRODUCTION

RailNetEurope (RNE) and its members will do their best to promote the use of Pathfinder by companies applying for railway paths (hereafter: applicants).

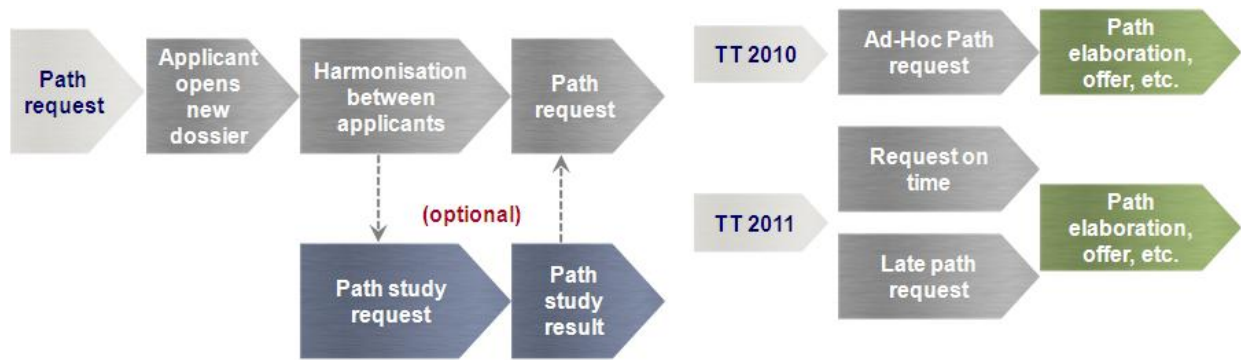
Path requests will be accepted via Pathfinder and answers will be communicated through Pathfinder either in addition to, or in replacement of, the traditional answering process already in use within the national organisation.

The RNE Joint Office shall help applicants by providing them with functional and technical information (e.g. training, e-learning, providing access to Pathfinder, interfaces, processes, guidelines ...).

The use of Pathfinder has to be made available to any applicant by any IMs/ABs for ad-hoc path requests for the running timetable 2010 and requests for the 2011 annual timetable. The process calendar for the timetable 2011 has been approved by RNE members and is valid both for passenger and freight path applications.

Pathfinder guidelines are applicable under the rules described in the *RNE process handbooks for path allocation* (documents are available on RNE website: www.railneteuropa.com). These guidelines describe the main steps regarding international path requests which have to be fulfilled by applicants (either applicants or authorized applicants) requesting a path involving several IMs/ABs and by IMs/ABs itself.

2. PATHFINDER PROCESS



Process steps for path requests (placed on time and late requests) for the next annual timetable and for the running timetable (ad-hoc requests) have been unified:

Annual timetable (placed on time):	Open	Harmonization	Path Request	Path Elaboration	Draft Timetable	Observations	Post-processing	Final Offer	Active Timetable	Closed
Annual timetable (Late path requests):	Open	Harmonization	Path Request	Path Elaboration	Late Request Offer	Acceptance	Post-processing	Final Offer	Active Timetable	Closed
Running timetable (ad-hoc requests):	Open	Harmonization	Path Request	Path Elaboration	Ad-Hoc Request Offer	Acceptance	Post-processing	Final Offer	Active Timetable	Closed

3. OPEN A DOSSIER

The leading applicant may open a **New dossier** at any time of the year. It is of course also possible to start a path request with an old or existing dossier from a previous timetable period. This is possible by changing the dossier type to “Status Quo” (refers to a dossier from the previous timetable period which is requested again in the same form) or to “Change” (means a changed dossier from the previous year’s timetable). This means that the applicant is going to work with a copy of the original file.

After filling in the relevant data, the dossier can be moved to the **Harmonisation** phase. During this period, involved applicants fill in their data and harmonise their requests. There is one part for the harmonisation of path-related issues and a separate part for production-related issues (e.g. train information, train composition, requested connections, through coaches).

If no support (consultation) at all is needed from the IMs/ABs, the leading applicant may switch the dossier with all applicants light on green directly to ⇒ **Path Request**.

In case the applicants wish to receive a detailed feasibility study result, or simply consult the IMs/ABs, the dossier must be moved to ⇒ **Path Consulting Conference**.

4. PATH CONSULTING / FEASIBILITY STUDY

Feasibility studies make a significant contribution to the efficiency of the train path allocation process for the annual timetable and for ad-hoc paths. They allow applicants' service plans to be checked for feasibility and, as necessary, taken through further iterations.

After the dossier has been moved to **Path Consulting**, the conference mode will be activated automatically, which allows applicants and IMs/ABs to share information and give advice on the consistency of the request. This mode may be used for example during path consultation meetings between applicants and IMs/ABs. IMs/ABs may give remarks in general on the path in question. Afterwards the dossier may be moved back to Harmonisation either by the leading applicant or by the coordinating IM/AB. The dossier is moved back also to Harmonisation in case there is insufficient information.

If a detailed feasibility study with a concrete timetable is needed, the leading applicant has to **submit the Feasibility Study Request**. IMs/ABs will conduct path studies and will try to give answers to path feasibility study requests as soon as possible and in time, so that applicants may benefit from these results either as a preparation for their regular meetings and information ex-change or for immediately placing a path request. This procedure applies to feasibility studies for path requests placed until Mid-January for the next annual timetable and for path requests for the running timetable.

Submissions to path feasibility study requests for the annual timetable placed until Mid-January 2010 will be switched directly to **Path Study Elaboration Conference**. If IMs/ABs intend to examine some possible path solutions without involving the applicants too early, the coordinating IM/AB might switch off the conference mode. The dossier will be moved back to conference mode automatically at the latest 8 days after the switch off. In case the negotiations between IMs/ABs have not been concluded within these 8 days, the coordinating IM/AB may switch off the conference mode again. Nevertheless, the leading applicant has always the possibility to withdraw the feasibility study request.

In this phase of the process (**Feasibility Study Elaboration**), the applicant can only access an archive version of the dossier. In passenger traffic, the train composition may be changed by the applicant at any time, as long as it has no influence on the characteristics of the path. In freight traffic, train composition changes (e.g. weight, length or gauge (profile)) may require a new path study due to the necessity of cancelling the ongoing study.

When studies by all IMs/ABs have been finalized and the dossier has been updated according to the status of the request, the coordinating IM/AB releases the **Feasibility Study Response**. The leading applicant can only accept a dossier (**Acknowledge Feasibility Study**). If doing so, it is moved to the **Harmonisation** mode. It might happen that, for one reason or another,

an IM/AB is not able to make a feasibility study (e.g. line closure). In this case the light for this IM/AB will be red.

If the result of the feasibility study does not suit the requirements of the applicants, they may either request a new feasibility study after having adapted the parameters for example (only if there is enough time left), or they may place the request with their original requirements (copy RU timetable).

5. PATH REQUEST

If applicants wish to request the studied paths, the dossier status must be changed by the leading applicant by using the button “Replace requested timetables by IM timetables”.

The leading applicant must ensure that all participants agree with the request. This process is controlled by making sure that all path-related “lights” are green. Unless all lights are green it will not be possible to switch the path request to the next stage.

Requests for the running timetable 2010 will be classified by the system as **ad-hoc path request** and will be handled by the IMs/ABs on the base of “first in – first served” in case of a path conflict.

Requests for the annual timetable 2011 placed at the latest on 12th April 2010 will be handled as **path requests placed on time**. If a request is handed over to the IMs/ABs after 12th April 2010, the system will classify it automatically as **late path request**.

It is always possible for the leading applicant to withdraw a path request in all following phases.

6. PATH ELABORATION

After having checked the consistency of the application, the coordinating IM/AB changes the dossier status from **Path Request** to **Path Elaboration** mode. This action allows all IMs/ABs to work on the design of the draft timetable. During this phase no dossier may be modified by any applicant and no applicant may see the working area of the IMs/ABs (IMs timetable) until the coordinating IM/AB switches the dossier either to the ⇒ **Draft Timetable** phase for path requests placed on time or to ⇒ **Path offer** (late request offer and ad-hoc request offer).

7. DRAFT TIMETABLE / PATH OFFER

Path requests placed on time before the 2nd Monday in April: All agreed and harmonized dossiers with all green lights from IMs/ABs will be switched automatically at internationally agreed deadline from **Path Elaboration** to **Draft Timetable**. Dossiers with yellow lights, i.e. dossiers with path conflicts unsolved in due time, will also be switched automatically. In Obser-

ventions, these dossiers will be in the conference mode for the IMs/ABs (applicants' right to make observations). The conference mode allows IMs/ABs to solve path conflicts and thus to make a subsequent path offer (draft timetable).

Late path requests: The coordinating IM/AB will switch manually agreed and harmonized dossiers with all green lights from IMs/ABs from **Path Elaboration** to **Late Request (path) Offer**.

Ad-hoc path requests: Dossiers with all IM/AB lights on green will be switched automatically (nightly at 23:59 h) to **Ad-hoc Request (path) Offer**.

All lights of the applicants will be changed to blue when shifting the dossier in ⇒ **Observations** or ⇒ **Acceptance**.

8. OBSERVATIONS / ACCEPTANCE

Path requests placed on time before the 2nd Monday in April: Applicants may make **Observations** regarding the proposed draft timetable in the available field. After these steps no observation can be made anymore. Afterwards the dossier will be switched to ⇒ **Post-Processing** by the leading applicant.

Late and ad-hoc path requests: Applicants' **Acceptance** should be given within 5 working days for late path requests and 72 hours for ad-hoc path requests after receipt of the path offer. If the applicants do not have any remarks regarding the path offer, the leading applicant may switch the dossier directly to ⇒ **Active Timetable** in order to speed up the process. By doing so, all involved applicants consider the path offer as ⇒ **Final offer** which they all accept. If no reaction arrives on time on the part of the applicants, it is accepted and the applicant's lights will be switched to green; the dossier will be moved automatically to the next phase.

In case the path offer does not correspond with the expectation of the applicants, the leading applicant may make remarks. This dossier will be switched to ⇒ **Post-Processing**.

If an applicant puts the light on "red", they should indicate their reason for the need of adapting the path offer.

9. POST-PROCESSING

IMs/ABs prepare the final answers to the customers. In this phase, IMs/ABs may optimize the train path. Once all IMs/ABs have finished their final adjustments, the dossier for **Path requests placed on time before the 2nd Monday in April** is moved to the ⇒ **Final offer** mode by the coordinating IM/AB.

In case an IM/AB is not in a position to submit a final offer for the annual timetable, it is considered as a **Path rejection**. The responsible IM/AB will then forward a pdf file of the relevant Pathfinder dossier to the appropriate Regulatory Body. This procedure is based on an agreement between the European Commission and the European Regulatory Bodies on the one side, and RNE and its members on the other side.

If in a dossier not all IMs/ABs lights are on green on time (e.g. due to still unsolved conflicts), national regulations for submitting a final offer will be applied.

Late & Ad-hoc path requests: The system checks regularly the status of the acceptance indicators of the dossiers in this phase and transfers those dossiers every night at 23:59 h to ⇒ **Final offer**, where all IMs/ABs light are on green.

10. FINAL OFFER

Path requests placed on time before the 2nd Monday in April: All involved applicants accept the Final offer within 5 working days by setting all lights on green.

Late and ad-hoc path requests: If a dossier is moved from path acceptance directly to ⇒ **Active Timetable**, the **Final offer** is just a milestone.

If the dossier has been moved via **Acceptance** to this phase, all involved applicants accept the **Final offer** within the deadlines mentioned in Figure 8 by setting all lights on green. The system checks regularly (every night) the status of the acceptance indicators of the dossiers and automatically transfers those dossiers with all lights on green at 23:59 h.

In order to keep the dossier “alive” after the path construction once the final offer has been accepted, all dossiers with all applicants’ lights on green will be switched either manually or automatically in the next phase ⇒ **Active Timetable** (see also Figure 12).

11. ACTIVE TIMETABLE

In this phase, applicants and IMs/ABs may use the dossier for adjustments or modifications of various elements (e.g. changes in rolling stock or path due to short-notice maintenance work).

12. DEADLINES & MILESTONES

- **18/01/2010 at 23:59 h (limit for placing feasibility studies for the timetable 2011):** Automatically switching all dossiers which are in **Path Consulting** to **Feasibility Study Elaboration Conference** – applicants lights must be green or at least yellow.
- **15/03/2010 at 23.59 h (limit for answering to path study requests):** Automatically switching all dossiers which are in **Path Study Elaboration Conference** to **Harmonisation** – IMs/ABs lights may be green, yellow, red or blue.
- **12/04/2010, at 23:00 h:** All dossiers in the **Harmonisation** phase with all applicants (path related) lights on green will be switched automatically to the **Path Request** phase.

The leading applicant must ensure that all participants agree with the request. This process is controlled by making sure that all “lights” are green. Unless all lights are green it will not be possible to switch the path request automatically to the next stage.

- **13/04/2010, at 00:01 h:** All dossiers submitted after this deadline will be treated by the IMs/ABs as **late path requests**. The system checks regularly (every night) the status of the acceptance indicators of the dossiers and automatically transfers those dossiers where all applicants’ lights are on green at 23:00 h to late path request until **11/10/2010**.
- **By 13/04/2010:** After having checked the consistency of the application, the coordinating IM/AB changes the dossier status from **Path Request** to **Path Elaboration** mode for requests placed on time.
- **By 20/06/2010:** In order to fulfil the harmonization process during the RNE Technical Meeting, all IMs/ABs have to guarantee the availability of the constructed/designed train path.
- **5/07/2010, at 02:00 h:** All agreed and harmonized dossiers with green lights as well as dossiers with yellow lights (see also Figure 7) will be switched automatically from **Path Elaboration** to **Draft Timetable**. After this deadline, the coordinating IM/AB may switch dossiers with all green lights manually. All lights of the applicants will be changed to blue in **Observations**.
- From **6/07/2010 to 6/08/2010:** applicants may make **Observations** in the available field.
- **6/08/2010, at 23:00 h:** At the end of this phase, all dossiers will be switched automatically from **Observation** to **Post-Processing** mode on the deadline, independently of the colours of the lights of the applicants (blue, green, yellow or red). The dossier can also be switched manually to Post-Processing by the coordinating applicant before the deadline. The IM/AB lights will change to blue in Post-Processing.
- Between **9/08/2010 and 23/08/2010**, IMs/ABs prepare the final answers to the customers. In this phase, IMs/ABs may optimize the train path. Once all IMs/ABs have finished their final adjustments, the dossier is moved to the **Final Offer** mode. The system checks regu-

larly (nightly) the status of the acceptance indicators of the dossiers and transfers those dossiers that have all IMs/ABs light on green at 23:00 h automatically.

- Between **23/08/2010 and 28/08/2010**, all involved applicants accept the **Final offer** by setting all lights on green. In order to keep the dossier “alive” after the construction of the annual timetable once the final offer has been accepted, all dossiers with all applicants’ lights on green will be switched automatically in the next phase **Active Timetable** on **29/08/2010 at 02:00 h**. This allows any participant to work on the dossier at any time. Participants also have read and write access to the dossier.

Of course, applicants have the possibility either to accept or to refuse (with reds lights) the **Final offer**. After acceptance of the offer, the formal acceptance is filed in the Pathfinder archive.

- **11/10/2010 at 23:59 h**: Latest time to place late path requests for the annual timetable 2011.
- **12/10/2010 at 00:01 h**: First moment for placing **ad-hoc path requests** for the running timetable 2011. The system regularly checks (every night) the status of the acceptance indicators of the dossiers and automatically transfers those dossiers where all applicants’ lights are on green at 23:00 h to ad-hoc path request.

13. PATHFINDER ORANGE BOOK

The Pathfinder orange book serves as the detailed user manual and process description for working with Pathfinder (https://www.pfndr.org/pathfinder/orangebook_en.pdf)

14. NATIONAL PATH REQUESTS

In cases where path requests are submitted by the applicant(s) exclusively through national processes for each national section of a given path (i.e. without Pathfinder) to each IM separately (generally on one network until the border station), IMs will not be able to guarantee a co-ordination of these separate path applications and to provide answers within the common calendar. This situation does not arise, if it has been agreed that the involved partners are using the Pathfinder Integration Platform.

In cases where national requests end or start at a border, IMs will provide answers according to the national calendar, and for the operating days requested country by country, according to the following principles:

- arrival time from network A at the border station not later than the requested time
- departure time from the border station to network A not earlier than the requested time

15. SUPPORT

Service & Support:

RailNetEurope Service Desk:

Phone: +43 1 907 62 72 25

Mon - Thu: 09:00 - 16:00; Fri: 09:00 - 15:00

E-mail: support.pathfinder@railneteuropa.info (Mail support (NEW (!): 24/7 for mails in English, max. response time 4h)

Should you have any questions about the process and the guidelines in general, please contact: E-mail: daniel.haltner@rne.at Phone: +43 1 907 62 72 15

Should you have any questions about access to Pathfinder, please contact:

E-mail: seid.maglajlic@rne.at

Phone: +43 1 907 62 72 24

You are welcome to try our eLearning program as well!

16. REMARK

All times mentioned in this document refer to the "Central European Time" (CET).