

Maritime Safety Information Broadcasts via Satellite

Submitted by IMSO

**SUMMARY**

Executive Summary: The new IMO NCSR Sub-committee will consider a proposal by the United States that the Iridium satellite system should be approved for participation in the GMDSS. This raises the question of how Iridium will broadcast MSI. The WWNWS Sub-committee will need to decide how to deal with the issues raised by the future incorporation of Iridium into the GMDSS.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 4

Related documents: MSC 92/WP.1/Add.1 paragraphs 9.22 to 9.25

**Introduction**

1. Long range Maritime Safety Information is currently broadcast to ships in oceanic and other waters via the International SafetyNET Service, part of the Inmarsat C system provided by Inmarsat. The technical and operational characteristics of the International SafetyNET Service were designed in the late 1970's to make the most effective use of the capabilities of the Inmarsat satellite constellation, and the Inmarsat C terminal software was written to dovetail the operational requirements of the information providers with the technical capabilities of the broadcast system.

**Discussion**

2. The IMO Maritime Safety Committee, at its 92<sup>nd</sup> session in June 2013, received a proposal from the United States that the Iridium satellite system should be considered for approval as an element of the GMDSS. This proposal was forwarded to the new Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) sub-committee for consideration at its first session in June 2014. In view of this, and to enable IHO to respond to any formal application by Iridium to participate in the GMDSS, the WWNWS Sub-committee needs to consider, at this session, the following key issues:

.1 what are the basic requirements that any satellite system must fulfil in order to successfully broadcast Maritime Safety Information in the GMDSS, noting that such requirements could include, *inter alia*:

- .1 sufficient input points for providing information to be broadcast;
- .2 suitable means for controlling the broadcast, including repetitions and cancellations;
- .3 what is the probability of a broadcast being properly received in a ship;

- .4 can a ship's terminal select the primary NAV/MET Area automatically;
  - .5 can ship's staff select a second NAV/MET Area so as to receive information for the next area the ship will enter;
  - .6 will an information provider be able to monitor the broadcast as required by the regulations;
  - .7 what will be the costs to administrations for originating such broadcasts?
- .2 how will information providers pay for broadcasts via two parallel networks in the GMDSS (Iridium and Inmarsat)?
- .3 should all MSI be brought together in a single server before being distributed to the relevant communication services for broadcast?

3 The issues involved in this discussion are sufficiently complex that the WWNWS Sub-committee may wish to consider establishing a correspondence group to consider the matter further. In this regard it should be noted that the first session of the new Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue Sub-committee (NCSR1) is now expected to meet 16 to 20 June 2014.

#### **Actions to be taken by the WWNWS Sub-committee**

- 4 The WWNWS Sub-committee is invited to:
- .1 consider the issues raised in paragraph 2 above and decide as appropriate; and
  - .2 establish a correspondence group to progress this work if needed;
  - .3 instruct the IHO to participate in relevant discussions in IMO and actively promote the needs of the WWNWS in relation to any application by Iridium to participate in the GMDSS.

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