

**2<sup>nd</sup> MEETING  
OF THE IHO COUNCIL**

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**REPORT OF THE IHO  
STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW WORKING GROUP**

**REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW WORKING GROUP  
(SPRWG)  
TO THE SECOND MEETING OF THE IHO COUNCIL**

*Submitted by:* SPRWG Chair

*Executive Summary:* This document reports on the progress of the Strategic Plan Review Working Group (SPRWG) which was set up by the Council at its first meeting in October 2017, in accordance with the decision A1/03 of the Assembly of the IHO, in April 2017. The TOR and ROP of the SPRWG were approved by IHO circular letter. The working group was tasked to deliver a report on the scoping phase of its work to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the IHO Council.

*References:*

- A. First Session of the IHO Assembly –List of Decisions
- B. List of Decisions and Actions from C-1
- C. IHO CL 66/2017 - *Call for approval of the terms of reference and rules of procedure of the strategic plan review working group and invitation to participate in the work of this working group*
- D. IHO CL 20/2018 – *Adoption of the ToRs and RoPs of the SPRWG and Membership*
- E. Strategic Plan Review Working Group (SPRWG) Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

**Introduction**

1. Decision A1/03 from the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the IHO Assembly stated:
 

*The Assembly tasked the Council to conduct a comprehensive review of the Strategic Plan and to provide a draft revised Plan, as appropriate, in time for the consideration of the 2nd ordinary session of the Assembly (A-2). The Council is empowered to establish a working group for this discrete purpose.*
2. Subsequently, at the first meeting of the IHO Council, the Council decided to establish a Strategic Plan Review Working Group (SPRWG), and to endorse its terms of reference and rules of procedure (TOR and ROP), and the selection of the WG officers (see Reference C). These TOR and ROP were approved by IHO Member States (MS) via IHO Circular Letter (see Reference D).
3. The TOR describe the work in two phases: scoping and drafting. The scoping phase was to be completed approximately 6 months from the approval of the establishment of the working group and the working group was to submit a proposal at C-2 for the draft framework of the revised strategic plan based on analysis and the consultations and contributions of the WG members.

**Achievements/outputs/conclusions**

4. In response to the call for membership, 23 IHO MS indicated their desire to participate in this working group, of which 17 are Council's members.
5. Under the TOR the SPRWG is to work to the greatest extent possible by correspondence. Upon IHO MS approval for the establishment of the working group, a collaborative space was created for the sharing of information as well as the posting and synthesis of Members' contributions. The TOR, ROP and membership have been posted on the IHO webpage of the Council (Home ▶

IHO Council & Working Groups (c/SPRWG), as have been circular e-mails, including some synthesis from the chair.

6. The c/SPRWG uses e-mail as the primary communication tool. Over 20 written contributions from 10 members have been received and posted to the SPRWG collaborative space.
7. In addition, taking advantage of the number of SPRWG Members who are IRCC members, the c/SPRWG called an ad hoc meeting of the SPRWG to be held during the 10th Meeting of the IRCC in Goa, India, thanks to the arrangements kindly provided by the c/IRCC and the hosts of the IRCC meeting. Fifteen (15) WG members were able to attend this face-to-face meeting, as was the Chair of the IHO Council (c/IHOC). This participation contributed greatly to refine the understanding of the issues surrounding the eventual development of an revised strategic plan.

### **Structure of the current strategic plan**

8. As a reminder, the structure of the current Strategic Plan is as follows:
  - Vision and Mission, as stated in the preamble of the Convention on the IHO, and object of the IHO, as described in its article II (7 objectives);
  - 15 Strategic Assumptions (grouped under 5 headings), identified as S/W/O/T with regard of the achievements of the objectives of the IHO;
  - 19 Strategic directions (under 4 headings), most (14) referring to one IHO objective, the rest to 2. Reciprocally, all objectives are covered by at least 2 strategic directions;
  - Implementation (“Ways and means”) based on:
    - o Monitoring by the Council
    - o Design of the 3-years Work Programme to implement the Strategic directions while mitigating the risks identified related to these SD. A risk management framework is included in the SP;
    - o The WP is divided in three programmes, reviewed annually by the Council: Corporate Affairs, Hydrographic Services and Standards, Inter Regional Coordination and Support. Each item of the programmes identifies, among other things:
      - the strategic direction to which it refers,
      - the key deliverables and associated milestones, as appropriate ,
      - the estimated resources when significant,
      - the risk to delivery when significant;
  - Progress monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Directions and of the execution of the Work programme is monitored with Performance Indicators:
    - o A small number (currently 9) of Strategic Performance Indicators (I), each associated with one of the 7 IHO objectives (2 objectives have 2 SPI), and established by the Assembly in a top-down process; each of these SPI is associated with several of the 19 strategic directions;
    - o A larger number of Working level Indicators, established by HSSC, IRCC and their subsidiary organs in a bottom-up process.

Therefore, the logical articulation is: Objectives => Strategic PIs => Strategic Directions => responsible organs => working level PIs.

## Observations

9. The observations regarding the current SP and desired improvements provided by the Members were numerous and varied; however, there were several common themes which are summarized below (in no particular order). Obviously, there is a great deal of interconnection between these items.
  - a) Several members' comments questioned the level of complexity in the current plan with regard to its efficiency, notably when it entails MS and IHO bodies to conduct assessments, the concrete effect of the results of which on the improvement of IHO business is not evident. The dual reference to the objectives of the IHO and associated SPI and to a large number of strategic directions makes difficult to comprehend priorities, even if those capture the main challenges of the IHO. Without reference to targets or goals, the operational nature of the strategic directions is in question.
  - b) There was an agreement for:
    - i. a plan that would be more straightforward and focused with a clarity and simplicity in targets, to make it simpler for the IHO MS and easier to understand for the non-IHO audience. It should be an effective communication tool.
    - ii. a need to review the means to evaluate (or monitor) the implementation of the SP. It was noted that overlaps between strategic directions and high-level objectives of the Convention should be avoided.

### *Implementation of the Strategic Plan*

- c) Related to the above, the strategic plan and the measure(s) of its execution should be firmly established and clearly evident in a "plan-do-check-act" (PDCA) loop within the IHO. At the present time, although a performance monitoring system including performance indicators was decided in 2009 by the 4<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference, this loop is not fully active and it is not apparent as to how the indicators influence actions, nor is it clear which body (e.g. the Council) is responsible to monitor the SPIs. Furthermore, contrary to the provision of the current Strategic Plan, the current Working Performance Indicators does not any more refer to the strategic directions, which prevents assessment of the implementation of the latter.
- d) Elements of the strategic plan should be evident in almost all activities of the IHO (a "golden thread"). The strategic plan should be used to guide the activities within the IHO (e.g. the Secretariat, the IRCC, and, HSSC). It tells these bodies "what" their activities should be aiming to accomplish at the strategic level, but at the operational level, the proposal of "how" of doing this, it is the responsibility of those bodies to incorporate this direction in their work programmes. Although the current Strategic Plan describes such a mechanism (under "Ways & Means" item), the current work programmes of the IHO do not refer explicitly to the strategic directions. From the strategic plan an order of priority should be clear, if not specifically listed in the plan. Related to the idea of the strategic plan remaining at that level, and considering the rapid change in technologies, it was suggested that the plan should not make reference to specific products or product lines, which are more to be considered in the implementation process.

### *Strategic Assumptions*

- e) Some ambiguities in the role of Strategic assumptions made feel preferable to focus on the strategic context, stressing on what has a major and specific impact on IHO and its members, and from which strategic directions could or should stem. This led to some proposal of restructuring the Strategic context. A separate document on the "Strategic Context" has been circulated to the SPRWG and is still under review; it is provided in Annexe A as information and should not be considered as endorsed by the working group.

## Way forward

10. It was clear from the feedback received, both written and at the ad hoc meeting, that most of the WG favoured 'new' strategic plan. Based on this general consensus and it was agreed that the report to C-2 would include a draft strategic plan of potential structure and content. The "strawman" has been circulated to the SPRWG for review as a document separate from this report. It is therefore proposed to continue the working group in order to launch the second phase described in the TOR. In that perspective, the chair proposes that the Secretary General of the IHO be a member of the working group.
11. The objectives of the drafting phase would be in accordance with the SPRWG TOR:
  - Define the measure(s) of success for 2026 and propose priorities.
  - Consider interrelation to budget, work plans, and performance indicators.
  - Provide a draft revised plan in accordance with the management plan and timetable.
12. Definition or measure of success proposed by the SPRWG's members can be filed in two main categories, respectively related to what IHO would have been delivered and to how the Organization would have done it. They may be summarized in two main goals:
  - G1: IHO Member States provides a good coverage of relevant services and products;
  - G2: All IHO Member States take a significant part to it and to the supporting works in the IHO bodies.

## Draft framework of a revised strategic plan

13. The structure of the revised strategic plan could be derived from the two broad categories identified in §17 under which strategic directions would define associated deliverables aiming at responding to the main challenges identified in the strategic context. Several proposals have already been made by SPRWG's members, covering a broad range of activities, which need further discussion within the WG. The level of refinement of those strategic directions should also be discussed by the SPRWG, in order to be consistent with the process of definition of the work programme of the IHO, as stated in the articles V and VI of the Convention.

## Management plan

14. The timeline for the preparation of A-2 would be:
  - C-3: July 2018 - Deadline for documents, 3 months before C-3 assuming an October meeting
  - A-2: December 2019 –Deadline for documents, 4 months prior to the Assembly
15. Work would be pursued by correspondence in order to:
  - Further define the steps / key priorities for the working group i.e. a work programme.
  - Continue to refine the strategic context.
  - Define the strategic directions.
  - Decide on the format of the strategic plan.
16. A meeting of the SPRWG would be convened in Genoa between the 3rd and 5th of June 2019 in conjunction with IRCC11.
17. Report to C-3 will include a proposed revised strategic plan. It will be included in the Council's report to the Assembly, eventually after being amended as requested by the Council.

**Difficulties and challenges yet to be addressed**

18. The manner in which the IHO Strategic Plan is integrated into an overall IHO communication strategy requires further consideration. This is outside the SP but, depending on what type of messages the IHO wishes to communicate, and how it does it, it may change some of the high-level strategic directions and deliverables.

**Actions required of the Council**

19. The Council is invited to:

- a) **note** the report of the SPRWG;
- b) **decide** to continue the working group
- c) **endorse** the management plan for the drafting phase
- d) **encourage** IHO member States to participate to the SPRWG
- e) **take** any other action considered appropriate