

Dear Secretariat,

Finland wishes to thank the Secretariat for the opportunity to provide comments on the emerging concept of IALA Centres of Excellence (ICOEs). We appreciate the ongoing work to clarify the purpose, structure, and added value of these proposed entities.

In our view, it is essential that any future ICOE structures are designed to support the core work of IALA and are clearly integrated into the organization's established processes. In particular, we consider it important to ensure that ICOEs do not duplicate, compete with, or inadvertently weaken the work carried out within IALA's technical committees.

The technical committees form the foundation of IALA's technical and standardization activities. They bring together experts and AtoN manufacturers from around the world, offering all members equal opportunities to contribute to technical development from the earliest stages. This openness and inclusiveness are central to the credibility and legitimacy of IALA's outputs, and they align with the principles followed by international standardization bodies such as IEC and ISO.

If participation in ICOEs were to be limited or not equally accessible to all IALA members, there is a risk that some stakeholders—particularly industry representatives—might perceive reduced value in engaging with the technical committees. Over time, this could shift technical preparatory work into more closed environments, which would not be desirable for the transparency or inclusiveness of IALA's standardization processes.

For these reasons, Finland supports the view that the role of ICOEs should be carefully defined and that their activities should complement, rather than parallel or replace, the work of the technical committees. We also agree that a formal framework covering designation criteria, governance, timelines, and integration into the work programme will be necessary before any ICOE structure is established.

We look forward to reviewing the Secretariat's further proposal at the next Council meeting in June 2026 and remain committed to supporting the continued strengthening of IALA's technical work.

Best regards,

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