VIRTUAL COMMITTEE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This document specifies and describes the working arrangements for virtual committee meetings. These working arrangements are uniform across all committees and are extra-ordinary in nature due to exceptional circumstances that prohibit face-to-face meetings in the usual manner. Face-to-face meetings will remain the primary means to progress IALA work.

The general workflow of virtual committees is depicted below, with further explanation in the following sections of this document:
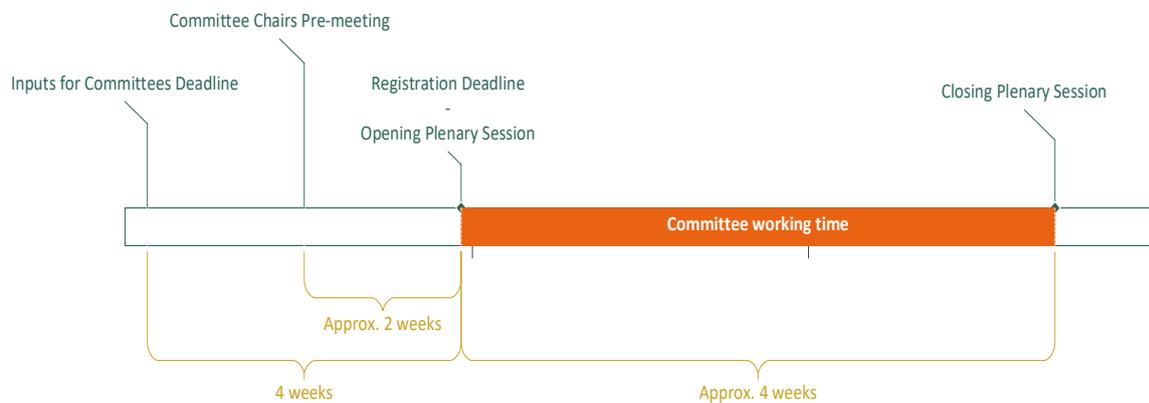

Figure 1 – Virtual Committee Workflow

DURATION

Conducting meetings virtually gives IALA an opportunity to hold committees over a longer period of time. This is particularly beneficial for:

- Accommodating participants across a wide variety of time zones;
- Allowing participants to fit committee work around their other commitments; and
- Enabling sustained work on tasks over a longer and less intensive period of time.

Therefore, virtual committees will be held over a period of weeks. It is important to note that although the duration is over several weeks, the expectation is that groups will meet as appropriate to the task objective that needs to be achieved over the period and the availability of participants. For example, in the past, similar groups have met for 1 – 2 hour virtual meetings per week. This will be determined by each task group.

REGISTRATION

The IALA Secretariat will issue an invitation to all members to register for a committee. This invitation will contain:

- key dates;
- a web link to opening plenary;
- deadlines and process for input papers; and
- these working arrangements.

Members that register before the opening plenary commences will constitute the committee and will be permitted to participate in the virtual meetings. Any members that request to register after the opening plenary has commenced will only be allowed to do so at the discretion of the chair of the committee.

If a member has more than one representative to a committee, then a main point of contact should be identified and if required, will also vote on behalf of the member within a committee in order to reach a decision.

STRUCTURE

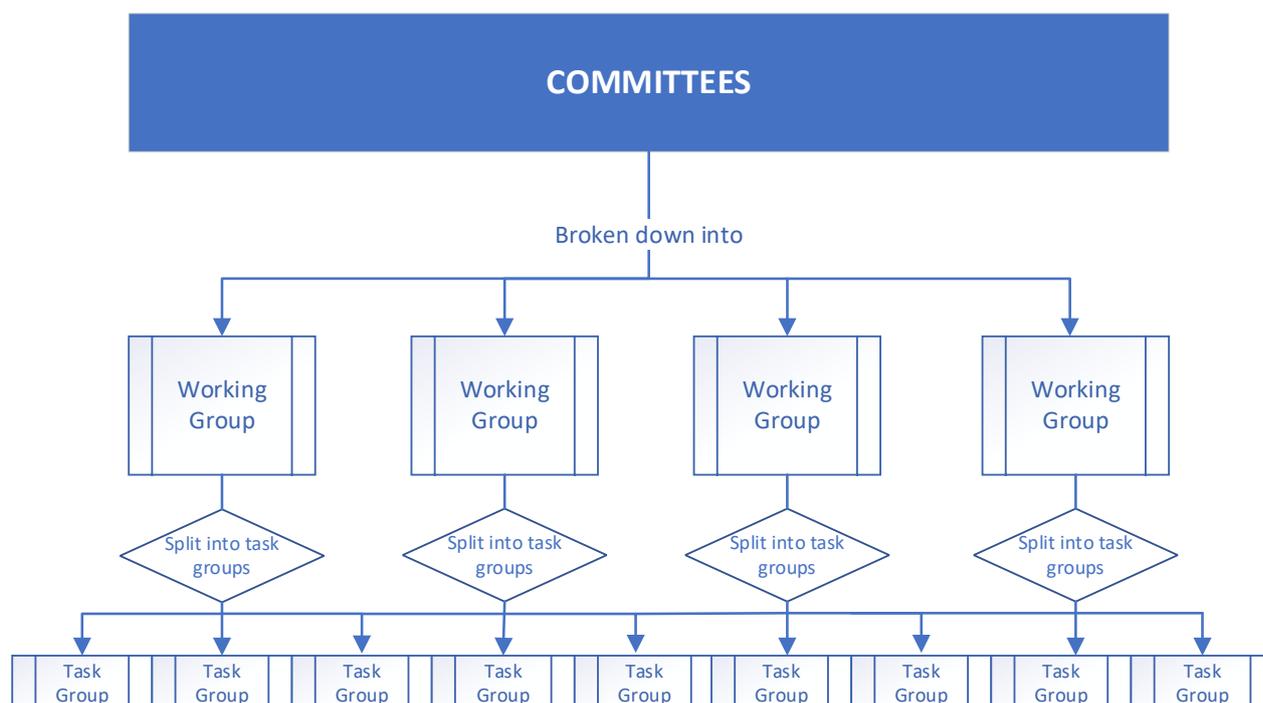The committees will maintain their current organizational structure, for example:

Figure 2 - Committee Organizational Structure[1]

INPUT

Input papers to each committee should be submitted to the IALA Secretariat and processed in the usual manner. The deadline for the submission of input papers will be four weeks (one month) before the agreed start date of the committee.

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[1] Participants determine which Working Groups and Task Groups they wish to join.

Chairs Pre-meeting

This meeting will be held prior to the commencement of the virtual committee. The meeting is only open to the committee management team consisting of the committee chair/vice-chair, working group (WG) chair/vice-chair, secretariat and invited committee participants that the chair may consider to be beneficial to the discussions.

This group will agree which task items are to be progressed during the committee, if not all. The agenda for this meeting should be agreed with the chair and, as far as possible, follow the 'normal' agenda but could also include:

1. virtual committee programme, review of input papers and key dates;

2. confirmation of priority areas of work to address;

3. the committee action plan; and

4. terms of reference, if necessary, including expected deliverables from a task group.

Terms of reference for task groups shall be agreed by the committee management team if they deem it necessary. The terms of reference shall include a clearly defined scope, desired outcome(s), method(s) of operation and other caveats for the work.

Any inter-committee tasks should be identified by the secretariat and the relevant committee chairs engaged at an early stage to agree the tasks terms of reference, if necessary, and how best to progress the work. Where more than one committee has an interest in a work item, one committee will be nominated as the parent committee.

Following this meeting, a committee action plan detailing each working group's tasks and any task group terms of reference will be circulated to registered committee participants prior to the committee commencing. Details of an online opening plenary will also be distributed to registered participants.

Opening Plenary

On the first day of the committee a short online plenary will be convened. This will explain the committee action plan and provide an opportunity for participants to raise any questions they may have.

Presentations

Presentations may be facilitated at the chairs discretion, throughout the committee session. Those wishing to present should contact the committee secretary. Presentations may be grouped together in one or more online sessions and will be advertised to committee participants to watch online and recorded and made available as part of the committee input.

Working Groups

Following the committee action plan the relevant working group chairs will co-ordinate the initiation of the task groups including the appointment of a participant as a task group leader, who will be responsible for the operation of the group.

Task Groups

A task group (TG) will be open to registered participants from the relevant committees. In order to join a task group, committee participants must declare an expression of interest by a specified date to the working group chair, as specified in the committee action plan. Other participants may join after this date at the discretion of the task group leader.

The nomenclature of a task group shall reflect the title of the task. Each meeting of a task group will be numbered. For example:

- TG on the Revision of R0119 and associated Guideline – Meeting 1
- TG on the Revision of R0119 and associated Guideline – Meeting 2

If the leader of the task group considers that the participation of IALA members from other committees may be beneficial, invitations may be extended at the discretion of the committee chair.

Where the participation of individuals from academic, scientific, research or other relevant organizations who are not members of IALA may be beneficial, an invitation may be extended at the discretion of the Secretary-General.

The chair of the task group will be responsible for all aspects of its operation and administration. A task group will be self-functioning and the secretariat will not normally provide administrative support other than coordinating access to online meeting tools.

A task group cannot approve documents or take final decisions on behalf of the parent committee or other relevant committees.

Output of Task Groups

Each task group leader will submit a summary of their groups work to the working group chair for inclusion in the committee report. Depending on the progress of each group their output will be either forwarded to the following committee as a working paper or submitted for committee approval.

Committee Approval - Silent Approval

Committee participants will be notified when a document is reaching maturity before commencing the process of silent approval, in order that they have an opportunity to review it and provide any informal comments or questions to the task group. Any document(s) that the task groups believe are mature enough for committee approval will be submitted to the working group chair who will review them before passing them to the wider committee management team.

The committee management team will determine whether to send the document(s) to committee participants for silent approval for five calendar days or to send the document back to the working group chair. If submitted for silent approval and no substantial comments are received then the document(s) will be considered as approved.

Comment(s) received will be handled at the discretion of the committee management team. Depending on the nature of the comment(s) received, the document(s) may be:

- offered for a further period of silent approval; or
- returned to the relevant working group for further consideration.

Task groups may submit documents to the approval process at any time during the committee working period. Any documents for approval must complete this process by the day before the closing plenary.

Report

Task group chairs should provide a summary of their group's activities to the working group chair who will collate these into a report of the working group. A committee report will then be produced by the secretariat, with these working group inputs, in conjunction with the committee management team in the usual manner.

Closing Plenary

All committee participants will receive the details of a closing online plenary at the end of the duration of the committee. The main purpose of this plenary will be to:

- summarise the outcomes of the committee;
- review the report; and
- provide participants with a chance to raise any questions.