# TASK 1.X.X VTS Digital Communication

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| **Standard** | Vessel Traffic Services | | |
| **Topic Area** | VTS Operations / Communications | | |
| **Task** | Guidance for interaction between VTS and ships by digital means.  *(Propose a name for the task)* | | |
| **Objectives of the task** | To provide guidance for digital interaction between VTS, ships (whether conventional or autonomous) and remote control centres, including:   * How ships can meet their reporting requirements by digital means * How VTS can achieve its purpose by providing information or issuing advice, warnings and instructions by digital means.   *(Describe the objective/s of the task)* | | |
| **Expected outcome** | New Guidance specifying how to implement the practices associated with Recommendations *R0127 - VTS Operations* and *R1012 ‐ VTS Communications* for the interaction between VTS and ships by digital means and in a manner that enables both the participating ship and the VTS to meet their obligations associated with the IMO resolution for VTS and associated IALA Standards.  In particular, the purpose of the guidance is to harmonize digital communications between VTS, ships and Remote Control Centres through standard message structure, format and elements. It aims to provide the framework for:   * How ships can meet their reporting requirements by digital means. * How VTS interacts with and manages ship traffic to ensure the safety and efficiency of ship movements by providing information or issuing advice, warnings and instructions as deemed necessary by digital means. * Ensuring communications convey the same meaning and intent, irrespective of whether provided by VHF voice or digitally.   *(Describe the expected outcome: e.g. Recommendation, Guideline or Other)* | | |
| **Compelling need** | The IMO Resolution for VTS states, inter alia, that:   * *“1.4 In complying with these Guidelines, Contracting Governments should take account of applicable IMO instruments and refer to the relevant international guidance prepared and published by appropriate international organizations.”* * *“3.2 To achieve its purpose, a VTS should provide information or issue advice, warnings and instructions as deemed necessary.”* * *“7.5 Effective harmonized data exchange and information-sharing is fundamental to overall operational efficiency and safety. VTS providers are encouraged to make use of automated reporting where possible.”*  IALA *Guideline 1141 - Operational Procedures for Delivering VTS states that:* *“Where the VTS provides information in digital format, processes and procedures on digital information exchange should be established. This information may include, for example, the use of AIS messages to provide information on weather, virtual AtoN's or the exchange of route information between vessels and VTS.*  *The procedures should include a description of the digital information delivered and the communication means used for the information exchange.”*  There is currently no guidance available for establishing a global framework for standardising:   * How ships can meet their reporting requirements by digital means * How VTS can achieve its purpose in providing information or issuing advice, warnings and instructions as deemed necessary, by digital means.   Development of this guidance will also assist:   * Manufacturers in developing ship and shore applications for digitally exchanging data * VTS authorities prepare standardized operating procedures for digital communications   *(Describe briefly why this task should be included in the Work Programme)* | | |
| **Strategic Alignment**  *(See IALA Strategic Vision)* | **Goal**  G1 - Marine Aids to Navigation are developed and harmonised through international cooperation and the provision of standards.  **Strategy**  S1 - Develop standards suitable for direct citation by States, in areas deemed important by the General Assembly, and the related Recommendations and Guidelines.  S2 - Position IALA as the source of standards, knowledge, and expertise that will enable States to provide Marine Aids to Navigation, in accordance with relevant international obligations and recommendations.  S6 - Improve and harmonise the delivery of VTS globally and in a manner consistent with international conventions, national legislation and public expectations, to ensure the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment. | | |
| **Scope** | **In Scope:**  The proposed guideline is associated with the obligations for participating ships and VTS under IMO Resolution IMO Resolution A.857 X.X and national law for:   * Ships providing reports or information from ships required by VTS; and * VTS achieving its purpose in providing information or issuing advice, warnings and instructions as deemed necessary.   The guidance should be consistent with the following guidance to ensure communications convey the same meaning and intent, irrespective of whether provided by VHF voice or digitally:   * *G1089 – Provision of a VTS* * *G1141 - Operational Procedures for Delivering VTS* * *G1132 - VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology*   *(Describe key items that are in scope/out of scope)* | | |
| **Brief and concise description of the work to be undertaken and programme mile­stones** (where appropriate). | Preparation of a new IALA Guideline for VTS Digital Communication and Interaction. Key milestones include:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | First draft | Oct 2021 (VTS51) | | Draft completed and forwarded to Council for approval | Mar 2023 (VTS53) | | Draft approved by Council | June 2023 | | | |
| **Expected numbers of sessions for completion** | Session number:  51 52 53 54 55 56 57  X  X  X | | |
| **Committee notes** | **Origins** |  | |
|  | **Agreed by session** | **TD#** | **Comments** |
| XX |  |  |
|  | **Approved by Council** | *(Council Session)* | *(Date)* |
|  | **Revision Notes:** |  | |