

## PIANC Environmental Commission (EnviCom) – Update of Activities

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### Summary

The Paper outlines the purpose of the Environmental Commission (EnviCom), the core activities of EnviCom and recent activities of the EnviCom Working Group.

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### Introduction

The Environmental Commission (EnviCom) is one of the Technical Commissions of the International Waterborne Transport Association (PIANC).

EnviCom deals with navigation sustainability and environmental risk-related issues relevant to all PIANC technical areas.

EnviCom is proactively developing and providing environmental guidance supporting the Waterborne Transport Infrastructure Sector to strive for sustainability. In this context, EnviCom works with all Technical Commissions of PIANC and partner associations, while engaging and collaborating with other relevant international organisations.

Members of EnviCom come from 19 nations and 6 partner organisations.

### Global focus on sustainability

The sustainable development of infrastructure systems has a worldwide focus.

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development goals provide a framework for the discussion, deliberation and development of such infrastructure.

EnviCom's goal is to provide practical, science-based guidance to shape and inform future practice and the development of sustainable navigation infrastructure. EnviCom's focus areas include:

- Preparing navigation infrastructure for climate change
- Working with the natural environment in delivering navigation infrastructure solutions
- Sharing knowledge internationally
- Providing technical guidance through working group reports
- Creating common understanding on best practice approaches to future challenges, through international collaboration across industry, government and non-government organisations.

Two strategic initiatives of EnviCom are Working with Nature and the Permanent Task Group on Climate Change.

### Working with Nature (WwN)

Working with Nature promotes a proactive, integrated approach to sustainable navigation infrastructure projects. It aims to achieve project objectives in an ecosystem context rather than assessing the consequences of a predefined project design and focuses on identifying win-win solutions rather than simply minimising ecological harm.

WwN considers the project objectives from the perspective of the natural system rather than from the perspective of technical design. It endeavours to achieve project objectives in a way which maximises opportunities and reduces delays and associated extra costs.

Adopting a WwN approach means doing things in a different order. Instead of developing a design and then assessing its environmental impacts – an approach which inevitably revolves around damage limitation – WwN promotes the following steps:

1. Establish project need and objectives
2. Understand the environment
3. Make meaningful use of stakeholder engagement to identify win-win options
4. Prepare project proposals/design to benefit navigation and nature

WwN Certificates of Recognition are awarded by PIANC to projects that demonstrate a WwN approach. Supporter Recognition is also awarded for initiatives, programs, plans, pilots or study projects relevant to WwN. Application can be made through the PIANC website. Major awards are granted at the 4 yearly PIANC Congress. The last WwN Major Award was granted in 2018 at the Panama Congress for the project " Middle Harbour Port of Oakland" (San Francisco, USA).

### **Permanent Task Group on Climate Change (PTGCC)**

To recognise the importance of the climate change challenge a cross-Commission Permanent Task Group on Climate Change (PTGCC) established under the EnviCom umbrella. The objectives of the PTGC are:

- To inform PIANC on how navigation may be affected by climate change.
- To advise PIANC on where and how adaptation and mitigation actions need to be taken so that the necessary actions and investment can be performed in a proactive way.
- To provide a common and basic platform to support all the PIANC Commissions in building up their work plans regarding climate change.

The PTGCC has recently released Technical Note 1: Managing Climate Change Uncertainties in Selecting, Designing and Evaluating Options for Resilient Navigation Infrastructure. This guidance provides a framework for designers, financiers and project owners to reduce climate change related risks.

Technical Note 2 is being finalised and will provide information on the costs of port damage, clean up, closures and downtime due to climate impacts.

### **Working Group Reports**

Preparation of technical guidance in the form of Working Group (WG) Reports is a core part of EnviCom's activities. Working Groups have representation by industry experts from across the world to ensure that guidance reports cover a broad range of environments and jurisdictions.

Recently published reports include:

- WG195: An Introduction to Applying Ecosystem Services for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure Projects. (2021)
- TG193: Resilience of the Maritime and Inland Waterborne Transport System (2020)
- WG 178: Climate Change Adaptation Planning for Ports and Inland Waterways (2020)
- WG 175: A Practical Guide to Environmental Risk Management (ERM) for Navigation Infrastructure Projects (2019)
- WG 188: Carbon Management for Port and Navigation Infrastructure (2019)

All completed WG reports are available free of charge to PIANC members.

Working group reports nearing completion include:

- TG3: Waterborne transport, ports and waterways: A 2022 update of climate change drivers and impacts

- WG157: Environmental Aspects of Dredging and Port and Waterway Construction Around Coastal Plant Habitats
- WG 170: Dredging Operations and Port Construction Around Marine Turtles and Mammals
- WG214: Beneficial Sediment Use for Sustainable Waterborne Transport Infrastructure Projects
- WG226: A Guide for Assessing and Managing Effects of Underwater Sounds from Navigation Infrastructure Activities

Other working groups in progress are:

- WG218: The Implications of Invasive Alien Species for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure
- WG226: A Guide for Assessing and Managing Effects of Underwater Sounds from Navigation Infrastructure Activities
- WG227: A Guide for the Decision-making Process Relating to Environmental Windows and Seasonal Restrictions for Dredging and Navigation Infrastructure Works
- WG230: How to Attract Green Funding for Nature Based Navigation

The level of Australian representation in EnviCom working groups has increased substantially in recent years, such that Australian expertise is now represented on most EnviCom working groups.

### **Workshops and Webinars**

EnviCom and EnviCom working group members deliver workshops and webinars on Working Group Reports and to gather input to inform the development of reports and guidance documents.

In addition members present in external forums such as the COP26 International Maritime Hub and liaise with international groups on relevant topic areas such as the UN Global Climate Compact.

### **Conclusion**

EnviCom is the PIANC Technical Commission with a focus on the sustainable development of navigation infrastructure systems.

Australian participation in EnviCom working groups and the Permanent Task Group on Climate Change to deliver technical guidance is strong.

PIANC members are strongly encouraged to respond to calls for nominations to participate in Working Groups and to nominate projects worthy of Working with Nature Recognition.