



8 – Strategy and Policy

8.3.1 Policy on submission and co-sponsoring of documents

Note by the Secretariat

PROCEDURE ON THE CO-SPONSORING OF DOCUMENTS OUT OF SESSION

1. SUMMARY

To address concerns about the current process for out-of-session co-sponsorship of input papers to intergovernmental bodies, regarding alignment with Member State procedures and the absence of a mechanism to register dissent at receiving IGOs, the Council established a Drafting Group in June 2025. Chaired by Sweden and coordinated by the Secretariat, the Group was tasked with developing a policy that reflects Member State sovereignty, ensures transparent decision-making and supports IALA's commitment to responsiveness and agility.

Following structured virtual meetings and written consultations, a revised draft procedure has been forwarded by the Policy Advisory Panel (PAP) and the Drafting Group (DG) for approval by the 3rd Session of the Council.

2. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

The Council to take into account the draft procedure contained in ANNEX A and consider it for approval.

3. BACKGROUND

As the executive organ of the Organization, the Council has in the past co-sponsored input papers to intergovernmental bodies such as the IMO. Sweden has generally supported the content of such papers. However, in 2024, Sweden chose not to support IALA's co-sponsorship of two input papers to the IMO - not due to objections to their content, but owing to concerns over the co-sponsoring procedure itself.

Specifically, the current silent approval approach does not sufficiently align with the formal preparatory processes and timelines followed by Sweden and potentially other Member States ahead of intergovernmental meetings or allow Member States to register reservations or non-alignment at the receiving IGO.

To address these concerns, the Council, during its 2nd session, established a Drafting Group (DG). The purpose of the Group was to prepare a procedure that sets out a clear process for approving co-sponsorships outside of formal sessions. This procedure will aim to respect national procedures and



sovereign decision-making, while enabling Member States to record and communicate differing positions when needed, reflecting IALA's core values, particularly its commitment to responding promptly to the needs of the maritime community and maintaining agile and effective ways of working.

The Drafting Group was chaired by Sweden and coordinated by the Secretariat. It included interested Council members and the Chair and Vice-Chair of PAP. The work was carried out via online meetings and email, including consideration at PAP58 with the aiming for Council approval at this session.

4. DISCUSSION

The Drafting Group (DG), established by Council 2 and chaired by Sweden, met virtually on 19, 30 June and 13 August 2025 to draft a policy on the co-sponsoring of documents out of session in accordance with the agreed Terms of Reference (ANNEX B). The methodology adopted by the DG centred on a collaborative, structured review of an initial draft policy prepared by the Chair and the Secretariat. This draft was presented section by section to ensure an organised discussion and to facilitate the capture of early feedback from Member States.

Council members contributed both during the meeting and through a post-meeting written comment process. Formal comments amendments were requested to enable the development of a revised draft that was agreed culminating in a submission to PAP.

DG discussion underscored several core rationales guiding the policy's development:

- The policy reaffirms that Council, as the executive organ of the Organization, retains responsibility for co-sponsorship decisions. It recognises the non-mandatory nature of IALA's outputs, as set out in Articles 4 and 8 of the Convention.
- A central consideration was the need to allow adequate time for national consultations. Views differed on appropriate minimum timeframes (ranging from 14 to 40 days), with concerns raised about balancing national processes with the risk of missing external submission deadlines.

During the course of the meetings the document was reviewed to ensure that it is in line with the Convention and General Regulations.

After review, the Convention is very clear regarding decision making; consensus or secret ballot. While a secret ballot can be managed in a physical meeting, it is much more challenging in a virtual setting - making consensus our only viable route. However, this may also be the simplest option, as, with a longer timeline there is potential to resolve any concerns from Council members.

The PAP reviewed the draft procedure and made only editorial comments, including renaming the document a procedure rather than a policy.

Following the PAP's feedback the document was sent to the DG for final review and agreed. It is now submitted to Council for approval.

5. THE COUNCIL IS INVITED TO

Note the information and **approve** on the draft procedure.

**ANNEX A** **DRAFT PROCEDURE**

Procedure for Co-Sponsoring of Documents Out of Session

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this paper is to govern IALA's co-sponsorship of input documents to intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) in accordance with Article 8.8 (j) of the Convention whereby .

The procedure is used for out-of-session Council approval and applies to input documents i.e. inputs that express a position and/or invite/request an action by the receiving organisation.

This paper does not apply to information papers.

2. PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

When a document requesting IALA's co-sponsorship to an IGO cannot be presented during an ordinary session of the Council due to submission deadlines of the receiving organisation, the Secretariat shall circulate the document to Member States by e-mail for consideration setting out a set time limit for responses.

The Secretariat will only submit a co-sponsorship proposal when a period of not less than 30 calendar days for Council consideration can be achieved. The Secretariat shall invite Council members and Member States to submit comments to the matter within the next 25 calendar days.

Any objections must be communicated by e-mail to the Secretariat and Member States, setting out the reasons for the objection, within the timeline specified. Council member's approval may be indicated by remaining silent.

In accordance with Article 11 of the Convention, every effort shall be made for Council decisions to be adopted by consensus. Consensus, for this procedure, is considered achieved in the absence of any objections from Council members.

In case of objections of any Council member(s), the Secretary-General shall consult with the concerned Council member(s) to reach a solution. If consensus cannot be achieved by the Council after these consultations, the document will not be co-sponsored.

If needed IALA might take the floor and provide technical inputs under the remit of IALA at the relevant point on the agenda in the IGO where the paper is discussed.



Terms of Reference for the Drafting Group on a Policy on the Co-Sponsoring of Documents Out of Session

1. BACKGROUND

Subject to the approval of Council, as the executive organ of the Organization, IALA has co-sponsored input papers to intergovernmental organizations such as the IMO. In general, Sweden is supportive of the content of these input papers. However, during 2024 Sweden did not support that IALA would co-sponsor two input papers addressed to IMO. Not because Sweden, objected to the content in general of the input papers but because of the IALA co-sponsoring mechanism. Agreement by silent approval does not currently take into account the timings of the formal procedure Sweden, and perhaps other Member States, have in place for their preparations for intergovernmental meetings. It also lacks a formally adopted policy of how to reflect the position of one or more Member States that may disagree with the co-sponsoring, conducted out of session.

A Drafting Group (DG) was therefore established by the IALA Council at its 2nd session to draft a policy on co-sponsorship of documents by IALA to intergovernmental organizations.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Group is to draft a policy for out of session approvals for co-sponsorship by IALA to other intergovernmental organizations related to the work of IALA. The policy should take into account the sovereignty and internal procedures, including timelines, of Member States, that enables those who have a dissenting voice from an approved document to be able to express their position at the receiving intergovernmental organization.

The policy should also reflect IALAs Core Values as per the Declaration of the International Organization For Marine Aids To Navigation, in particular, to respond quickly to the needs of the maritime community, adopt flexible working arrangements to stay agile and be efficient and timely, preventing against delays in submission.

3. SCOPE

The process reflected in the policy should propose a clear framework for:

- The Council approval procedure out of session
- Allowing Member States to register reservations or non-alignment.
- Propose procedural safeguards (e.g. minimum timelines, opt-out mechanisms).

The Policy applies to input papers, expressing a position and/or requiring a decision from the receiver. Information papers are outside the scope of this policy.



4. COMPOSITION AND ROLES

The DG will be coordinated by the Secretariat and Chaired by Sweden¹.

Membership of the DG consists of [all interested Council members] Albania, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Singapore, Spain and the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Policy Advisory Panel (PAP).

5. TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

The policy will be drafted using the timeline set out below with the aim of securing Council approval at C03 in December 2025:

- Two online meetings of the DG (19 June, the second 30 June)
- Drafting Group – 1st draft (by 6 July)
- Drafting group meeting 11 August - final adjustments for PAP submission.
- PAP – comments on draft (9 – 12 September 2025 – input paper deadline 12 August 2025)
- Drafting Group – Take into consideration comments and finalize draft for submission to Council (TBD)
- Council 3 – approval of final draft (December 2025)

6. METHODOLOGY

The work will be carried out through online meetings and correspondence via e-mail. For expedience a first draft will be presented to the first meeting of the DG by the Chair.

¹ Johan Winell – johan.winell@sjofartsverket.se