Input paper: [[1]](#footnote-1) VTS58-10.2.1

**Input paper for the following Committee(s):** **Purpose of paper:**

(Select as appropriate)

ARM  ENG  PAP  Input

ENAV VTS  Information

**Agenda item** [[2]](#footnote-2) 10.2

**Technical domain/ Task number** 2 Task 3.8.8 – VTS English Language Competency Test (Tentative Title)

**Author/Submitter** IG 3.8.8

Report of the Intersessional group on Task 3.8.8 – VTS English Communication Competency Testing

# background

The IALA VTS Committee is progressing towards the development of guidelines for assessing the English communication competency of VTS personnel. The Intersessional Group has reached provisional consensus to use the title “Competency in VTS Communications” for this Guideline, as a basis for further consideration by the Committee.

At VTS57 the Committee agreed that this task would be progressed intersessionally by task group 3.8.8 for consideration at VTS58.

In progressing the draft Guideline the intersessional group also identified minor amendments should be considered for *Recommendation R1012 on VTS Communications* and *Guideline 1132 on VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology*.

# Discussion

The Task Group held several meetings between VTS57 and VTS58 and has prepared the final draft of the Guideline on Competency in VTS Communications. The objective at VTS58 is to finalise the document and forward to IALA Council for approval.

1. **New Draft Guideline on Competency in VTS Communications**

The following key revisions have been incorporated into the draft Guideline:

* 1. **Change of Title**

The provisional title VTS English Communication Competency Testing has been revised to Competency in VTS Communications. This broader formulation reflects the intent of the Guideline to measure and assure competency in standardized VTS communications, as set out in IALA Guideline G1132, irrespective of whether operators are native or non-native English speakers. The emphasis is placed on ensuring that VTS operators’ communication practices demonstrate the required standard of competency to support safe and effective VTS operations, rather than assessing English language proficiency alone.

* 1. **Addition of Annex C – Example Test Questions**

To support the practical application of the Guideline and the development of assessment tools, Annex C: Example Test Questions has been introduced. This annex contains illustrative tasks designed to demonstrate how competencies may be evaluated in practice through scenario-based exercises. The examples are structured in accordance with the evaluation framework (see Section 5) and aligned with the Common Communication Tasks of VTS Operators (see Annex B). Depending on the competencies being assessed, question formats may include text, audio, images, or video (see Section 6.5).

* 1. **Editorial Amendments**

Minor editorial corrections and adjustments have been made throughout the document to improve clarity, accuracy, and consistency of presentation.

1. **Proposed revision of *Recommendation 1012 on VTS Communications***

It is proposed that the new Guideline on Competency in VTS Communications will be associated with *Recommendation R1012 on VTS Communications*. In addition, it is assumed that the new Guideline on VTS Digital Communications (Task 1.3.1) will also be associated with R1012.

Noting the above, the intersessional group has prepared a draft revision of Recommendation 1012 to reflect its associated with the three guidelines related to VTS Communications:

* G1132 - VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology
* GXXXX – VTS Digital Communications
* GXXXX - Competency in VTS Communications

A copy of the draft Recommendation is attached (including a version in track-mode) for the Committee to consider at VTS58.

1. **Proposed Editorial Amendments to** ***Guideline 1132 on VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology***

In developing the new guideline on Competency in VTS Communications it was recognized that minor editorial amendments to *G1132 on VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology* were required to improve readability and consistency between guidelines.

The Committee is requested to consider the proposed minor amendments to G1132 as described below:

* 1. **Replacement text for Section 5.3.2 – Closed loop Communications [Read-back]**

*Misunderstandings in communications may occur when parts of a message are misheard, misinterpreted, or assumed – particularly under pressure or when messages are complex. This may lead the bridge team to act on incomplete information or make incorrect assumptions.*

*To reduce the risk of miscommunication, a closed-loop or read-back technique may be used to confirm that VTS messages are correctly received and understood:*

* *VTS (the sender) delivers a clear piece of information or instruction.*
* *VTS requests the receiver (the person hearing the message) to repeat or read-back key information or instructions.*
* *VTS listens to the repeated information to ensure the message has been correctly understood and responds in a way that confirms they will take appropriate action.*
* *VTS confirms whether the message was correctly received:*
* *If correct, they respond with “YES.”*
* *If incorrect, they respond with “NO” and repeat the correct message.*

*If no reply is received, the VTS should repeat the message until the receiver responds clearly. If the message is still not understood, the message should be rephrased.*

In addition, the task group suggests that consideration should be given to whether an example in that section is beneficial / appropriate.

* 1. **Proposed amendments to Section 5.1 Compiling a Message, Footnote 1 for Plain Language**

The definition of “Plain Language” should consider more than just “writing”. Two options are proposed for the Committee’s consideration:

* *Plain language is writing* ***or speaking*** *that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience.*
* *Plain language is* ***~~writing~~ communication*** *that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience.*

# Action requested of the Committee

The Committee is requested to consider:

1. The draft *Guideline GNNNN on Competency in VTS Communications* which is expected to be finalised at VTS58.
2. The revised *Recommendation R1012 on VTS Communications*, and
3. Proposed editorial amendments to *Guideline 1132 on VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology.*

# attachment

* VTS58-10.2.1.1 Draft Guideline on *Competency in VTS Communications -* Task 3.8.8
* VTS58-10.2.1.2 R1012-Ed1.3-VTS-Communications-DRAFT 2025 track-mode

1. Input document number, to be assigned by the Committee Secretary [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Leave open if uncertain [↑](#footnote-ref-2)