

IALA COUNCIL

3<sup>RD</sup> SESSION

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## 8– STRATEGY AND POLICY

### *8.4– IALA's presence worldwide*

#### 8.4.1 – IALA Technical Centres of Excellence

##### BACKGROUND

The transformation of IALA into an international organization (IGO) has elevated its mandate to promote harmonized Marine Aids to Navigation (AtoN) and sustainable maritime services worldwide.

As the Organization expands its global reach, the Secretariat and the World-Wide Academy face increasing demands for technical development, standardization, training, and capacity-building support.

Several Member States have indicated their interest in establishing local centres which could assist the Organization in achieving its strategic goals without increasing the budget and the contributions.

The Council of IALA as an association discussed the possibility of regional presence of IALA at C79 on 11-15 December 2023 (Paper C79-17.3.1). The Council noted the information provided and decided not to move forward with the matter of establishing regional presence of IALA. The Council also decided that the discussion should be continued after the transition process to the IGO within the new elected (IGO) Council.

Now that the Organization has been successfully created, and is fully operational, it is appropriate to reconsider this matter.

##### DISCUSSION

Some Member States of the Organization have expressed their interest in establishing regional hubs that could assist the Organization with achieving its strategic goals by focusing on a particular region, providing technical support and capacity building etc. to that region.

The World-Wide Academy (the Academy) utilizes office space and meeting facilities made available by Singapore and Türkiye and formalized through their respective Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). These facilities are not regional centres but are used as office space for seconded officers and training delivery in the form of courses delivered by the Academy itself.



Our sister organizations IMO and IHO have established decentralized structures which expands their global outreach.

In the case of the IMO, the Organization officially launched the Global Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC) Network in 2017 and has since expanded this to five regional MTCC's located in Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific. This initiative is funded by the European Union and implemented by the IMO. The mission of the MTCC's is to:

- Promote low-carbon maritime transport.
- Support implementation of IMO energy efficiency measures.
- Facilitate technology transfer and capacity building.

In the case of the IHO, they started establishing regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHC's) in 1929 and have now 14 RCH's which meet regularly to address regional hydrographic challenges and align with IHO standards and programs. The RHC's were created to:

- Coordinate hydrographic activities regionally.
- Improve charting coverage.
- Facilitate capacity building, training, and technical cooperation in hydrography.
- Support IHO's global mission to ensure that all seas, oceans, and navigable waters are properly surveyed and charted.

The latest IHO initiative is the establishment of an IHO Infrastructure Centre in South Korea aimed at hosting the IHO Maritime Connectivity Platform (MCP) and expected to be operational in 2026. This initiative is largely funded by the Republic of Korea.

These examples show that there is precedence in the maritime IGO domain for decentralized structures aimed at promoting certain topics globally.

## THE CONCEPT OF IALA CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

The above has given rise to the idea of establishing *IALA Centres of Excellence* (ICOE's) worldwide.

The proposed Centres are envisioned as national institutions, hosted and managed by a Member State, and formally recognized by the Organization to support the achievement of its strategic goals through a thematic approach — such as digitalization, heritage, capacity building, education, and harmonization (S-200), among others.

These centres would operate under the Organization's strategic guidance and contribute to the development, dissemination, and implementation of standards and best practices.

Each centre would be funded by one or more sponsors in a Member State with demonstrated capacity and commitment to advancing marine AtoN and related technologies.

The following basic requirements have been identified:

- Non-political and non-commercial.



- Well defined scope focusing each centre on topics supporting the Organization's strategic goals.
- Separate legal entity from the Organization, and independent provisions for financial and operational sustainability.
- Formalised with a three-year agreement/MoU with the Organization, renewed every year.
- Formal mechanism for interaction with the Secretariat.
- Defined reporting obligations to the Organization.
- No additional financial burden on the Organization's general membership.

The Organization would sign an MoU regarding each centre, and the Secretariat would facilitate the interaction with the ICOE's and manage their goals and activities.

The ICOE's would allocate budget for the costs associated with the interaction with the Organization.

Examples of topics ICOE's can focus on:

- General management and specific engagement with members in one or more of the official languages
- GNSS augmentation and integrity systems.
- Operation of the IALA MCP instance.
- S200 development.
- Terrestrial PNT system (R-Mode etc.).
- Digitalization of waterways.
- Cybersecurity in the IALA domain.
- AtoN Light measurements.
- Terrestrial and satellite based VDES.
- Next generation Vessel Traffic Services.
- Heritage.
- Application of Artificial Intelligence in the maritime domain.
- Data product Specification and technical services.

The ICOE's can take on a number of different type of activities. The following types of activities have been identified so far:

- Technical support to Technical Committees of the Organization on specific topics.
- Assist the Academy with training, capacity building and R&D.
- Assist the Secretariat with developing the .
- Host international seminars and workshops.
- Engage with maritime research institutions.
- Conduct technical research into one or more topic.



- Disseminate outcomes to the technical bodies of the Organization.

Other Member States may be invited to express interest based on regional needs, technical capacity, and alignment with Organization's strategic priorities.

## GOVERNANCE

The General Assembly as the principal decision-making organ of the Organization decides the overall policy of the Organization and approve agreements with States in accordance with the Convention, Article 7.7(b). The decision to introduce Centres of Excellence of the Organization around the world hosted and managed by Member States is considered part of the overall policy of the Organization. As a consequence, a decision by the General Assembly is required to approve the ICOEs.

In addition, the General Assembly approves agreements with States in accordance with the Convention, Article 7.7(m), whereas the Council coordinate the activities of the Organization. In order to facilitate the recognition of ICOEs in-between General Assemblies and based on technical or operational requirements, it is proposed that the General Assembly approves a basic template Memorandum of Understanding to be used by the Organization when agreeing on the implantation of an ICOE with a Member State. At the same time the General Assembly, in line with the Convention, Article 8.8 (a) delegates the approval of individual ICOEs to the Council and empowers the Secretary-General to sign the respective MoUs with the relevant Member State based on the approval of Council.

The Secretariat will develop the template framework and template Memorandum of Understanding and draft General Assembly Resolution to be further discussed by the Council in time before the submission to the General Assembly in Mumbai in 2027;

### THE COUNCIL IS REQUESTED TO

**Endorse** the concept of IALA Centres of Excellence as a strategic initiative to support IALA's global mandate.

**Request** the Secretariat to develop a formal framework for ICOE designation, governance, timeline and integration into the work program of the Organization.

**Encourage** interested Member States to submit expressions of interest for hosting future ICOE's.