

IALA COUNCIL
3rd session



8--12 December 2025
Mumbai, India

8 – STRATEGY AND POLICY

8.4-IALA's presence worldwide

8.4.1.1 – Comments on document C03-8.4.1 - IALA Technical Centres of Excellence

Note by Japan

1. BACKGROUND

The transition of the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) into an intergovernmental organisation (IGO) progressed smoothly.

Its international role in promoting harmonised Marine Aids to Navigation (AtoN) and sustainable maritime services has been strengthened, and the demand for technical development, standardisation, training, and capacity-building activities continues to grow.

In this context, at the 3rd session of the IALA Council, the concept of establishing IALA Technical Centres of Excellence (ICOE) has been proposed through document C03-8.4.1, *IALA Technical Centres of Excellence*, by the Secretariat.

The concept is described as initiatives to support technical development, international capacity-building, and the implementation of standards, drawing on initiatives of IMO and IHO.

This paper sets out Japan's comments and proposals on document C03-8.4.1.

2. DISCUSSION

Japan has the following concerns:

2.1. Insufficient Discussion and Analysis

The discussion at the 79th IALA Council in 2023 primarily focused on establishing a regional presence for activities mainly within the World-Wide Academy (WWA), and Japan recognizes the importance of this matter. However, the current proposal, as indicated by the title "IALA Technical Centres of Excellence," is understood to relate to the establishment of a technical centre. In this regard, it seems that no discussion or sufficient consultation has taken place at the Council or within the DTEC Committee and other relevant committees prior to the submission of this proposal.

In the proposal document, there has been no clear indication of the nature and degree of requests, nor of the specific needs of Member States concerning the establishment, leaving its necessity unclear.

Although examples from WWA and other international organizations (IMO and IHO) are referenced, supplementary details clarifying whether the existing IALA framework is insufficient and whether such an establishment could effectively address IALA's current situation and specific challenges are not provided; therefore, further analysis must be conducted.

Additionally, it remains unclear whether there is a clear rationale or any indication of urgency for seeking approval at the next General Assembly in 2027.

2.2. The Need for Careful Consideration and Accountability

Given that the proposed ICOEs would be hosted and managed by Member States, and formally recognized by IALA, its basic concept, operational guidance and procedures, funding arrangements, and personnel appointments, among other elements should be acceptable to other Member State governments as well.

In particular, at the establishment stage, decisions within government agencies regarding funding arrangement and personnel appointment are expected to be indispensable. However, the current document only outlines the intended objectives, and compliance with the Convention, without providing any governance frameworks or operational procedures. Furthermore, as the activities may involve all categories of IALA members - Member States, Associate Members, and Affiliate Members - the concept must also be accountable to the entire IALA membership in each country. In a similar manner, issues such as sustainability including risks of funding must be carefully considered.

Therefore, it is essential to provide Member States with sufficient time and adequate information to enable a thorough examination before any endorsement is considered.

2.3. Significant Influence of Decisions by the Council

Article 8.1 of the Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation stipulates that "The Council is the executive organ of the Organization and shall be responsible for directing the activities of the Organization." While this document seeks endorsement for the concept rather than approval, any decision on the direction by the Council, which is responsible for operational execution and policy setting, would have a significant impact on subsequent discussions.

In light of these factors, and to ensure transparency and fairness, it is essential that sufficient discussion be undertaken.

3. JAPAN'S POSITION AND PROPOSAL

Japan understands the significance of achieving IALA's strategic vision and has been contributing to its activities.



However, the information provided in this document alone is insufficient as a basis for expressing endorsement. Before making any decision, Japan believes it is necessary to conduct thorough discussions on issues such as the necessity of establishing such centres, the work plan, and the positioning of their roles and activities related to existing committees and organizational structures. As previously indicated, even if the decision taken by the Council is nothing more than an endorsement of the concept, such a decision would set a course for the future direction of IALA's activities. Therefore, it is important that the Council makes its judgment based on the aforementioned discussions.

For these reasons, Japan proposes that, prior to deliberation at the Council, the concept be thoroughly reviewed and discussed by a group of interested Member States or by relevant committees, and that Council discussions take place only after such examination.

4. THE COUNCIL IS REQUESTED TO

- **Consider** Japan's proposal and **agree** to hold a discussion among the interested Member States or within an appropriate committee prior to the Council's decision.
- **Note** the comments provided in this paper