

IALA DOCUMENTATION PROCEDURES AND QUALITY CONTROL

1 INITIATION

All documents produced by a Committee and aimed at distribution outside IALA should be traceable back to an IALA Council approved Work Item. IALA Manuals and their updating are treated as individual cases but for Recommendations, Guidelines and Liaison Notes, standard templates are available on the IALA FTP server.

On completion of each item of work, a Committee should produce one or more IALA documents or liaison notes / input papers to an international regulatory body as indicated in its Work Programme, for consideration by the IALA Council.

2 INPUT DOCUMENTS

Documents for consideration by a Committee should be sent to the Secretariat as soon as practicable before the meeting at which they are to be considered and, in any case, not normally later than one month beforehand. Documents should include a header with the number of the agenda item that they address and the name of the person / organization submitting the document and indicate to which agenda item / Task number they are relevant. Documents received by the Secretariat are published on the IALA FTP server, in Word format where possible, and the Committee Web site, in .pdf format. Posting will start no less than six weeks prior to the meeting. Papers received later than one month before the meeting cannot be expected to be considered by the Committee.

Input paper deadlines:

- 1 month beforehand – closing date for papers;
- 2 weeks beforehand – final posting to website.

Documents for consideration at a meeting are numbered by the Secretariat in a way that indicates the meeting number, the agenda item to which they refer and the sequential number of the document relating to that agenda item. For example, a document numbered 'VTS 31/5/3' indicates that it is the third document received that addresses agenda item 5 of the 31st meeting of the VTS Committee.

Documents provided for information purposes will be number 'VTS32/INF/xx'.

3 OUTPUT DOCUMENTS

The output from a Committee meeting takes two forms:

- 1 Output papers; documents being distributed outside the Committee.
- 2 Working documents; documents remaining within the Committee.

Draft output papers may be generated by a single working group of a Committee or from a number of working groups, with one working group taking the lead. The Chair of the working group / lead working group is responsible for the first level of checking of the contents of the paper. If, as occasionally happens, papers result from the combined efforts of two or more Committees the Chairs of the contributing Committees are responsible for the contents of their Committee's input. Within the lead Committee, however, the document can be expected to be managed by a working group / lead working group. This process provides for an initial level of peer review.

Output papers, are reviewed and together with the action to be taken with them approved during a plenary session at the end of the meeting. Approving release outside the Committee indicates that the members of the Committee are content with the documents and it also provides a second level of peer review.

Documents declared as working documents are automatically referred to the next meeting of the Committee.

4 FINAL APPROVAL

All documentation distributed outside IALA needs to be approved by the IALA Council, unless the IALA Council have ruled otherwise. As the IALA Council meets at six monthly intervals, the time taken in the seeking of its approval needs to be taken into account when planning the release of a document, especially towards the end of a Work Programme or when, say, an IMO meeting deadline needs to be met. However, where timescales are short, it is possible to 'fast track' the IALA Council's approval by means of an e-mail circulation.

It should be borne in mind that the IALA Council, following its review of a document submitted to it, may give qualified approval and require specific amendments to be made. If these can be made by the Secretariat this will not hold up publication. However, if the Secretariat is unable to implement the required changes the document will be returned to the originating Committee. This will inevitably delay publication, typically by 6 months.

In extremis, the IALA Council may not approve a document submitted to it but return it to the originating Committee so that more generic comments can be considered before a possible resubmission.

5 DOCUMENT PROCESSING & QUALITY ASSURANCE

Documents created through IALA Committees will follow a quality assurance process to ensure that both content and presentation reflect the highest possible standards. As documents may be created by one or more IALA Committees, a co-ordinated approach to quality assurance is necessary.

- In the majority of cases, a document is based on a standard IALA template;
- Chair / Vice-Chair of the Committee(s) are actively involved throughout the development process;
- The Technical Co-ordination Manager (Secretary to each Committee) is involved throughout the development process, for format and editorial review;
- Working Group / Lead Working Group members reach agreement on the content of the document;
- Working Group / Lead Working Group Chair reviews and approves the document before submission to the Committee plenary review;
- The Committee reviews the document, in plenary, with changes being agreed;
- If approved, the Committee then agrees to either forward the document to:
 - the IALA Council for approval and, where appropriate, proposes subsequent action to be taken with it; or
 - another Committee.

Specific minority objections will be noted, for reporting to the IALA Council when the document is submitted to it.

- Once approved by a Committee, documents are forwarded to the IALA Council via the Secretariat for final formatting and editing;
- The document is then forwarded to the IALA Council for review, with a view to approval of the document and its proposed distribution;

- When approved by the IALA Council, documents are returned to the Secretariat for publication and posting on an IALA Website or other disposition, as directed by the IALA Council;
- The IALA Membership is then notified of the approved document.