

IALA COUNCIL
3rd session



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Mumbai, India

8 – STRATEGY AND POLICY

8.4-IALA's presence worldwide

8.4.1.2 – Comments on Japan's Note on document C03-8.4.1 - IALA Technical Centres of Excellence

Note by Spain

1. BACKGROUND

Spain wishes to thank Japan for its constructive and carefully considered comments on document C03-8.4.1 concerning the establishment of IALA Technical Centres of Excellence (ICOEs). The concerns raised are valuable contributions to the ongoing discussion on how best to structure and govern such Centres.

Spain would like to recall that the concept of establishing Centres of Excellence within IALA is not new. As evidenced in the internal Secretariat paper "*Spanish Sponsorship Opportunity*" (2021), the possible establishment of a Spanish Centre of Excellence was already envisaged by the Secretariat, including considerations on functions, staffing, and financial arrangements.

Additionally, a draft Memorandum of Understanding, shared with Spain in 2021, outlined a full model for the establishment of a Regional Office / Centre of Excellence, including governance structures, responsibilities, financial independence, and operational modalities.

These earlier documents demonstrate that the idea of ICOEs has been under development within IALA for several years and is consistent with the Organization's strategic evolution as an intergovernmental organization.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. Spain responds to the concerns expressed by Japan as follows:

2.2. On "Insufficient Discussion and Analysis"

Spain acknowledges that discussions at C79 focused primarily on regional presence for WWA activities. However, Spain wishes to highlight that:

- The origins of the ICOE concept can be clearly traced back to 2021, when the Secretariat developed a structured proposal for a Spanish Centre of Excellence.
- This 2021 note contained concrete options, budgetary models, and proposed functions, showing that the Secretariat had already considered the possibility in depth.
- The draft MoU shared in 2021 likewise demonstrates that governance, operational responsibilities, financial arrangements, and reporting structures were already being addressed.

Therefore, the Secretariat's current proposal does not introduce an entirely new concept but consolidates work previously undertaken, now adapted to the context of the IGO.

Regarding the necessity of ICOEs, Spain considers that the Secretariat's paper clearly identifies:

- increasing demand for capacity-building, training and standardization;
- growing technical needs linked to IALA's expanded mandate as an IGO;
- expressions of interest from various Member States.

These items justify revisiting the question now that the IGO is operational.

2.3. On "The Need for Careful Consideration and Accountability"

Spain fully agrees that ICOEs must operate under a solid governance and accountability framework.

Spain notes that:

- The Secretariat's proposal explicitly foresees the development of a formal framework, including a template MoU, a clear designation process, reporting obligations and interaction mechanisms with the Secretariat.
- Many of these elements already appear in the draft MoU circulated from 2021, which includes:
 - financial independence;
 - roles and responsibilities of the host State;
 - coordination with IALA Headquarters;
 - creation of a steering committee;
 - provisions on duration, review and termination.

Spain also wishes to underline that all ICOEs would be entirely funded by the host Member State, as reflected in both the Secretariat's document and the 2021 MoU draft. Therefore, no financial burden is placed on IALA's regular budget or its membership.

This ensures accountability and sustainability while respecting the principle that ICOEs must complement the Organization without altering its financial structure.



2.4. On “Significant Influence of Decisions by the Council”

Spain agrees that any Council decision may guide future developments. However, the Secretariat is not requesting approval of the framework at this stage, but endorsement of the concept so that the Secretariat may prepare the necessary instruments for later Council and General Assembly consideration.

Endorsing the concept now:

- does not preclude detailed analysis in committees;
- does not imply approval of any specific Centre;
- enables the multi-year work programme required for adoption at the 2027 General Assembly;
- allows Member States, including Japan, to participate fully in shaping the framework.

Spain therefore supports the Secretariat’s proposed approach:

endorsement of the concept, followed by inclusive technical and policy work.

3. SPAIN’S POSITION AND PROPOSAL

Spain considers that:

1. The concept of ICOEs is consistent with IALA’s strategic development and has been under consideration at least since 2021.
2. ICOEs would operate under the principle of subsidiarity, supporting IALA’s objectives through specialized regional or thematic functions.
3. Full financial independence from the IALA budget is guaranteed, as ICOEs would be hosted and funded by Member States.
4. Governance and accountability mechanisms can be developed based on the Secretariat’s proposal and the 2021 MoU model, which already contains much of the required structure.
5. Endorsement of the concept at this stage is appropriate and necessary to begin the detailed development of the formal framework.

Spain therefore supports endorsing the concept of IALA Centres of Excellence and proceeding with the development of a comprehensive framework, incorporating the valuable observations made by Japan and other Member States

4. THE COUNCIL IS REQUESTED TO

- Endorse the concept of IALA Technical Centres of Excellence as presented in document C03-8.4.1.
- Request the Secretariat to continue developing the formal framework, including governance, designation criteria, and a template MoU, taking into account the comments submitted by Japan, Spain and other Member States.
- Encourage continued participation by all interested Member States in shaping the future structure of ICOEs.