



IHO File No. S1/1001/WP

CIRCULAR LETTER 36/2018
18 June 2018

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IHO WORK PROGRAMME AND
REQUEST FOR MEMBER STATES TO CONSIDER HOSTING MEETINGS**

References:

- A. Decision 23 of the 1st Session of the IHO Assembly (*Approval of IHO Work Programme 2018-2020*)
- B. General Regulations of the IHO (*Article 6.b*)

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The IHO Work Programme 2018-2020 (see Reference A) relies on the contribution from Member States to be accomplished. One significant contribution is hosting the meetings of the IHO bodies, which requires commitment and careful preparation. Planning attendance at the meetings is also challenging and it is often difficult to identify, plan and organize the events to attend, particularly when some meetings are called at relatively short notice or clash with meetings in other parts of the world.

Hosting Meetings

2. Some Member States are unable to attend IHO meetings if they regularly involve long distance travel and consequently high expense. For this reason, I would like to encourage more Member States to consider hosting meetings. The financial impact of hosting a meeting can usually be minimized and is typically less than the cost of travel to a distant venue.

3. As a general rule, a venue appropriate to the number of anticipated participants is required. It should be conveniently located near moderately priced accommodation so as to minimize commuting between hotels and the meeting venue. Video projectors and work desks for delegates are normally required at all meetings. Depending on the nature of the meeting there is sometimes a requirement for small rooms to enable sub-groups to carry out tasks. For larger meetings, access to microphones is of great assistance in controlling the meeting and enabling a better understanding of the speakers, especially for those not sharing the same first language as the speaker. It should be stressed that, as with other inter-governmental working meetings, there is no requirement or expectation to provide free meals, accommodation or entertainment, it is entirely for the hosts to decide.

4. Hosting a meeting also provides an opportunity to expose the work of the IHO to local staff and to the higher levels of government and the wider public in that country as well as neighbouring coastal States. Inviting relevant authorities for the openings and issuing media releases could help maximize the benefits in hosting meetings.

Long cast calendar

5. In order to facilitate the planning for attending meetings and to avoid conflicting events, I would like to invite all bodies of the IHO to endeavour to schedule their meetings for the period 2019-2020 as early as possible, and where possible beyond 2020. The dates and venues of the IHO events already known are posted in the IHO calendar available on the IHO website. The dates for the next Assembly (A-2 will be held from 20 to 24 April 2020) and Council (C-2 will be held from 9 to 11 October 2018 and C-3 will be held mid-October 2019) meetings also need be taken into account for when planning other IHO meetings.

Visa

6. In accordance with Reference B the IHO meetings are open to all Member States. The IHO Secretariat has been informed that on some occasions Member States' delegates and stakeholders have encountered difficulties in attending IHO meetings due to letters of invitation or other administrative arrangements needed for the granting of entry visas which have not been provided by the host country in time. In this respect, host countries are requested to provide delegates with essential documents as early as possible and, where necessary, liaising with the appropriate national authorities responsible for granting entry to the host country.

7. Similar difficulties have resulted in a number of potential participants missing seminars and workshops organized as part of the IHO Capacity Building Work Program (CBWP). Not only does this have a negative effect on the efforts of the IHO to promote participation in meetings, seminars and workshops but it also risks CB funding which must be committed in advance to cover the workshops and the participation of delegates.

Attendance to meetings

8. The attendance of participants is also a key component for the success of an IHO meeting. In larger meetings and in order to minimize the workload and associated side costs, Member States should therefore consider the possibility of limiting the number of their delegations (in general up to two participants in addition to working groups' office bearers, if any), so meeting rooms and seating arrangements can be optimized. If more participants are planned, it is important to liaise with the host country to ensure it is feasible. Participants that are unable to confirm attendance before the deadline are invited to inform the host on their plans to attend and the number of potential participants at the deadline.

9. It is important to highlight the responsibility of participants to commence with their visa application process as early as possible, noting that a Schengen visa (which is required for most of the European Union countries) takes a minimum of six weeks from application and some others even longer. The host country cannot be blamed for the non-issue of visas in the case of late applications.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mathias Jonas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Mathias JONAS
Secretary-General