

WORK PROGRAMME

Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation

Expansion of the scope of work

New symbols for AIS-Aids to Navigation (AIS-AtoN)

Submitted by Japan and the United States

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document proposes to expand the scope of existing work of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation regarding new symbols for AIS-Aids to Navigation.
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	5
<i>High-level action:</i>	5.2.4
<i>Planned output:</i>	5.2.4.2
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 17
<i>Related documents:</i>	MSC 86/23/7, MSC 86/23/18, NAV 55/INF.7, NAV 56/11, NAV 56/11/1, NAV 56/11/2, NAV 56/11/3, NAV 56/INF.2, NAV 56/INF.11, resolution MSC.191(79) and SN/Circ.243

1 The following proposal is submitted in accordance with the Guidelines on the organization and method of work of the Committees (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.2), taking into account the High-level Action Plan for the Organization and priorities for the 2010-2011 biennium (resolution A.1012 (26)) and circular letter No.3031 regarding the new format for IMO documents.

Background

2 In MSC 86/23/7, Japan proposed to the Maritime Safety Committee at its eighty-sixth session a new work programme item for the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation to develop new symbols for AIS-AtoN, which the Committee approved (MSC 86/26).

3 At the fifty-sixth session of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation, Japan submitted a document (NAV 56/11) that showed new examples of the symbols and the principles for their development. There were also comments submitted by IHO (NAV 56/11/1) and Denmark (NAV 56/11/3) which favored Japan's improvement of the symbols, but also expressed a desire for further discussion and the necessity of agreement at IMO regarding their use.

4 In the discussion at the Sub-Committee, many delegates expressed their appreciation for the Japanese initiative, but because AIS-AtoNs can be displayed on multiple navigation display systems with or without nautical charts (i.e. radar), it was pointed out that there was a need for an IMO policy on their use before the development of new symbols.

5 IALA also submitted an information document (NAV 56/INF.2) that provided information on the definition and the use of virtual aids to navigation to NAV56.

Expansion of the scope of work

6 The scope of the existing work assigned by the Committee is to develop new symbols for AIS-AtoN. However, taking into account the discussion at the Sub-Committee, it may be appropriate to expand the scope of this existing work to include the development of policy, guidance, and performance standards on AIS-AtoN. Consequently, it is also recommended that the name of the existing work program “the development of new symbols for AIS-AtoN” be amended to “the development of policy and new symbols for AIS-AtoN” to appropriately reflect the revised content of work.

Need or compelling need

7 Use of AIS is wide-spread and with the advent of AIS-AtoN stations situational awareness can extend beyond the bridge to the waterway. Many countries have carried out research and study on AIS-AtoN and proven its effectiveness in safety and efficiency of navigation. However, as with most new technologies, the practical use of AIS-AtoN requires caution because of its limitations, lack of training of seafarers, and familiarity with its symbols, etc. This is especially true regarding the use of virtual AIS-AtoNs, which do not physically exist, but can be made virtually visible to mariners that have the proper equipment to display them. There is a compelling need to not create confusion for mariners, something this work item can prevent by carefully considering the proper administration, training and application of AIS-AtoNs.

8 Consequently, in addition to the development of new symbols there is a need for development of policy, guidance, and standards for their use.

Analysis of the issues involved, having regard to both the costs to the maritime industry, and global legislative and administrative burdens

9 This proposal only develops policy and symbols which will not require new or additional equipment but only graphical modifications of existing symbol(s). Costs and administrative burdens from this work will be minimal to inconsequential.

Benefits which would accrue from the proposal

10 Developing policy and new symbols for AIS-AtoN will promote the proper use of AIS-AtoN and help the appropriate understanding of mariners. Hence the maximum and optimum utilization of AIS-AtoN will be secured and enhance the safety and efficiency of navigation.

Priority and target completion date

11 Since AIS-AtoNs already exist, the development of policy and new symbols should be highly prioritized in order to ensure their proper use. The expansion of the scope of work may increase related workload, but should not impact the original target completion date in 2013.

Is the subject of the proposal within the scope of IMO’s objectives?

12 The proposal is within the scope of the IMO’s objectives, as it aims to enhance and integrate the use of AIS and AtoN, thereby improving the safety and efficiency of navigation.

How is the proposed item related to the scope of the Strategic plan for the Organization and fits into the High-level action plan?

13 Since the proposal is directly related to standards for shipborne navigational aids, the subject is within the item 5.2.4 of the High-level Action Plan.

Do adequate standards exist?

14 The existing SN/Circ.243 on “Guidelines for the Presentation of Navigation-related Symbols, Terms and Abbreviations” provides for a generic symbol to represent any AIS-AtoN regardless of its characteristics. It is anticipated that this Circular will be revised to include a library of AIS-AtoN symbols that more accurately reflects their characteristics. The IALA Recommendations and Guidelines on AIS-AtoN and Virtual AtoN could be useful support for the development of the IMO policy.

Do the benefits justify the proposed action?

15 The benefit described in paragraph 10 justifies the proposed action.

Estimation of the number of session needed to complete the work.

16 Three sessions on the NAV Sub-Committee starting at its fifty-seventh session (NAV57) are necessary to complete this expanded work item.

Action requested of the Committee

17 The Committee is invited to consider and approve the proposal for the expansion of the scope of the existing work program of NAV, regarding development of new symbols for AIS-AtoN, to include performance standards, guidance and policy on their use and to change the name of the work item accordingly.

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