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| From: VTS Committee | VTS 32/output/8 |
| To: PAP Committee | 11 March 2011 |

Liaison Note

VTS Beyond Territorial Seas

# Introduction

The VTS Committee has considered the further Task 2 “*Develop criteria, guidance or general provisions, for submission to IMO, on establishing and operating a VTS beyond territorial seas, to include a clarification of the difference between a VTS Area established / extending beyond territorial seas and operated as a VTS in its own right and a ship reporting system managed / monitored by a VTS*” as directed by Council (Draft Report session 50 paragraph 8.1.1) and the outcome of this review is set out below.

# Review Outcome

Guideline 1071 on the “*Establishment of a Vessel Traffic Service beyond Territorial Seas (Edition 1)*“ was approved in December 2009. This guideline identified three options for the establishment of VTS beyond territorial seas and set out examples of how this might be achieved concluding that “*Authorities identifying the need to establish or extend a VTS beyond territorial seas, either individually or on a multi-national basis, should note that this can only be achieved under current regulation through the establishment of voluntary use of VTS or a VTS that is part of, and in support of, a Ship Reporting System*”.

Since Council approved the textual amendments to this task, a directly related proposal has been raised at IMO MSC for a mandatory VTS beyond territorial seas. MSC’s deliberations on this issue[[1]](#footnote-1) conclude, inter alia, that: “*this was a legal issue …… not under the purview of the NAV Sub-Committee or the Committee”;* and that *”there were existing guidelines regarding adoption of a mandatory ship reporting system and establishment of Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and States were encouraged to follow those guidelines*”. Noting this outcome, it is considered, therefore, that this may be an inappropriate moment to be proposing to IMO a new concept for the establishment of a VTS beyond territorial waters in its own right, nor to further develop the existing guideline to reflect a legal process that does not have universal support, and that this task should be marked as complete on the basis of the guidance already issued under Guideline 1071, pending any further statement that may be made by IMO on this subject.

# Action requested

PAP is requested to consider this recommendation seeking further guidance from LAP and/or Council as deemed appropriate.

1. MSC 88-26 articles 11.28 – 11.39 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)