

**7th Meeting of the Inter Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC-7)
Mexico City, Mexico, 1-3 June 2015**

Paper for Consideration by IRCC

**Revision of the Approval Process by IHO Member States for Maritime Safety
Information (MSI) Documents**

<i>Submitted by:</i>	WWNWS-SC
<i>Executive Summary:</i>	This paper outlines a proposed revision of the procedure for IHO Member States approval of MSI documents prior to submission to the IMO NCSR and the MSC.
<i>Related Documents:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) WWNWS-SC ToRs and RoPs. b) IMO resolution A.705(17), as amended. c) IMO resolution A.706(17), as amended. d) Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information.
<i>Related Projects:</i>	N/A

Introduction and Background

1. The original resolution of the tenth International Hydrographic Conference in 1972 recommended the formation of an ad hoc joint IMO/IHO Commission to study the “establishment of a coordinated, efficient global radio navigational warning service”. Subsequently, this became a purely IHO Commission known as the Commission on Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings, which in January 2009, became the IHO World-Wide Navigational Warning Service Sub-Committee (WWNWS-SC) but nevertheless consults continuously with IMO.

2. In its report to the eleventh International Hydrographic Conference in 1977, the Commission submitted a Draft Plan for the Establishment of a World-Wide Navigational Warning System, also referred to as Plan for the Establishment of a co-ordinated Radio Navigational Warning Service. The title World-Wide Navigational Warning Service or WWNWS used in subsequent revised editions of the document reflects the evolution of the system from a proposed action to an effective and fully operational co-ordinated service. Subsequent revisions reflect the evolution of the WWNWS since the advent of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), as adopted by the Conference of Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, on the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System in November 1988, effective on 1 February 1992.

3. IMO resolution A.706(17), as amended, states that future amendments to the guidance document will be considered formally and approved by both the IHO and the IMO in accordance with the procedures set out in Annex 1 to the resolution. It adds that proposed amendments shall be evaluated by the IHO WWNWS-SC, which includes an ex-officio representative of the IMO Secretariat, prior to any extensive IHO or IMO consideration.

Analysis/Discussion

4. IMO resolution 705(17), as amended, states that navigational warnings should be provided in accordance with the standards, organization and procedures of the WWNWS under the functional guidance of the IHO through its WWNWS-SC.

5. The WWNWS-SC Terms of Reference directs the sub-committee to prepare and review the various guidance documents for the WWNWS and evaluate any proposed amendments prior to formal IHO or IMO consideration. In coordination with the IMO Secretariat, the WWNWS-SC has developed a rolling programme of review for all Maritime Safety Information (MSI) documents, including the IMO resolutions. At present the review process is approximately halfway through its second cycle.

6. Normal IHO procedure is for recommendations of a Sub-Committee to be submitted to the IRCC for consideration. However due to the requirement for the WWNWS-SC to provide timely input to the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), the meetings of which are held annually in March, the Sub-Committee is authorized to submit proposals, by IHO Circular Letter, directly to Member States for approval prior to submission to the IMO.

7. It has become evident there is a need to simplify further the MSI document approval process, which at present involves three separate Member State approval processes (IMO, IHO and WMO); a process which, from final WWNWS-SC approval to presentation at the MSC, takes approximately 9 to 10 months but allows little more than 3 months for final collation of the document and subsequent circulation to the IHO and the WMO Member States for their comments and approval. The current timings of the WWNWS-SC meeting in late August/early September and the IMO NCSR deadline for submission of large documents of late November/early December results in the process being unduly compressed. There is no scope for moving the dates of the WWNWS-SC to earlier in the year as this would then generate a clash with the IRCC and the IMO MSC, which generally meet in late May/early June, and the start of the northern hemisphere summer break.

8. It is proposed that the IRCC authorize the WWNWS-SC to submit revised and amended MSI documents, as directed in their terms of Reference, directly to the NCSR without the need to circulate them to the IHO Member States via Circular Letter. Proposed draft revisions will be available in the WWNWS-SC section of the IHO website as WWNWS-SC meeting documents at least one month prior to the WWNWS-SC meeting and will be presented to participants of the meeting for discussion and final review. Non-attending members can submit comments to the WWNWS-SC meeting through the chair or the secretary of the WWNWS-SC or the secretary of the DRWG at any time prior to the meeting.

9. IMO, IHO and WMO Member States could coordinate any additional inputs through national delegations to the NCSR and the MSC, having had an extended period to study the documents and the proposed final amendments either from the versions available for download from the IHO website or via the versions submitted to the NCSR and the MSC. The WWNWS-SC, on behalf of the IMO, IHO and WMO, would be the sponsor of these submissions. It is hoped this process can be agreed and in place prior to the submission of the IMO NAVTEX Manual to NCSR 3 in March 2016.

Conclusions

10. The current approval process for MSI documentation is considered inefficient and bureaucratic, resulting rushed procedures to meet the NCSR submission deadline. The proposed revised procedure would enable documents to be submitted to the NCSR in a timely fashion, whilst maintaining the opportunity for IHO Member States to comment on any proposed amendments or revisions through their national delegations at both the NCSR and the MSC meetings, prior to final endorsement and approval.

Justification and Impacts

11. The proposed revision intends to improve the efficiency of the MSI document approval process, whilst still providing IHO Member States with sufficient opportunity to comment on any proposed revisions and amendments through their national delegations to the NCSR and the MSC.

Action Required of IRCC

12. The IRCC is invited to:

- a. note this report;
- b. endorse the revised approval procedure for MSI documents and, if deemed appropriate, invite the IHB to issue a circular letter seeking IHO Member States approval;
- c. inform the WMO secretariat of the Committee's decision and request WMO endorsement, after undertaking whatever consultation action is deemed necessary; and
- d. take any other action as appropriate.