

Regional Workshop on GNS Berlin, 17 October 2016

Venue: Berliner Hafen- und Lagerhausgesellschaft (BEHALA)

Chair: GNS study consortium

General statements

The participants expressed concerns that the use of the study results is still open. The consortium replied that it is up to the EC to decide; follow-up activities could further develop the process of GNS implementation as outlined within the study (which may be compulsory as of 2031). The process could be started on a voluntary basis or funded by an EU project.

It was asked what the consequences of not meeting GNS targets will be in practice. Insufficient consequences would make the GNS initiative toothless (arguments in the discussions with further stakeholders or for budget negotiations are needed).

The focus of GNS should be on infrastructure and operation, but port services should be in as well.

Riparian states do not always have the same objectives and priorities as regards navigation status. This emphasized the need for transnational coordination.

KPIs

The question was raised whether there will be KPIs to illustrate the challenge of managing international rivers. The consortium replied that this issue that can be hardly depicted in quantitative indicators and thus this will be covered by the guidelines.

It was also emphasized that despite the high number of parameters, the definitions should be clear and harmonized, in all languages. The GNS indicators should be kept to a small number and reflect the needs of the waterway transport users.

No new reports should be needed. Data should be useful for transport users and available on the internet. The EC should gather the data first and then contact the administrations. That would raise acceptance. Too many parameters would result in either missing or incorrect data. Other initiatives should be checked for synergies and operators should be addressed to specify their needs.

It was advised to address navigation channel and fairway dimensions by parameters. Additional to navigation channel depth and width, the fairway width is regarded as important factor for navigation.

User consultation

Being asked if the consultation process of users is already in place, the participants replied that there is room for improvement. The high number of different administrative bodies involved makes it difficult, e.g. as regards responsibilities for the correctness of data.

A proposal was made for the GNS process: to nominate one coordinator per country who coordinates the national positions considering navigation and other interest such as

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environmental protection first and afterwards has the mandate to represent their member states cross-sectoral on international level. The coordinator should be a navigation representative.

Exemption criteria

It was questioned if the reference water levels should be compared to the score on fairway depth in single years, as also the reference water levels represent average values for several decades. It might be better to set confidence intervals or use the modal value (which is the most important one for navigation users).

It is key to differentiate also for river sections.

Good practice guidelines

Special guidelines for several countries should be produced, using the specifications in the respective language and referring to documents that are relevant/ratified in this country.

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