

**IALA Council****3<sup>rd</sup> Session****8-12 December 2025****Mumbai, India**

## **17. Any other business**

### **Paper for consideration by the Council**

#### **Establishment of the IALA Innovation Challenge**

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#### **Summary**

This paper proposes the establishment of an IALA Innovation Challenge, an international competition aimed at stimulating innovation in Aids to Navigation (AtoN) and related maritime services. The initiative would strengthen IALA's role as an International Organization that fosters global cooperation, modernization, and the adoption of cutting-edge solutions to enhance safety, efficiency, and sustainability in navigation.

#### **Background**

The International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) was formally transformed into an International Organization in 2024, with the mandate to promote safe, efficient and environmentally responsible navigation worldwide.

The maritime sector is undergoing profound changes, driven by digitalization, automation, autonomous vessels, artificial intelligence and sustainability requirements. To remain at the forefront of this transformation and to respond proactively to these developments, IALA should provide a platform where professionals, innovators, researchers, and industry stakeholders/entrepreneurs worldwide, can present solutions that advance the modernization and efficiency of AtoN and related services.

#### **Proposal**

It is proposed that IALA establish the IALA Innovation Challenge, an international competition designed to stimulate and recognize innovative solutions that can modernize and improve the efficiency of Aids to Navigation (AtoN) and related services.

The competition would be open to:

- Professionals and experts in the maritime and navigation domain;
- Research institutes and universities;

- Start-ups and technology developers;
- Cross-sector innovators interested in contributing to maritime safety.

## Objectives

- To create a global platform for innovative ideas that address current and future challenges in AtoN systems and services.
- To encourage collaboration between industry, academia and authorities.
- To accelerate the adoption of cutting-edge solutions in digitalization, automation, data exchange, and environmental sustainability.
- To recognize and reward outstanding contributions that can have a lasting impact on maritime safety and efficiency.

## Format

The IALA Innovation Challenge could be organized as an annual or biennial event, aligned with major IALA Conferences or Symposia. The process could include:

1. Call for Proposals – open submission process at international level.
2. Evaluation – assessment by a jury of experts drawn from IALA, industry and academia.
3. Final Stage – shortlisted proposals presented during an IALA high-level event (e.g. Conference, Symposia).
4. Award Ceremony – winners receive the IALA Innovation Award, along with opportunities for mentoring, visibility and possible pilot projects and implementation.

## Benefits

- Reinforces IALA's position as a global leader in maritime safety and innovation.
- Accelerates the integration of new technologies into AtoN systems and related maritime services.
- Strengthens cooperation between IALA Members, Industry and stakeholders.
- Provides recognition, visibility, opportunities and incentive for innovators contributing to safe, sustainable navigation.
- Encourages a culture of creativity, sustainability, and forward-looking solutions within the maritime community.

## Conclusion

By launching the IALA Innovation Challenge, IALA will demonstrate its continued commitment to fostering innovation, recognizing excellence, and strengthening international cooperation in the field of maritime aids to navigation. By acknowledging outstanding contributions and promoting forward-looking ideas, IALA reaffirms its leadership role in enhancing the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of global navigation, while inspiring future progress across the maritime domain.

Council is invited to:

1. Approve in principle the establishment of the IALA Innovation Challenge.
2. Decide periodicity (e.g. annual or biennial) and the form of the recognition/award (e.g. certificate, plaque, trophy)
3. Task the Secretariat to prepare detailed guidelines and rules, including scope and evaluation criteria.
4. Create the recognition/award Committee
5. Consider aligning the launch of the first Innovation Challenge with a major IALA event.
6. Funding the innovative solution?