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| **From:** | VTS Committee | VTS51-13.1.1.6 |
| **To:** | ENAV Committee  ARM Committee  ENG Committee  MASS Task Force | 7 October 2021 |

**LIAISON NOTE**

**Implications of MASS from a VTS Perspective – Discussion Paper**

# introduction

A draft discussion paper on the implications of MASS from a VTS perspective has been prepared by the VTS Committee to assist the Committee:

* Achieve a common understanding of MASS and its implications on the provision of VTS by clearly and concisely identifying:
  + Trends and opportunities presented by MASS.
  + Issues / challenges for the management of ship traffic in a VTS area.
  + Options, policies, and strategies for VTS to embrace / influence MASS.
  + Implications for the regulatory and legal framework for VTS.
  + Implications for IALA Standards relating to VTS.
* Monitor the advent of MASS and its associated implications for VTS.
* Strategically plan for MASS and determine new work programme tasks associated with the preparation of new/amended IALA guidance.
* Develop guidance to assist authorities ensure the safety and efficiency of vessel movements in the VTS area.

# background

The advent of MASS will have significant implications for how VTS contributes to the safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and the protection of the environment within the VTS area by mitigating the development of unsafe situations.

This includes how VTS will interact with conventional ships, autonomous ships, and control centres (remote and/or local) to mitigate the development of unsafe situations through:

* Providing timely and relevant information on factors that may influence the ship's movements and assist onboard decision-making.
* Monitoring and managing ship traffic.
* Responding to developing unsafe situations.

A key consideration in moving forward will be balancing the benefits derived from new and advancing technologies with safety, efficiency, protection of the environment and security, particularly as MASS transitions from ‘local’ trial environments to operational scenarios.

The Committee commenced work on *Task 1.4.3 Development of Guidance on the Implications of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) from a VTS Perspective* at VTS50. A key component of the task includes preparing a discussion paper describing the implications of MASS on the provision of VTS.

# Discussion

The advent of MASS will be ongoing for many years and it is intended that the discussion paper will be reviewed and updated, as appropriate:

* Following VTS Committee meetings.
* To reflect outcomes from the recently completed regulatory scoping exercise on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) by the IMO to assess existing IMO instruments to see how they might apply to ships with varying degrees of automation (MSC.1-Circ.1638).
* To reflect amendments to IALA’s Strategic Vision and Current Drivers and Trends.
* To reflect outcomes from the MASS Task Force.

It is not the intention for this document to address the issues/implications identified. This will be achieved new/amended work programme tasks adopted by the Committee.

In preparing the draft discussion paper it was also identified that with the rapid developments associated with MASS and associated supporting technologies there would be benefits in circulating the paper to the other IALA Committees and the MASS Task Force for their information and comment.

A copy of the discussion paper is attached.

**Action requested**

The ENAV, ARM and ENG Committees, and the MASS Task Force, are requested to note / provide comment on the draft *Discussion paper – Implications of MASS from a VTS perspective*.