

IALA COUNCIL
3rd session



8-12 December 2025
Mumbai, India

8– STRATEGY AND POLICY

8.4.1– IALA’S PRESENCE WORLDWIDE

8.4.1 – IALA TECHNICAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

8.4.1.3 – COMMENTS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

1. BACKGROUND

Following IALA’s transition into an intergovernmental organization (IGO) in August 2024, its responsibilities for promoting harmonised AtoN, maritime safety, and environmentally sustainable maritime services have significantly expanded. The Organization is now expected to operate with strengthened institutional capacity consistent with its new mandate.

In this context, the Secretariat submitted document C03-8.4.1 introducing the concept of establishing IALA Centres of Excellence (ICOE). The Republic of Korea understands that this document seeks conceptual endorsement only, not the approval or designation of any specific centre. Given the upcoming 2nd General Assembly in 2027, it is both appropriate and timely to begin structured discussions on institutional functions that will enable IALA to fulfil its expanded role as an IGO.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Need for the Establishment of ICOE

IALA currently operates under a single Secretariat–Committee structure, which limits its ability to expand technical expertise, strengthen international cooperation, and conduct specialized research across key domains such as maritime navigation safety, environmental protection, digital AtoN and S-200 implementation, capacity-building, and lighthouse heritage.

As an IGO, IALA requires more specialized and segmented institutional functions. Therefore, the establishment of ICOE is both necessary and appropriate.

2.2 Expected Benefits of Establishing ICOE

- 1) Enhance technical expertise through function-specific centres (e.g., Navigation Safety Institute, Environmental Protection Centre, Heritage Centre)
- 2) Strengthen cooperation with IMO, IHO, UNESCO, and regional partners
- 3) Support global standard development, policy research, and harmonised AtoN service implementation



Some Member States have expressed concerns related to governance, financial sustainability, and accountability. Korea notes that these issues can be thoroughly addressed once the Council provides conceptual endorsement and initiates the framework development process.

2.3 International Precedent Case – UNESCO Category 2(Host Country Managed) Model

The Secretariat's proposal is broadly consistent with internationally recognised institutional practices, such as the UNESCO Category 2 model, under which independent centres:

- 1) are proposed by Member States,
- 2) are designated by the General Conference, and
- 3) operate independently through a cooperation agreement aligned with the parent organization's mandate.

These structured steps provide a reliable reference for developing ICOE governance and operational arrangements.

** UNESCO Category 1(UNESCO Managed)*

3. KOREA'S POSITION AND PROPOSAL

3.1 Endorsement of the Concept

The current document seeks conceptual endorsement only. Conceptual endorsement is essential to begin detailed framework development. Korea recalls that during the 2024 ENG Committee (WG3), it highlighted the need for mechanisms equivalent to ICOE and emphasised that formal consideration should proceed after IALA's transition to an IGO.

3.2 Establishment of a Secretariat-Led Special Group

Korea proposes the establishment of a Special Group led by the Secretariat, in which participation would be open to representatives from the ENG, ARM, VTS, and DTEC Committees, the World-Wide Academy, and any Member State that considers its involvement necessary.

This Special Group would develop:

- governance arrangements,
- funding and sustainability mechanisms,
- designation criteria, Agreement/MoU templates,
- operational and procedural guidelines.

3.3 Step-by-Step Pathway to the 2027 General Assembly

- 1) The 3rd Council: Conceptual endorsement
- 2) 2025–2026: Framework development by the Special Group
- 3) 2026 Councils – Review of draft framework
- 4) 2027 General Assembly – Approval of final framework
- 5) Post-2027 – Establishment of ICOE



4. THE COUNCIL IS REQUESTED TO

- **Endorse** the concept presented in document C03-8.4.1.
- **Approve** the establishment of a Secretariat-led Special Group to develop detailed frameworks
- **Request** the Special Group to prepare governance arrangements, designation criteria, Agreement/MoU templates, operational procedures, and other mechanisms necessary for the establishment of ICOE