**VTS Phraseology – Guiding Principles**

**Introduction**

1. Task 1.3.1 to develop a Guideline on VTS Voice Communications, Phrases/Phraseology was established following the 2012 VTS Symposium held in Istanbul, where the conclusions of the Symposium included:

*“There is a compelling need to establish stand-alone communication procedures for VTS to facilitate clear and unambiguous transfer of information.”*

1. The VTS Committee incorporated the task as part of its 2014-2018 Work Programme and subsequently carried forward into the current programme.
2. The VTS Task Register 2018-2022 states that the objective of the Task is to:

*“Prepare a guideline on VTS voice communication that presents key words and standardized phraseology based on common scenarios to support clear and concise information exchange.”*

**Guiding Principles**

1. In developing a guideline on VTS Voice Communications, Phrases/Phraseology the following guiding principles have been established:
   1. The new Guideline should incorporate Guideline 1132 *VTS VHF Voice Communication Ed.1 - Dec 2017* to provide one authoritative document.
   2. \*VTS Phraseologies are not intended to be exhaustive, but
   3. \*VTS Phraseologies should always be used whenever they are applicable. It follows therefore that:
      1. VTS personnel will need to learn VTS phraseology for immediate recall without reference elsewhere and, thus,
      2. The number of VTS phrases should be limited as far as possible,
      3. Alternative phrases for similar actions/situations should be avoided to ensure the use of standardized phraseology, and
      4. To ensure this, phrases should normally only apply to operational circumstances when time is critical or where misunderstandings might compromise safety.
   4. \*Where VTS Phraseologies have not been identified, plain language or locally adopted phraseologies should be used following the general principles currently set out in Guideline G1132 and to be transferred into this new guideline.
   5. Whilst recognising the shortcomings of SMCP, it should be recognised that SMCP remains the recognised IMO publication on the subject generally available to mariners. This Guideline should, therefore, complement the phrases in SMCP as far as possible and avoid contradicting SMCP unless there are clear errors in SMCP where phrases no longer adhere to current recognised procedures/policy.
   6. VTS Phraseologies identified in the guideline should, at this stage, be limited to phrases for use by VTS personnel communicating with ships. It is not appropriate to identify responses from ships to VTS and the selection and wording of phrases must take this into account. (*Note: There may a future opportunity to develop ship to VTS responses if, and when, SMCP is updated*).
   7. Procedures identified through phrases used in this guideline should take into account the following expectations of mariners:
      1. Many mariners participating in a VTS are not qualified or certificated to the standards expected in the air world.
      2. The standard of spoken English is, in many cases, considerably lower than those required of aircraft pilots.
      3. Wider adoption of procedures requiring on-board knowledge and mandating their use by ships would require implementation through IMO and cannot be included for use in this guideline.

*\*Principles asterisked are adapted from ICAO Doc 9432 – Manual of Radiotelephony*