

Recognition of Iridium mobile satellite system as a GMDSS service provider

Submitted by IHB

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document provides additional details of the application for consideration of Iridium Satellite LLC to become a Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) mobile satellite services provider, which are relevant to WWNWS-SC

Action to be taken: Paragraph 2.

Related documents: MSC 94/9/2 dated 3 September 2014

1. See attached document.
2. The Sub-Committee is invited to note the information provided and take action as appropriate.

MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE
94th session
Agenda item 9

MSC 94/9/2
3 September 2014
Original: ENGLISH

NAVIGATION, COMMUNICATIONS, SEARCH AND RESCUE

Evaluation of the Iridium mobile satellite system

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive summary: Following consideration at NCSR 1 of the application to recognize the Iridium Satellite LLC system for use in the GMDSS, this document provides information on two alternative methodologies for assessment of the system and the delivery of an evaluation report for consideration by the NCSR Sub-Committee

Strategic direction: 5.2

High-level action: 5.2.5

Planned output: 5.2.5.3

Action to be taken: Paragraph 18

Related documents: MSC 92/9/2, MSC 92/9/3, MSC 92/9/26; NCSR 1/12, NCSR 1/12/1, NCSR 1/12/2 and NCSR 1/28

BACKGROUND

Outcome of MSC 92

1 The Committee, at its ninety-second session (MSC 92), considered the notification by the United States (MSC 92/9/2) of the application for recognition of the "Iridium" mobile-satellite system for use in the GMDSS. In this context, the Committee also considered the information provided by IMSO (MSC 92/9/3) on actions undertaken by IMSO in preparation for the recognition of a new mobile satellite communication system for the GMDSS (MSC 92/26, paragraphs 9.22 and 9.23).

2 After some discussion, MSC 92, having noted that, in principle, there were no objections for recognition of the system, agreed to refer the matter to the NCSR Sub-Committee for detailed evaluation of the technical and operational information provided. Furthermore, the Committee noted that IMSO was prepared to assist the Organization in undertaking the technical and operational assessment (MSC 92/26, paragraphs 9.24 and 9.25).

Outcome of NCSR 1

3 The Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue, at its first session (NCSR 1), considered:

- .1 the proposal submitted by the United States (NCSR 1/12), providing detailed information related to the application to recognize Iridium Satellite LLC for use in the GMDSS;
- .2 the information provided by IMSO (NCSR 1/12/1) on actions it had undertaken in preparation for the recognition of a new mobile satellite communications system for use in the GMDSS and highlighting relevant financial and operational matters; and
- .3 comments provided by the United Kingdom (NCSR 1/12/2) on document NCSR 1/12, outlining a number of detailed concerns relating to the recognition of the Iridium mobile satellite system for use in the GMDSS.

4 During the ensuing discussions, views were expressed that the detailed technical assessment should be conducted as soon as possible, by IMSO or by another independent group of experts, addressing all related concerns in order to ensure compliance with the criteria set out in resolution A.1001(25) (NCSR 1/28, paragraph 12.5).

5 The NCSR Chairman, noting the provisions of resolution A.1001(25) and MSC.1/Circ.1414, clarified the procedures related to the process of recognition of mobile satellite communication systems for use in the GMDSS (NCSR 1/28, paragraph 12.6). In particular, in order to produce an evaluation report, a technical and operational assessment should be conducted by an independent body which can report directly to the NCSR Sub-Committee. However, it was within the purview of the Committee to decide on the independent body to undertake the technical and operational assessment and to issue the request.

6 After an in-depth discussion, NCSR 1, recognizing general support for the application for recognition of the Iridium mobile satellite system for use in the GMDSS agreed it should be evaluated in accordance with the criteria defined in resolution A.1001(25), and that:

- .1 the Committee could consider convening a group of experts, through the Secretariat, to participate in the evaluation process and provide technical advice, including requesting support from other international organizations such as IHO, WMO and others; or
- .2 the Committee could consider and decide which independent body should produce a technical and operational assessment of the information contained in documents NCSR 1/12 and NCSR 1/12/2, invite that body to make the assessment and provide a report to the NCSR Sub-Committee for evaluation; and
- .3 additional information deemed to be required for the assessment could be presented directly to the independent body, through the Secretariat, in order to address the concerns expressed in document NCSR 1/12/2 as well as those expressed in paragraph 12.5.3 above (NCSR 1/28, paragraph 12.9).

DISCUSSION

7 Taking into account the discussions and decisions of NCSR 1 and in order to conduct the detailed technical and operational assessment and produce an evaluation report in relation to the application to recognize Iridium Satellite LLC for use in the GMDSS, the Committee is required to decide:

- .1 either to convene a Group of Experts (GoE);
- .2 or request an independent body (e.g. IMSO) to undertake this task.

Group of experts

8 In case the Committee decides that the evaluation should be done by a Group of Experts, the GoE should have competence in the following fields:

- .1 Earth stations;
- .2 Space segment;
- .3 Maritime mobile terminals;
- .4 Terrestrial Networks;
- .5 Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS); and
- .6 Search and Rescue, including routing of distress alerts.

9 To this end, the Committee might invite Member Governments to nominate experts in the aforementioned fields for service in the GoE. Thereafter, the Secretary-General could select the members of the Group from the list of nominations received and instruct them to select a Chairman to act as focal point for the evaluation. The group should be composed of members addressing all the required competencies and be comprised of an odd number (including chairman) such that any disputed views can be decided by majority.

10 Furthermore, the Secretariat should be instructed to make all necessary arrangements and facilitate the Group of Experts throughout the process.

An independent body

11 MSC.1/Circ.1414, paragraph 11 reads such that the Committee would request IMSO to undertake the Technical and Operational Assessment and produce the report. If this is the case, undertaking the evaluation would also assist IMSO to acquire the system-specific knowledge necessary to carry out the oversight function of the performance of any successful applicant satellite system, once it is approved for participation in the GMDSS.

12 The Secretariat has not identified any other potential independent bodies, which would be able to undertake the detailed technical and operational assessment and prepare the evaluation report.

13 NCSR 1 agreed that additional information deemed to be required for the assessment could be presented directly to the independent body, through the Secretariat, in order to address the concerns expressed in document NCSR 1/12/2 as well as those expressed at the session. Accordingly, it is proposed that the Secretariat is instructed to oversee the work of the independent body.

COST RECOVERY

14 As reflected by IMSO (NCSR 1/12/1), costs may include expert/consultancy fees, travel and other administrative costs which may be incurred during the evaluation process. The work to be carried out includes, studying of documentation, visiting Earth stations, other sites and organizations to collect information and data, live testing of all connections between Earth stations, service providers, RCCs and others, and testing of maritime mobile terminals. It is anticipated that a significant amount of travel may be involved.

15 IMSO (NCSR 1/12/1) has indicated that, in anticipation of any work which the IMSO Directorate may need to undertake in the process of recognition of new GMDSS providers, the IMSO Assembly has established specific measures, in the form of daily fees plus actual expenses, to finance any GMDSS work not related to an existing GMDSS provider which is subject to IMSO oversight. This will apply in case IMSO is requested to undertake any work in relation to Iridium.

16 Although the Organization has not made formal arrangements in this regard, it should be noted that the regular budget does not foresee the funding of this kind of activity. It is, therefore, proposed that the Organization would recover the costs involved from Iridium, if the Committee decides that the evaluation is to be carried out by a Group of Experts convened by the Secretary-General.

ADDITIONAL WORKLOAD FOR THE SECRETARIAT

17 The Committee is also invited to note that the workload of the Secretariat will significantly increase if a Group of Experts evaluates the information rather than an independent body. This is due to the fact that the Secretariat would have to make all financial and travel arrangements, and provide support to the activities of the Group of Experts.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE COMMITTEE

18 The Committee is invited to consider the information provided and decide as appropriate.
