

Agenda item 4.6
Author Secretariat

DOCUMENT REFORMATTING REPORT FOR PAP32

1 INTRODUCTION

At the time of writing, all but six published Guidelines have been reformatted. Thus, Guidelines constitute the bulk of experience gained so far with the reformatting process. Next to Guidelines has been Model Courses, including the creation of a Level 2 document for the specific use of the ENG Committee. Least experience has been gained with the reformatting of Recommendations, although they are next on the 'to do' list.

The initial templates have been revised, as additional author requirements have emerged. These have been posted to File Share, for use by the Committees. As time has gone by, the need for revisions has reduced but do still arise; the latest were on 13 September with the provision of Lists and Bullets within a Table and changes and improvements to the format for the ENG L2 Model Course.

Hopefully, without putting authors into a 'straight jacket', there is now a consistent format for Guidelines and Model Courses; the layout of Recommendations needs discussion.

'Guidance for authors' has been produced and is periodically reviewed. Feedback from users working with the templates would be much appreciated.

2 GUIDELINES

Currently, there are 36 Guidelines in which I have identified issues; many of a minor nature. The queries are occasionally resolved by the relevant Committee Secretary, from whom valuable feedback is received. However, in most cases the documents are being referred to the relevant Committee. The remainder are available for publication but I assume are validated by the Technical Manager / Committee Secretary.

2.1 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

2.1.1 DEFINITIONS

It is understood that all definitions used in IALA documents should be contained in the IALA Dictionary. To this end, a form of words is being employed for use in the Definitions section. (*The definition of terms used in this Guideline can be found in the International Dictionary of Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA Dictionary) at <http://www.iala-aism.org/wiki/dictionary>.*)

The question arises as to what to do with those documents that contain sections dealing with definitions, some of which are extensive? Should all definitions be contained solely in the Wiki or, for clarity's sake, be included in the text (as well as being in the Wiki)? The latter course brings with it the challenge of consistency of information in two places and how this is to be achieved. It is suggested that this is a policy issue and that PAP needs to take a view on it.

With a view to improving the Dictionary, it is suggested that a record be made of the occurrences of definitions in existing documents, using the appropriate form, for consideration by the Dictionary Working Group.

2.1.2 ACRONYMS

Many Guidelines did not have a list of acronyms and, without exception, existing lists have been incomplete. As it is assumed that Guidelines are not aimed solely at subject matter experts a comprehensive list of acronyms would seem to be a requirement. The list needs to cover acronyms used not only in the main text but also any Tables, Figures and list of references. As only two documents have

been found not to need a list of acronyms (if one excepts IALA), it is suggested that no Guideline should be allowed to leave a Committee without one and that its completeness needs validating.

The current inclusion of acronyms for scientific terms / units, such as GHz and mm, has been queried and a policy decision about their inclusion would be helpful.

Building on a record of existing acronyms from the WiKi, additions encountered during reformatting have been made and these updates, in the required WiKi format, are being provided periodically for consideration by the Dictionary Working Group.

2.1.3 CAPTIONS

Captions are required for all Tables, Figures and Equations. Numerous instances of omission have been identified but by far the most deal with equations. The inclusion of a caption within a Figure or a Table that has been included as a graphic, means that the caption will be omitted from the Table of Contents and this needs to be discouraged.

2.1.4 FIGURES

Many 'Figures' include text that may need to be editable. Due to their method of construction, some original 'Figures' have needed to be redrawn and there have been some instances where this has not been possible. In instances, where redrawing is not feasible, a low quality graphic has had to be recycled thus reducing the overall quality of the document. This leads to the suggestion that a decision needs to be made about the exclusive use of a commonly available software package that enables the editing of text and basic shapes. Also, there needs to be some stipulation made about the quality (dpi) of embedded graphics.

2.1.5 EQUATIONS

Apart from the need for captions, equations should be created using MS Equation Editor, part of MS Word, and all terms used should be defined. A format for how equations should be presented, including the format for defining terms, is shown in the Guideline template.

2.2 MINOR ISSUES

2.2.1 STYLES

When reformatting a document, it is difficult to avoid introducing unauthorised styles. This is cured by reviewing styles in use and deleting any unauthorised as one of the finalisation checks. Having one person vetting this process is not fool proof but it is inevitable that this challenge will increase in significance when the Committee are responsible for releasing documents to IALA for Council approval.

2.2.2 REFERENCES

For a none matter expert, it is difficult to judge where a reference is required but during reformatting I have suggested inclusion of some documents that have been quoted in the main text and not referenced; I suspect that there must be others that should have been included. It is presumed that, as in academic documents, references are important for the reputation of a 'learned body'.

2.2.3 LANGUAGE

The language used in IALA technical documents is UK English. Given the multinational range of potential authors, consistent use of UK English is another 'challenge'. This can be overcome by checking a document's language before it is finalised.

2.2.4 COLOURS

Some guidance to authors is given about the use of colours in text, tables and figures but it is believed that more is required.

3 MODEL COURSES

From the relatively limited experience gained with Model Course the two templates now available are working well.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is my understanding that 'Technical Annexes' are to be divorced from Recommendations. This assumption is bolstered by the fact that the original Recommendation template has no 'Guideline like' styles.

In the Recommendations that I have so far reformatted only one (R-135) required separation from its Technical Annex and the task seemed straightforward; I felt able to produce two documents for the Committee's consideration. However, reformatting Guideline 1023 made me look at its governing Recommendation (E-112). Separating this document looks like a more significant challenge as there is a serious amount of technical content in what I have been assured needs to be retained as 'Recommendation'. There is also an added complication, in that there is an existing Guideline and, as it is assumed that to have two Guidelines on the same topic would prove confusing, this needs to absorb the technical information to be extracted from the Recommendation. In such circumstances and as a layman, I am happy to produce a draft but subject matter expert guidance will be required.

Depending on IALA's requirement, it may be necessary to review the styles available in the Recommendation template.

5 CONCLUSION

Guidance would be helpful regarding:

- definitions;
- acronyms;
- the need for Committees to check the following before forwarding their documents to Council:
 - use of captions;
 - language;
 - need for references;
- quality and, where relevant, the 'editability' of Figures;
- use of colour in author created graphics and Tables.

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