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| From: VTS Committee | DTEC4-6.2.2.12  (VTS57-12.3.2) |
| To: DTEC Committee | 21 March 2025 |

LIAISON NOTE

Response to the draft Guideline on Digitalization of Waterways

# INTRODUCTION

The VTS Committee would like to thank DTEC for the liaison note on the draft guideline on digitalisation of waterways (DTEC3-11.2.2.9 and DTEC3-11.2.2.9.1). The VTS Committee has reviewed the documents provided as well as the action items. Please find our comments below.

# DISCUSSION

The VTS Committee would like to share the following feedback and remarks on the early version of the new guideline on Digitalisation of Waterways of the DTEC Committee.

**General comments:**

* Although the guideline is aimed to introduce different aspects of waterway digitalisation including digitalisation maturity assessment, digital twins and digital services provided to vessels, the scope of the guideline has not been defined.
* When developing the guidance further it should be clear that the content should not expand beyond the IALA responsibility, e.g. large portions of the document, including the references, are considering inland waterway matters.
* As the guideline seem to focus a lot on the inland waterways and River Information Services (RIS) and less on VTS. It should be clear that RIS and VTS differs both operationally as well as technically. However, as there are mixed zones with traffic from both coastal and inland waterways, consideration should be made when planning digitalization in such areas.
* Regarding existing concepts in maritime domain, IALA is already co-operating with IHO on developing S100 standards to enhance digitalization.
* The document is not structured as a guideline, it is more an academic paper raising questions and giving answers by the authors. The guideline should also be more user-friendly regarding the words and expressions used.
* Furthermore, as the document addresses a range of unrelated subjects, such as 1) Digitalization maturity and data models 2) Generic AtoN and VTS applications 3) Outlook on the future. Which ideally should be treated separately.
* It should be noted that concerning guidance on digitalization of waterways PAP56 highlighted the need for clearer recommendations on what members are expected to do. It was noted that recommendations should be concrete while guidelines should present possible ways to implement them.
* To enhance readability, the VTS Committee suggests to use known definitions and concepts instead of using concepts from other domains e.g. vessels vs waterborne vehicles (2.1.1.).
* Regarding the references on MASS, autonomous vessels and remote control centres, it should be determined whether this guidance should be incorporated into the holistic MASS/Digitalization guideline as the present title of the recommendation is drafted to be “Digitalization of Marine AtoN to Enable Digital Navigation to include MASS”.
* We have noticed that this guideline has been developed under task DTEC-7.1.2 Develop guidance on Digital Fairway. We have also noticed a possible relationship with task DTEC-7.1.1 Develop a discussion paper on digitalisation in the scope of IALA which is described to develop a vision for digitalization of shipping and maritime transportation. Considering the present title of the guideline, we would appreciate to get more information on the differences between these tasks and why “waterways” is being used instead of “fairway”.
* The VTS Committee would be grateful if we could have the possibility to review the draft guideline at more sessions, perhaps as an inter-committee task, as this task is not included in our Work Programme for the moment.

**Specific comments and feedback:**

* Digitalization Maturity Model introduced in section 2.1.3 and its application to all waterway entities as described in section 2.1.3.4 and any planned adoption of digitalization maturity models:
  + No specific comment on the model, but it’s unclear what is meant by “waterway entities”.
* Concept of digital model-shadow-twin introduced in section 3.1.1:
  + The schema is clear but the explanations are very complex and difficult to understand.
* New terminology introduced related to AtoNs interacting with MASS in section 7.4 and its subsections:
  + New terminology is confusing like ‘Smart Hectometre Stone’ which may only be used in inland waterways.

# ACTION REQUESTED

The DTEC Committee is invited to consider this response and provide feedback to the VTS Committee.

That the DTEC Committee consider an inter-committee task group on this task and invite VTS Committee participation.