# The Future of the EUGIN European Navigation Conference

## Summary

The European Navigation Conference (ENC) series is a key asset for EUGIN. All conferences, including ENCs, are operating in evolving and challenging environments. This paper recommends that EUGIN’s Council discusses and addresses these challenges proactively to strengthen and secure the future of the ENC series.

## Challenges

The authors would like to invite discussion and review within EUGIN Council of the current situation faced by the ENC series. Reflecting on the challenges observed in organising the current ENC2023 and the recent ENC in 2021, the following situation is evident (there was no ENC in 2022):

1. High risk: *Institutes bidding to host ENC’s take all the risk. The pool of Institutes in a position to do this is shrinking. There are also growing gaps in European Institute coverage.*
2. Consistency: *Each ENC currently is a “start-up”. As well as being an almost overwhelming amount of work for the host Institute, this leads to very inconsistent ENC brand and quality.*
3. Size: *Successful conferences work hard year-on-year to grow, based on reputation and value. ENC loses this opportunity by having completely different leadership and structure for each conference. The experience and assets should be built on, whereas currently they are lost.*

The authors believe that EUGIN can address and overcome these challenges, leading to a stronger ENC with more impact and value.

## Principles

The authors propose that the EUGIN Council should discuss principles to support a stronger ENC series. Once principles are agreed, an approach can be designed for the future of the ENC series.

Suggested core principles for EUGIN’s ENC series:

1. Inclusive: *The ENC series should be for all of Europe and not restricted to countries where there is an Institute able to host an ENC itself.*
2. Consistent: *To build strength and value for delegates, the ENC series should be consistent each time. This would include, for example, appearance (logo, website etc), abstract approach, registration, proceedings.*
3. Leading: *The ENC series should be the pre-eminent and leading European navigation conference bringing together the key stakeholders from across Europe in academia, industry and government.*

## Options

The options for ENC range from continuing the status quo, to more collaboration between Institutes, to EUGIN itself taking a broader role, supported by the Institutes.

Based on the suggested principles above, EUGIN’s approach for ENC’s would be likely to include some or all of the following aspects:

1. Consistent systems, agreements and channels: *The following would be the same year-on-year for the ENC series: web domain, website, database, e-mail tools, social media channels and hashtags, payment processor accounts and approvals, bank account(s), abstract portal, publishing agreement(s). This would indicate either EUGIN itself taking a broader role or a professional conference organiser (PCO) being retained for the ENC series.*
2. Conference Committees: *An international advisory committee and programme committee with consistency from ENC to ENC. This allows for continuous improvement and experience, and to build a strong positive reputation. All Institutes could participate actively, adding strength and perspective.*
3. Governance: *The EUGIN Council may need to meet more regularly, or to create a conference sub-committee of interested Institutes, to oversee ENCs and related key decisions.*
4. Finances: *A key question is how to finance ENC’s, and how to deal with any surplus and, particularly, deficit. It is reasonable to expect that a sustainable and self-financing position for ENC’s is achievable. Initially it may be necessary for Institutes to contribute to a fund, perhaps in a scaled way linked to Institute size, to underwrite the risks and assure the initial seed cash-flows for ENCs.*

## Recommendation

The EUGIN Council is invited to discuss and agree core principles for the ENC series and to consider the associated structural options and next steps.

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