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Agenda item 5.1

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**IALA Documentation**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to document and communicate a number of potential opportunities for improvement with IALA documentation. Specifically, these relate to:

* Categorisation of Recommendations, Guidelines and other documents;
* Currency / Maintenance of Manuals; and
* Committee Reports.

1. **Recommendations, Guidelines and other documents**

Two opportunities for improvement have been identified. These are:

1. Appropriate choice of category of guidance – recommendation or guideline: It has been observed that the distinction between Recommendations and Guidelines is becoming increasingly blurred. This may be because of a lack of understanding (by the committees) of the criteria for each and/or the ‘rules’ not being applied consistently by them.

This has resulted in a situation where some guidance documents currently cast as Recommendations would be more appropriate as a Guideline - and vice versa. As an example, in some cases, detailed technical information (which is clearly guidance on best practice) has been presented as a Recommendation.

1. Ad-hoc documents (e.g Brochures): There is growing variety of document types being produced and promulgated (e.g. information brochures, plans etc.), without any prior IALA agreement or rules on criteria. This issue needs to be managed. It is important to recognise that if information cannot neatly be cast as a recommendation or guideline, it can be made available to the membership by providing it via some on-line system e.g. IALA website, IALA Wiki or similar.

Recommendations

* That PAP reviews the existing definitions of IALA guidance documents and communicates these to the committees prior to the October 2014 committee meetings.
* That the IALA Secretariat provides each committee with a list of Recommendations and Guidelines they are responsible for and request them to review and identify the documents that need to be recast.
* That each committee be tasked with reviewing its Recommendations and Guideline in terms of their classification in accordance with the definitions (revised or as is) at their October 2014 session. A draft template is at Annex A. The outcomes of this process should be reported to the subsequent PAP meeting for consideration.

*Note: Consideration may need to be given as to whether some documents should be split. That is, an existing recommendation that contains extensive guidance (and which is more appropriate as an IALA Guideline) may benefit from being split into a Recommendation with an associated Guideline.*

* That PAP discuss and agree on the type of ad-hoc documents that can be developed by committees. This can then be forwarded to the IALA Council for consideration.
* Remind the technical committees of the importance of ensuring that existing IALA guidance remain current by undertaking a review of the Recommendations and Guidelines within each 4 year work program.

1. **Currency / Maintenance of Manuals**

Manuals are traditionally large documents in hard (and soft) copy. By their very nature, they can be out-of-synch with the Recommendations and Guidelines they refer to, soon after they are issued. This is because as per current practice, Recommendations and Guidelines can be updated during a 4 year work term, whereas Manuals are only updated at intervals of four years.

A proposed approach to dealing with this issue would be to publish both a hardcopy and online copy of each manual. The hardcopy manuals could be produced at the current 4 yearly interval. The online version of the manual would be updated during the four yearly work term by the committees as new/revised guidance is approved by Council.

It is also suggested that consideration be given to Manuals referring to Recommendations and Guidelines without the need to extensively quote/re-word the information provided in the relevant Recommendation/Guidelines. This would enable Manuals to provide succinct, high level and comprehensive guidance. Detailed information on specific subjects, suggestions for implementation would be contained in the relevant Guidelines.

At the end of the 4 year work term, the electronic version would provide the basis for producing the revised version of the next hardcopy manual.

Recommendations

* Maintain current hardcopy manuals.
* Establish an editable electronic version of each manual and utilise online tools to enable maintenance of the currency of the information.

1. **Committee Reports**

The current structure/content of the committee reports could be improved to address the following issues:

* Reports do not adequately document decisions and the rationale behind decisions. This can cause confusion at times and often involves Committees revisiting work items unnecessarily.
* The reports usually contain a large number of annexes. The continuing need for these should be reviewed to ensure that they are adding value for IALA and its members
* The reporting of the working group activities currently varies in depth of detail and relevance to the outputs of the committee. The report should primarily reflect the plenary outcomes more so than working groups’ deliberations providing that the rationale for decisions is adequately captured. The report needs to be concise to enhance readability, also noting that reports are submitted to Council.

Recommendations

* Ensure that the Committee reports document decisions and the rationale for those decisions.
* IALA Secretariat to develop a new Committee report template in time for the October 2014 meetings that facilitates the changes proposed.
* Committees to implement the structure and content changes in their Committee reports from the first round of meetings of the 2014-2018 work program.

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**Annex A – Template for reviewing the classification of existing Recommendations and Guidelines**

The current IALA definitions for Recommendations and Guidelines are:

* **Recommendations -** These documents represent the highest level of IALA documentation (equivalent to a ‘standard’ in an intergovernmental organization). Recommendations provide direction to IALA members on uniform procedures and processes that will facilitate IALA objectives. IALA recommendations contain information on how members should plan, operate and manage Aids to Navigation. Recommendations may reference relevant International Standards and IALA Guidelines.
* **Guidelines -** These documents provide detailed information on an aspect of a specific subject, indicating options, best practices and suggestions for implementation. IALA Guidelines relate to planning, operating and managing Aids to Navigation.

Each Committee is requested to review existing and emerging Recommendations and Guidelines they have ‘ownership of” carriage by completing the table below to confirm the guidance/information is suitable categorised as either a Recommendation or Guideline.

| **No.** | **Ed.** | **Name** | **No. of Pages** | **Recommendations** | | | **Guidelines** | | **Conclusion/s** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Direction on uniform procedures and processes** | **Contains information on how members should plan, operate and manage Aids to Navigation** | **References relevant International Standards and IALA Guidelines** | **Provides detailed information on an aspect of a specific subject, indicating options, best practices and suggestions for implementation** | **Relates to planning, operating and managing Aids to Navigation** |  |
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