

ANNEX

CONSOLIDATED IMSO BRIEFING: JANUARY 2020 TO DECEMBER 2021

INTRODUCTION

1 This consolidated report covers the organizational activities over the period from January 2020 to December 2021. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the SOLAS Contracting Governments, outlining the work and substantive progress achieved by the Organization in key areas, as outlined below.

COVID-19 AND IMSO OPERATIONS

2 The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges for organizations worldwide, including IMSO. In response, IMSO Directorate has followed the advice from the World Health Organization and the UK Government and has been working from home since March 2020, making the best use of telecommunication facilities, in order to ensure that the works of the Organization are carried out in the best possible manner.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

3 General

Despite the situation of lockdown, IMSO continued to perform its role as the global intergovernmental regulatory oversight body, protecting maritime public mobile satellite safety services (Global Maritime Distress Safety System - GMDSS) on behalf of the 165 SOLAS (International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea) Contracting Governments. It also continued to serve as the coordinator of the international system for the Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT) and functions effectively to meet safety, security and marine environmental protection needs of the SOLAS Contracting Governments. Membership of the Organization has increased from 105 to 106 Member States over the last two reporting years.

4 Ensuring continuity of Global Safety Services – GMDSS

4.1 Continuity of GMDSS services by the existing satellite service providers

4.1.1 IMSO has closely monitored the availability of both space and ground segments of the satellite system to ensure the GMDSS services provided by the existing commercial operators are up and running at all times. It's critical given the growth and volume of international maritime trade that GMDSS services are readily available to safeguard seafarers and passengers on ships and that the commercial operator performs to the expected service availability requirements through its satellite communication network.

4.2 Assessment of the BeiDou Satellite System (BDMSS)

4.2.1 IMSO, at the request of IMO, has started the process of a technical and operational assessment of the BeiDou satellite system, ensuring that it complies fully with the requirements of the GMDSS. In this regard, the Expert Consultancy Programme was re-launched to establish a Group of Experts (GoE). The GoE has met several times using virtual meeting facilities; however, due to the pandemic, the GoE has not yet attended a site visit in China. IMSO is planning to submit a report to the ninth session of the NCSR Sub-Committee which will take place in June 2022.

5 LRIT Coordination

5.1 Current status of LRIT system

5.1.1 Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) of ships is an essential part of safety and security measures that are being deployed by the SOLAS Contracting Governments given the increased volume of international maritime trade and the growth of piracy activities in the international waters. Ever since its establishment in 2008, the system is gaining its importance, with the SOLAS Contracting Governments using LRIT information to improve safety, security and search and rescue at sea.

5.1.2 Today, we have 165 SOLAS Contracting Governments, however, only 118 Contracting Governments, eight non-metropolitan territories and two special administrative regions are integrated into the LRIT system. IMSO, as the coordinating body, has undertaken efforts to engage with non-participating States to motivate them joining the system for its wider implementation.

5.1.3 It was found that a good number of States were disconnected from the system due to financial issues related to the provisioning of the service. IMSO efforts have helped them to solve their pending issues and to reconnect their Data Centres (DC). IMSO has also encouraged new members to join the LRIT system. With both disconnected members re-joining as well as new members brought on board, has enabled not only successful and enhanced implementation of the LRIT system for ensuring safety, security, protection of the marine environment and search and rescue globally, but also enabled sustainable financing and lower audit fee.

5.1.4 In addition, increased membership of the LRIT system has meant that economies of scale with lower costs can be passed on to all participating members, as shown in section 5.2 below.

5.2 LRIT implementation

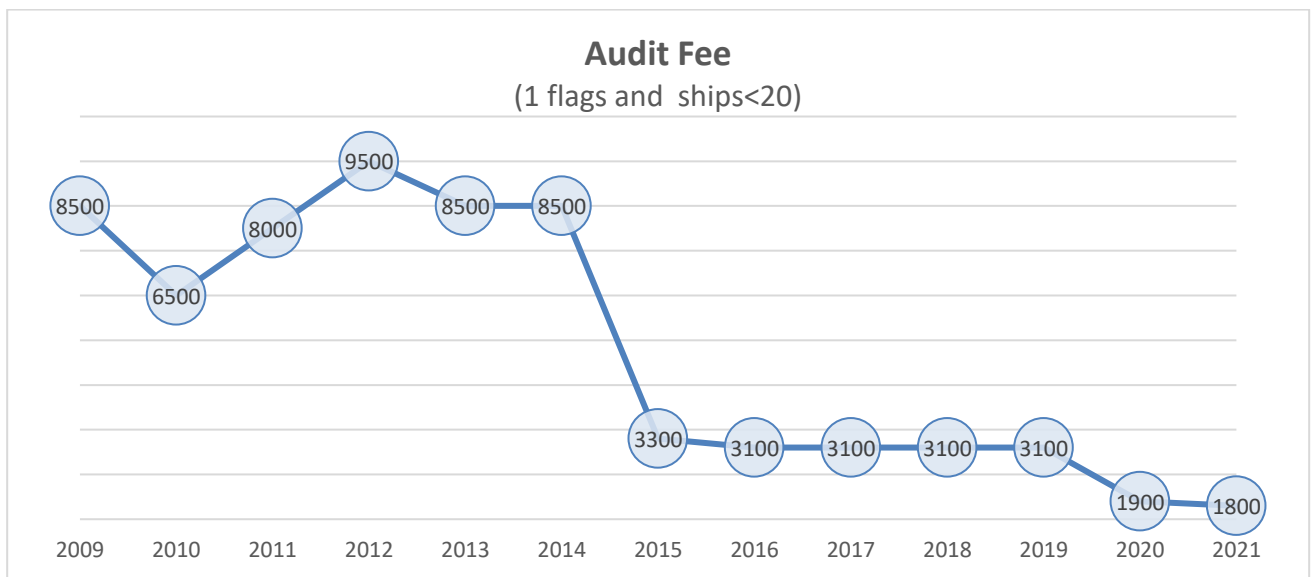
5.2.1 IMSO is in continual engagement with SOLAS Contracting Governments to demonstrate the benefits of joining the LRIT system. The Directorate has been conducting an outreach campaign which has resulted in an increasing number of SOLAS Contracting Governments joining the LRIT system. Since 2020, 3 new DCs have been established and 2 States have joined the system. This increase in joining the LRIT system helps to implement the LRIT and reduces the overall cost base for all the SOLAS Contracting Governments. Going forward: the Directorate will continue to encourage more SOLAS Contracting Governments to join the LRIT system for its enhanced implementation.

5.3 LRIT audit fee

5.3.1 Since the Director General assumed the office in 2015, he has pursued a strategy for the LRIT functioning, so as to achieve higher output through wider implementation and minimisation of the audit fees such that they reach a more acceptable level for SOLAS Contracting Governments (*as shown in the chart below*).

5.3.2 The Director General, whilst maintaining the same LRIT cost base and audit fee successfully for the years from 2015 to 2021. In addition, taking into account the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the financial situation all around the world and the mandate given by the Assembly, the Director General conducted a review of the LRIT financial position and decided to further reduce the LRIT Audit Fees for 2021, introduced a further 'reduction in audit fees' for the upcoming 2021 audits.

5.3.3 The Directorate created a dynamic tool to allow Member States to verify the evolution of the audit fee for their DC, considering the number of associated flags and the number of registered ships. This tool is available at <https://imso.org/lrit-audit-fees>.



The graph shows the evolution of the LRIT audit fee in GBP for a Data Centre with one flag and less than 20 ships over the past 12 years.

5.4 LRIT audit reporting

5.4.1 Seeking to improve its processes as the LRIT Coordinator, IMSO implemented the amendments to the principles and guidelines relating to the review and audit of the performance of LRIT Data Centres and the International LRIT Data Exchange, as approved by MSC.101. This led to a reduction in the administrative workload and allowed more effort to be concentrated in the technical part of the audit. Furthermore, the audit report format was updated, in order to provide more user-friendly information. IMSO also updated its audit software to be compliant with the LRIT third modification phase amendments approved at MSC.101. Directorate staff have been seeking to implement more efficient processes to the LRIT audit, benefiting from data analysis tools

6 Directorate Activities

6.1 IMSO representation

5.1.1 The Directorate has continued to participate and submit input documents to meetings from various international organizations including IMO, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and other relevant bodies.

6.2 Satellite communications frequency related activities (ITU related matters)

6.2.1 Since ITU World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015, IMSO has supported all possible efforts to protect L band and also C band for maritime and aeronautical safety services, in collaboration with the concerned Member States and relevant international organizations and provided inputs to the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications (CEPT), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), IMO and ITU.

6.2.2 IMSO participated in the ITU World Radio Conference in 2019 (WRC-19), when the Organization had a particular interest in the outcomes related to the protection of the frequencies used by the mobile satellite services recognized by IMO to operate in the GMDSS, including both the new and existent services.

6.2.3 After WRC-19, IMSO has continued following these issues in relevant forums from ITU, namely the ITU WP 5D and ITU WP 4C, contributing to the meetings with relevant information and inputs. For example,

since 2020, IMSO has provided inputs to appropriate forums and administrations in response to the IMT 5G implementation threats on both L-band and C-band.

6.2.4 The protection of these frequencies used to support distress and safety communication is an ongoing and relevant issue to which IMSO has given due consideration. Over the last years, the Organization submitted several documents to IMO relevant forums, such as the Navigation Communication and Search and Rescue Subcommittee and the ITU/IMO Expert Group. These submissions aimed to support the development of the IMO position for the WRC-23.

6.2.5 The BeiDou system (BDMSS) applied to be recognized as a GMDSS satellite services provider, and the NCSR 7 invited IMSO to conduct the technical assessment. Thus, IMSO has followed the meaningful discussion at the ITU WP 4C1 regarding the inclusion of new satellite systems in the relevant regulations to protect the GMDSS.

6.3 SAR related activities

6.3.1 IMSO in support of SAR authorities, has collaborated with SOLAS Contracting Governments to minimize the volume of false distress alerts, particularly from fishing vessels and non-SOLAS ships. These false distress alerts negatively impact Rescue Coordination Centres which have been severely affected by these unnecessary false alerts.

6.3.2 IMSO has followed with interest the ICAO developments on the GADSS in the context of aeronautical and maritime search and rescue, collaborating in common areas as per the Agreement of Cooperation executed between the organizations.

6.4 Capacity building

6.4.1 IMSO has continued to provide support to Members States for capacity building by organising quarterly briefings using virtual meeting facilities.

6.4.2 IMSO is currently executing a capacity building project to support the implementation of the LRIT system by the Small Islands Developing States and the Least Developed Countries using funds donated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

6.5 Financial matters

6.5.1 In advancing the “Do More with Less” strategy, in line with decisions of the IMSO Assembly at its 22nd session (2012), the Director General has undertaken significant initiatives with a reduced budget to achieve the goals of the Organization securing support from the SOLAS Contracting Governments, satellite service providers, and data centre operators, as well as motivating staff members to deliver key results as reflected above.

6.5.2 The Director General has continued to maintain a prudent cost base even with increased volume of activities, returning savings on GMDSS to the satellite service provider and minimising LRIT audit fees for SOLAS Contracting Governments. Progressively, the Director General will continue to minimise costs as and where possible in the interest of all concerned parties including both Member Governments and GMDSS Operators.