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Agenda item XX

Technical Domain / Task Number 1.4.2

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The future of the Navigational Assistance Service

# Summary

The policy on the provision and delivery of the Types of Service offered by a VTS was updated in Dec 2012 (Reference [1]). Notwithstanding this recent update, it is submitted that confusion still exists in the minds of many mariners, VTS Operators and VTS Authorities over these services and, in particular, over the provision of a Navigational Assistance Service.

This input paper proposes that, in the anticipated update of IMO Resolution A.857(20) (Reference [2] Task 1.4.2), the provision of Navigational Assistance should be reviewed and more properly described to assist VTS Authorities in its effective implementation.

## Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to seek review by the VTS Committee and IALA Council of the current policy for the delivery of a Navigational Assistance Service. The output of any review may then be included in the anticipated update to IMO Recommendation A.857(20).

# Background

The VTS Committee has debated the Types of Service provided by a VTS over many years. The most recent guidance on service provision (Reference [1]) included at its paragraph 3.1 more detailed guidance on what Types of Service might be appropriate. Notwithstanding this updated guidance, it is clear from declarations of service provision by many VTS Authorities that the provision of a Navigational Assistance Service (NAS) is still not properly understood and, indeed, opinions on interpretation exist even amongst policy makers.

# Discussion

Current VTS service provision is mandated by the IMO within Resolution A.857(20). The need to update this Resolution has been recognised and a task to update the Resolution forms part of the current work plan (Reference [2]). The recently issued IALA Strategy Paper (Reference [3]) recognises that confusion exists over service provision and identifies at its Annex B that “*The types of services need to be more clearly defined as they currently are a source for continuous debate*”. IALA has also invited the IMO Sub-Committee to note that *“some IMO Member States, co-sponsored by IALA, may consider a submission to the Maritime Safety Committee with a proposal for the review of resolution A.857(20)*”. The current task of submitting a proposal for an update to Resolution A.857(20) to IMO is, therefore, a unique opportunity to address the confusion over NAS.

Commodore Barry Goldman has written an article which has been submitted to the Nautical Institute for inclusion in its magazine “Seaways” and will be published in March 2016. A copy of this article is attached. In summary, this article sets out:

* The current IMO Resolution was published at a time of significant change and that it sought to address fears that some authorities might seek to dilute pilotage.
* That, notwithstanding specific guidance provided by IALA in Guideline 1089 and the amplifying explanation in the IALA VTS Manual, a significant number of VTS Authorities were not declaring the provision of a NAS where this may be considered to be appropriate and postulates that this may be due to confusion over interpretation and/or a misplaced fear of liability.
* That existing doctrine allows for a common misconception that NAS equates to “Remote Pilotage” but that remote pilotage is not a VTS Type of Service as recognised by IALA but is approved by some nations as a pilotage service.

The article concludes that the delivery of navigational assistance, especially in unplanned circumstances, should be more properly regarded as a procedure or technique and that IMO Resolution A.857(20) should be amended accordingly. It offers an alternative in that NAS as a Type of Service is retained for pre-planned navigational assistance whilst unplanned navigational assistance is redefined as a procedure or technique. It recognises that this compromise may not fully address the existing potential for confusion and misinterpretation and may leave open the potential for a link being made with remote pilotage.

IHMA supports the discussion and conclusions of this article and recommends that the VTS Committee consider the proposal to review the current definition of Navigational Assistance, especially in unplanned circumstances, as a Type of Service in the anticipated review and update of Resolution A.857(20) for submission to IMO. Further, such a review would serve to enable the optimum development of Maritime Service Portfolio 2 (NAS) within the e-Navigation Strategic Implementation Plan. Noting the possible expansion of VTS into other areas identified in the strategy paper, it is considered that a review of the Navigational Assistance Service would be advantageous and that consideration should also be given to the inclusion of other more appropriate definitions that are more closely aligned to the other existing Types of Service, namely INS and TOS, which it is believed remain entirely relevant.

# References

1. IALA Guideline No. 1089 on Provision of Vessel Traffic Services (INS, TOS & NAS) Ed. 1 Dec 2012
2. VTS 40/14 Report of the 40th session of the IALA VTS Committee 19-23 Oct 2015 – Work Programme
3. IALA VTS Strategy Paper - Addressing the delivery of VTS in a rapidly changing world - May 2015
4. NCSR 3/INF.10 - 17 December 2015 – Vessel Traffic Services in a rapidly changing World

# ENCLOSURE

[1] Draft article submitted to “Seaways” (Nautical Institute) entitled “Navigational Assistance in

VTS – A Service or a Procedure?” – Barry Goldman – Jan 2016

# Action requested of the Committee

The Committee is requested to:

1. Consider the proposal to review the provision of a Navigational Assistance Service, especially in unplanned circumstances, in the anticipated update of Resolution A.857(20). If this proposal is supported and noting the significance of the change, the VTS Committee is further invited to;
2. Submit this paper to the IALA Council to endorse the recommendation in principle for inclusion in the work on the update to IMO Recommendation being undertaken in Task 1.4.2.