The World Road Association, formerly called the Permanent International Association of Road Congresses - and still widely known as PIARC, is the oldest of the international associations concerned with roads and road engineering. Founded in 1909, it was granted consultative status (category II) to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 1970. PIARC has 97 member Governments and 2,100 members in 129 countries.

PIARC is a non-political and non profit-making association. Its vision is to be the world leader in providing information on roads and road transport policy and practices within an integrated sustainable transport context. The general aim of the Association is to improve international co-operation and to foster progress in road transport policy, road technology and road network operation. PIARC serves its members by:

- being a leading international forum for analysis and discussion of the full spectrum of transport issues related to roads and road transport,
- identifying, developing and disseminating best practice and giving better access to international information,
- providing within its activities special emphasis for developing countries and countries in transition,
- developing and promoting efficient tools for decision making on matters related to roads and road transport.

To achieve these aims PIARC:

- creates and co-ordinates Technical Committees,
- organises, every four years, a World Road Congress and a Winter Road Congress, plus various technical events,
- publishes a large number of documents including a quarterly magazine ("Routes/Roads").

PIARC is assisted in its task by Technical Committees and specialised technical groups, composed of engineers and experts appointed from member countries. Approximately 850 engineers and experts are gathered for this purpose from 50 countries. The Technical Committees and specialised groups operate continuously and participate in international meetings dealing with their particular subjects.
The twenty Technical Committees are:

C 1 Technical Committee on Surface Characteristics
C 2 Technical Committee on Community Consultation
C 3 Technical Committee on Technological Exchanges and Development
C 4 Technical Committee on Interurban Roads and Integrated Interurban Transport
C 5 Technical Committee on Road Tunnel Operation
C 6 Technical Committee on Road Management
C 7/8 Technical Committee on Road Pavements
C 9 Technical Committee on Financing and Economic Evaluation
C 10 Technical Committee on Urban Roads and Integrated Urban Transport
C 11 Technical Committee on Road Bridges and other Structures
C 12 Technical Committee on Earthworks, Drainage, Subgrade
C 13 Technical Committee on Road Safety
C 14 Technical Committee on Sustainable Development and Transport
C 15 Technical Committee on Performance of Road Administrations
C 16 Technical Committee on Network Operations
C 17 Technical Committee on Winter Maintenance
C 18 Technical Committee on Risk Management for Roads
C 19 Technical Committee on Freight Transport
C 20 Technical Committee on Appropriate Development

PIARC broadcasts its objectives especially through a programme of International Seminars, where the aim is to ensure that the to road transport related issues and problems of PIARC member countries are recognised and tackled. Progress is achieved through the exchange of experiences, technology transfer, the work programmes of the technical committees and the identification of areas of research.

PIARC’s activities include some special initiatives that are of particular relevance to developing countries. The new PIARC strategic plan places great emphasis on the need to meet the requirements of all its member countries including the 60% with a GNP less than US$3,100 per capita. Because these countries are least able to afford the costs of representation, PIARC has determined that all technical committees should regularly arrange some of their meetings and related seminars in developing or emerging countries. A Special Fund has been set up to help low income country members to meet the costs of representation.

PIARC’s Technology Transfer Centres project aims to establish or strengthen national technology transfer centres in low income member countries. Up to 20 centres are to be supported in the first phase. The centres are to be a source of information about best transport practice internationally and nationally, and are responsible for disseminating that information within the country and to other national centres. Centres also offer support to their national PIARC First Delegate.

The Technical Committee on Terminology aims to make easier the understanding of engineering terms across languages. The Committee has produced a Technical Dictionary of Road Terms published in French, English, Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Greek, German, Japanese, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. There is also a Lexicon in French and English containing around 16,000 common expressions on a range of road engineering topics covering design and construction, materials, structures, road safety, vehicles, traffic management, finance, environment, transport law, computers and physical sciences. The Dictionary and Lexicon are published on CD.
PIARC publications

Technical Committees and Working Groups publish compiled documents, recommendations and state of the art methodologies. These documents, intended for decision makers, design engineers, field engineers and researchers, are based on wide international consensus. All documents are published in the two official languages of the Association, French and English. The publication catalogue is available from PIARC’s web site at http://www.piarc.org/.

The English version of the International Road Maintenance Handbook may be ordered from:
Transport Research Laboratory
Crowthorne
Berkshire RG45 6AU
United Kingdom

Fax: +44 (0)1344 770356
E-mail: international_enquiries@trl.co.uk

The Handbook is also published in French, Spanish, Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese and Khmer with versions under consideration in Bangla, Chinese and Hindi. For more details, please contact PIARC Central Office at:
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Fax: +33 (1) 49 00 02 02
E-mail: piarc@wanadoo.fr
Web site: http://www.piarc.org/
C 17 Technical Committee on Winter Maintenance
C 18 Technical Committee on Risk Management for Roads
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