Input paper: [[1]](#footnote-1) VTS48-8.3.2

Input paper for the following Committee(s): check as appropriate Purpose of paper:

**□** ARM **□** ENG **□** PAP **X** Input

**□** ENAV **x** VTS **□** Information

Agenda item [[2]](#footnote-2) 8.3

Task Number 2 Task 1.3.1

Author(s) / Submitter(s) Australian Maritime Safety Authority and International Harbour Masters Association

Develop a Guideline on VTS Voice Communications, Phrases / Phraseology

# Summary

This paper provides input for the VTS Committee’s consideration in developing the new Guideline on VTS Voice Communications, Phrases / Phraseology (Task 1.3.1).

## Purpose of the document

The purpose of the input paper is to provide:

1. Feedback on the current direction of *VTS47-13.3.11 WP draft Guideline on VTS Voice Communications Phraseology task 1.3.1.*
2. A revised draft document for consideration.

## Related documents

Related documents include:

* *VTS48-8.3.2.1 Attachment 1 - VTS Communication Phrases – Australia*
* *VTS48-8.3.2.2 Attachment 2 - Revised scope for the Task Register*
* *VTS47-13.3.11 WP draft Guideline on VTS Voice Communications Phraseology task 1.3.1)*

# Background

As part of the Committee’s 2018-2022 Work Programme the development of a Guideline on VTS Communication Phrases / Phraseology (Task 3.3.1) commenced in October 2018. In addition, a workshop on the Harmonization of VTS Voice Communication was held in Busan, Korea, 19-22 February 2019.

# Discussion

The development and adoption of standardised phraseology is critical to ensure VTS provides quick and effective communication. This will also overcome differences in language and reduce the opportunity for misunderstanding. Ambiguous or non-standard phraseology is a frequent causal or contributory factor in accidents and incidents.

The authors have reviewed the working paper prepared by Working Group 1 at VTS47 (*VTS47-13.3.11 WP draft Guideline on VTS Voice Communications Phraseology task 1.3.1*) and would like to provide the following comments for the Committee’s consideration in finalising the new guideline:

1. **Scope (as per the Task Register)** - The scope for this task as currently described in the Task Register appears immature and is confusing to the reader. For example, it includes comments and refers a new task regarding the *‘training for standard communication and nautical english’*. A revised draft is attached for consideration (*VTS48-8.3.2.2 Attachment 2 - Revised scope for the Task Register*) as a means to ensure the document being developed remains focussed.
2. **Digital Communications** - The *Expert Meeting on the Use of Digital Communication Technology in Vessel Traffic Services* (*VTS47-3.1.3.1 Report of Expert Meeting*) highlighted that the development of IALA standards for VTS voice communications, including structure and phraseology, may provide a basis for the development for implementing standardised VTS digital communications.

There is an opportunity in preparing the new guideline to capture VTS phrases commonly used worldwide which can be used for any communications, whether it be voice or digital, in a single document.

1. **Standalone document** - The document should provide guidance on VTS phraseology in a comprehensive standalone document and a common framework for the delivery of standard phraseology. This is particularly important to promote standardised VTS communication with participating ships and allied services.

The current working paper (*VTS47-13.3.11*) simply provides a series of tables (message element and message intent) without providing explanatory lead-in text to assist the reader with guidance on when/how to apply phrases in various circumstances.

It is the view of the authors that the new guideline should contain high level guidance on communication principles. It is suggested that such a structure would:

* Facilitate the provision of clear, concise, and unambiguous communications that are timely and effective.
* Minimise misunderstanding of the intent of messages and reducing the time required for effective communication.
* Mitigate complacency with more experienced operators, as well as a valuable coaching tool for new VTS personnel
* Assist VTS Training organisations to incorporate the use of standard VTS phraseology into their course curriculums.

1. **Duplication with** ***Guideline 1132 on VTS VHF Voice Communications*** *–* Guideline 1132 was released in December 2017. In preparing the guideline on Phraseology it was considered that duplication of some text from Guideline 1132 was necessary for completeness of the new document.

It is the view of the authors, however, that it would be much more appropriate to combine both into a single document. The text from Guideline 1132 could be carried forward into the new guideline and added into the introductory paragraphs to promote consistency amongst VTS operators with their radio voice procedures. Guideline 1132 would then become “*VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology*”.

1. **General comments** - Specific comments on the working paper output from VTS47 include:

* The table under *‘Section 1.1.1 General’* contains numerous example phrases without a structure to assist the reader. It is suggested that these would be better grouped under headings relating to activities which VTSs routinely undertake in their day-to-day operations (eg pilotage, anchoring, berthing operations, traffic management).
* The input provided by China MSA at VTS47 (*VTS47-3.1.9 Proposal for the Amendment to the draft Guideline on VTS Voice Communications Phraseology relating to emergency scenarios)* does not appear to have been considered. This was viewed as valuable input in terms of how VTSs respond to emergency situations.

The draft guidance associated with this input paper (*VTS48-8.3.2.1 Attachment 1 - VTS Communication Phrases – Australia*) has been prepared with the above considerations in mind and will hopefully provide useful input in preparing the new guideline.

# Action requested of the Committee

The Committee is requested to:

1. Draw the attention of Committee members to this input paper and associated attachments,
2. Forward Attachment 1 (VTS48-8.3.2.1) to Working Group 1 for consideration in preparing the new guideline,
3. Consider the merits of amalgamating this new guideline with Guideline 1132 to form a single document, and
4. Consider reviewing/updating the Task Register to ensure the task is appropriately scoped and the Committee has a common understanding of the task. To assist in this, a draft has been prepared   
   (VTS48-8.3.2.2).

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