



**Rail Safety & Standards Board**

# **System Interface Committee Protocol**

## **Issue Three**

The aim of this protocol is to set out a framework for the governance, operation and management of System Interface Committees (SICs). This protocol is established by a resolution of the RSSB Board.

**Approved by**

**Rail Safety and Standards Board**

**Effective date 01 January 2009**

Rail Safety and Standards Board

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## Issue Record

Issue	Effective Date	Comments
SIC Protocol	10 February 2004	Produced to support the establishment of the Systems Interface Committees.
SIC Protocol	01 November 2005	February 2004 issue amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take account of changed responsibilities following the abolition of the Strategic Rail Authority.</li> <li>• Include a statement on the intellectual property rights for RSSB procured research</li> </ul>
SIC Protocol Issue Three	01 January 2009	November 2005 issue rewritten in its entirety to reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment of the Technical Strategy Advisory Group and its role in relation to SICs.</li> <li>• SICs involvement in strategic issues resulting from the Rail Technical Strategy.</li> <li>• Inclusion of RSSB, DfT and ORR as members of SICs.</li> <li>• Removal of the details of RSSB support to SICs.</li> </ul>

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## **1 Status of protocol**

- 1.1 The aim of this protocol is to set out a framework for the governance, operation and management of System Interface Committees (SICs).
- 1.2 This protocol is established by a resolution of the RSSB Board.

## **2 Governance of SICs**

### **2.1 Roles of the RSSB Board and RSSB**

- 2.1.1 The RSSB Board shall keep the activities of the SICs under review.
- 2.1.2 If the Board considers that a SIC is failing in a material way, the Board shall consider the matter and take such steps as it considers appropriate.
- 2.1.3 The RSSB Board shall appoint SIC Chairmen. Further information is provided in Annex C.
- 2.1.4 The RSSB Board shall decide on issues referred to it by SIC Chairmen where timely consensus cannot be achieved and where the issue cannot be resolved by TSAG or it is not appropriate for TSAG to be involved.
- 2.1.5 RSSB shall retain the intellectual property of all RSSB procured research and development carried out on behalf of the SICs. RSSB will retain the intellectual property of documents it is requested to publish on behalf of the SICs. Where there is funding for R&D from other parties, RSSB will agree the ownership of the intellectual property with such parties.
- 2.1.6 RSSB shall provide support to SICs and SIC subgroups within the resources made available through the normal budgetary process.

### **2.2 Role of the Technical Strategy Advisory Group (TSAG)**

- 2.2.1 The role of TSAG in relation to SICs is set out in the TSAG remit<sup>1</sup>. It is to:
  - a) Overview as appropriate the work of the SICs, industry activities and other cross industry groups, ensuring their agendas (including research) are consistent with long term needs, and encouraging efficiency in the means by which these are developed.
  - b) Provide a point reference for coordination of SIC activities, identifying and resolving overlaps and interactions in relation to SIC activity and between SIC activities and other cross industry programmes and processes.
  - c) Maintain a strategic viewpoint covering RSSB and SIC-related research, identifying the need for research into strategic issues.

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<sup>1</sup> TSAG remit dated 11 October 2007.

### **3 Purpose of the SICs**

- 3.1 The purpose of the SICs is to assist the railway industry in managing all aspects of identified system interfaces within the scope for each SIC set out at Annex A in the most effective, safe and cost efficient way.
- 3.2 The approach adopted by SICs shall be:
- a) Strategic – resulting from the Rail Technical Strategy, or further development thereof, and any consequent direction from TSAG through formal remits to SIC Chairs, and
  - b) Tactical – dealing with more immediate issues, but aligning where necessary with the trajectory of the Rail Technical Strategy.

### **4 SIC scope to achieve purpose**

- 4.1 The general remit for SICs to achieve the purpose set out in 3 is to:
- a) Identify opportunities for improving efficiency at the interface between vehicles and infrastructure and consider how to develop and implement them
  - b) Commission studies or research or use other methods to seek solutions to interface issues and to develop opportunities where appropriate
  - c) Identify solutions to issues, and make recommendations to TSAG, industry (including RSSB) or DfT on the best solutions. In so doing, recommendations should take into account the benefits to the industry as a whole, where the specific benefits will fall and the cost of implementing the recommendations
  - d) Promote agreement on how solutions could be implemented.
- 4.2 SICs may establish subgroups to carry out remits in support of the purpose.
- 4.3 The Board of RSSB or TSAG may provide SICs with a remit to assist industry in solving problems or developing opportunities that fall outside the scope of a SIC where it is in the wider interest of the railway industry to do so.

## **5 Operation of SICs**

### **5.1 Decision making**

- 5.1.1 SICs shall operate on a consensus basis to achieve their purpose.
- 5.1.2 Consensus means a general agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any member of the committee concerned. The process of consensus involves taking into account the views of all members of the committee concerned and to reconcile conflicting arguments.
- 5.1.3 If timely consensus cannot be achieved the SIC Chairman may consult with TSAG. If TSAG is not able to resolve the issue, the SIC Chairman may prepare a report for the RSSB Board in order to receive a decision on the issue.

### **5.2 Research and development**

- 5.2.1 SICs shall act as principal client groups for the topic research plans set out in the RSSB stakeholder's guide to research and development<sup>2</sup> and shall sponsor and oversee research in accordance with the guide.

### **5.3 RSSB support**

- 5.3.1 RSSB shall provide SICs and their subgroups with support as agreed separately with SIC Chairmen.
- 5.3.2 Such support shall fall within the resources made available through the RSSB budgetary process.
- 5.3.3 To enable RSSB to provide adequate levels of support, all SICs shall provide to RSSB by end-July each year a forecast of the levels of support they seek for the coming financial year.

### **5.4 Organisation**

- 5.4.1 Each SIC shall produce a remit describing the agreed working arrangements of the committee.
- 5.4.2 SICs shall meet as frequently as necessary to carry out their purpose.
- 5.4.3 Where SICs establish subgroups they shall provide a remit for each subgroup to include: purpose; authority to carry out activities; delegation of authority to make decisions; reporting requirements to the SIC; any conditions under which the subgroup will cease activity.
- 5.4.4 Each SIC shall provide an annual report to TSAG on work completed, proposals for future avenues of research and alignment with other SICs.

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<sup>2</sup> RSSB (October 2007) *A stakeholder's guide to participating in the RSSB-managed rail and industry research and development programme.*

- 5.4.5 An annual report covering the activities of all the SICs shall be provided to the Board of RSSB outlining how the SICs' activities for the year have collectively supported the purpose, and the benefits they have achieved.
- 5.4.6 SICs may regulate their activities in support of the purpose as they deem appropriate. Such activities might include:
- a) The development and management of a SIC plan to provide a coherent agenda that links into the Rail Technical Strategy and other industry activity
  - b) The development of a communications plan to support the dissemination of information to the railway industry (including the outcome of research, the benefits of research to the industry and implementation of research by industry) in cooperation with other SICs
  - c) Monitoring research and other studies or investigations carried out by industry
  - d) Examining practice and experience from other railway organisations
  - e) Liaison with TSAG and other SICs to ensure that activities in support of the purpose are mutually supportive and that there are no overlaps or omissions between individual SICs
  - f) Liaison with Standards Committees (SCs): to ensure that SCs are aware of SIC activity where there might be an impact on Railway Group Standards or associated documents managed by SCs; to make proposals to SCs for new, or changes to, Railway Group Standards or associated documents.
  - g) Support to industry conferences and exhibitions.

## **6 Committee constitution**

### **6.1 Membership**

- 6.1.1 The membership of each SIC shall be appropriate to its scope set out at Annex A.
- 6.1.2 Each industry category<sup>3</sup>, RSSB, DfT and ORR is entitled to one member on each SIC.
- 6.1.3 The role of each member is to represent the views of the constituency to which they belong and, through a process of consensus, develop solutions which provide best whole-industry outcomes.
- 6.1.4 Details of the criteria for, and the appointment of, members are at Annex B.

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<sup>3</sup> A set out in the Rail Safety and Standards Board Constitution of 1 April 2003, amended 14 December 2005 and 29 June 2006 (paragraph 3.3).

## **6.2 Chairman**

- 6.2.1 The Chairman's role is not to represent the constituency to which he/she belongs but is to encourage fair representation of views through other members and seek best whole-industry solutions through consensus.
- 6.2.2 The constituency to which the Chairman belongs may appoint another member to the committee so that the views of that constituency are represented on the committee
- 6.2.3 Details of the criteria for, and appointment of, Chairmen are at Annex C

## **6.3 Meetings**

- 6.3.1 Guests may be invited by the Chairman to attend SIC meetings to provide expert advice or for other purposes as appropriate.
- 6.3.2 Meetings shall be quorate when at least three members (including the Chairman) or authorised alternatives are present. This shall include at least one member who represents an industry category.

## **Annex A: Scope of established SICs**

A.1 Five SICs are established to fulfil the purpose of this protocol. They are:

### **Vehicle/Structures**

This SIC shall provide the focus for the interface between vehicles and the fixed infrastructure in the areas of physical clearance (gauging) and vehicle loading (route availability).

### **Vehicle/Track**

This SIC shall provide the focus for the interface between the vehicle wheel and the rail and between the vehicle and track interaction.

### **Vehicle/Train Energy**

This SIC shall provide the focus for energy issues on the railway system.

### **Vehicle/Train Control and Communications**

This SIC shall provide the focus for train control and communication issues

### **Vehicle/Vehicle**

This SIC shall provide the focus for the interface between railway vehicles, and shall also facilitate activity on topics which, while essentially intrinsic to vehicles, have implications for the interface of vehicles with the railway system as a whole, or with the environment (such as weight, reliability, noise).

## **Annex B: Committee members**

### **B.1 Criteria applicable to all members**

- B.1.1 Each member shall be willing to act as deputy Chairman in the Chairman's absence if so requested by the Chairman or by other members.
- B.1.2 Members may appoint a named alternative, in writing, to the Chairman. The alternative will carry out committee and other duties when the member is not available.
- B.1.3 A member may be removed by the SIC if the member:
  - a) Ceases to meet the criteria set out at B2 (industry category member)
  - b) Is absent from three out of six consecutive SIC meetings without the agreement of the committee
  - c) Fails to exercise his/her judgement in a professional manner.

### **B.2 Criteria applicable to industry category members.**

- B.2.1 Industry category nominees shall:
  - a) Normally belong to a company which is a member of RSSB
  - b) Have a professional background
  - c) Occupy a senior position in the industry
  - d) Demonstrate commercial and technical competence in the area concerned
  - e) Have relevant practical experience
  - f) Be a member of an appropriate professional institution which covers the relevant area.
- B.2.2 A SIC may relax criteria for appointment of an individual if there is an exceptional nominee who would otherwise not be eligible for appointment.

### **B.3 Appointment of industry category members**

- B.3.1 Industry categories may each put in place arrangements for nominating a person to each of the SICs and can make a nomination on behalf of the relevant industry category when notified that a vacancy exists:
  - a) ATOC for passenger Railway Undertakings
  - b) RIA for suppliers and infrastructure contractors who can each nominate a member for each SIC
  - c) Rolling stock owners (including rolling stock leasing companies)
  - d) Non-passenger Railway Undertakings, and
  - e) Network Rail and other Infrastructure Managers.

- B.3.2 Alternatively, RSSB may obtain nominations direct from RSSB member companies when no arrangements have been put in place by industry categories.
- B.3.3 All SIC members will consider nominations with reference to the criteria for membership and confirm the appointment of the member.
- B.3.4 Industry category members shall be appointed to a SIC for a maximum period of three years and shall automatically stand down after this time. Individuals may be nominated for a further term and appointed in the normal manner.
- B.3.5 Where an industry category member appoints a named alternative, the alternative shall be either another member or a person who fulfils the criteria set out at B2. The member may remove the alternative member by written notification to Chairman. The appointment of the alternative member ceases automatically when the industry category member's appointment ceases.
- B.3.6 An industry category member may give notice in writing to the Chairman of his/her resignation from the committee.
- B.3.7 The industry category may provide in writing to the Chairman notice of its wish to remove the appointed member.

## **Annex C: Committee chairmen**

- C.1 Nominations put to the RSSB Board shall follow consultations with SIC chairmen and relevant SIC members. The RSSB Board shall ensure that, taken together, chairmen appointed to SICs represent a balance of constituencies.
- C.2 The maximum term of office for the chairman shall be three years. Chairmen may be reappointed by the RSSB Board at the end of the term if the individual offers himself/herself for nomination.
- C.3 During the temporary absence of the chairman, the duties of chairman may be carried out by another member (see also annex B). If there is a temporary vacancy, members may elect one of themselves to act as chairman on an interim basis.
- C.4 The chairman of a SIC may be removed from office by a simple majority vote of the members of a SIC, subject to confirmation by the RSSB Board.
- C.5 A SIC chairman shall advise the RSSB Board of his/her wish to resign as chairman.