

I. IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communication and Search and Rescue 12th Session (NCSR 12)

IMO NCSR Sub-Committee mainly deals with matters that are related to navigation and communication, including the analysis and approval of ship routing measures, and ship reporting systems; carriage requirements and performance standards for navigational and communication equipment; the long-range identification and tracking (LRIT) system, and the development of e-navigation. Other things, like search and rescue matters and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), including recognition of service providers.

The NCSR 12th session was held from May 13th to 22nd, 2025, at the IMO Headquarters in London. Key outcomes for NCSR 12 are as follows:

1. VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) ([Note 1](#))

VHF data exchange system (VDES) is a digital communication system that operates over the VHF band to provide secure and reliable data exchange, for example between ships and between ships and the shore.

NCSR 12 had finalized the draft amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Chapter V (Safety of navigation) and associated documents. It is about introducing the VDES as an alternative shipborne navigational equipment and system to comply with the existing requirements of the automatic identification system (AIS). The draft amendments will be subject to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) 110th Session (MSC 110) (June 2025) for approval, and further be adopted by MSC 111 (May 2026), then enter into force on January 1st, 2028.

2. Development of guidelines for software maintenance of shipboard navigation and communication equipment and systems

At the MSC 107 meeting (June 2023), IMO decided to develop further requirements for software maintenance of shipboard navigation and communication equipment and systems related to the SOLAS Convention on Chapter IV (Radiocommunications) and Chapter V (Safety of navigation).

NCSR 12 had finalized the new draft Guidelines for the software maintenance of shipboard computer-based navigation and communication equipment and systems, which aimed to ensure a controlled and standardized approach to software maintenance. It is,

however, important that any software installed in accordance with these guidelines should not compromise the type approval of the relevant equipment or systems.

It will be submitted to MSC 111 (May 2026) for approval and is expected to be released in the form of an MSC circular.

3. Finalized the draft MSC circular on Guidelines on carriage and use of Electronic Nautical Publications (ENP) system

SOLAS Regulations V/19.2.1.4 and V/19.2.1.5 require all ships to carry the nautical charts and nautical publications, including back-up arrangements if this function is partly or fully fulfilled by electronic means, to plan and display the ship's route for the intended voyage and to plot and monitor positions throughout the voyage. Publications may be carried in the form of electronic media.

NCSR 12 had finalized the draft MSC circular on Guidelines on carriage and use of electronic nautical publications (ENP) system, and will be further approved by the MSC 111.

The new guidelines aim to promote the effective use of electronic nautical publications, covering aspects such as the general requirements for carriage and operation of ENP on board a vessel, adequate backup arrangements, and power supply.

4. Digital navigational data system (NAVDAT) (Note 2)

On the 109th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 109, Dec. 2024), IMO had adopted a new performance standard for NAVDAT equipment as Resolution MSC.569(109). It introduced NAVDAT into the IMO regulatory framework. NAVDAT is confirmed as one of the radio equipment as a receiver or receivers capable of receiving MSI and search and rescue related information, relating to the SOLAS Ch. IV (Radiocommunications) Regulation 7.1.4.

NCSR 12 had a discussion on the NAVDAT service and agreed that initial proposals related to the introduction and administration of a global NAVDAT system, renaming of the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel, and related draft terms of reference.

NCSR 12 also urged Member States to ensure that METAREA and NAVAREA Coordinators have completed the required training and testing that declare the Iridium SafetyCast service operational as soon as possible; and those not presently conducting testing or trial activities to progress the implementation of such service.

A planning roadmap was updated in preparation for the implementation of the NAVDAT

service and forwarded to the IMO/ITU Experts Group for consideration. The draft of the NAVDAT manual was agreed upon and will be forwarded to the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) for review.

5. Guidance for global ECDIS S-100 data connectivity

NCSR 12 reviewed the draft of a guidance to establish a framework for data distribution and global IP-based connectivity for shore-based facilities and ships supporting Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) S-100 products ([Note 3](#)).

The development of the guidance follows the adoption of a revised version of the ECDIS Performance Standards (Resolution MSC.530(106)) in 2022, which enables the next technical generation of Electronic Navigational Charts.

The revised version will apply to ECDIS equipment installed on or after 1 January 2029. During the transitional period from 1 January 2026 to 1 January 2029, ECDIS equipment may comply with the current standards (Resolution MSC.232(82)) or the new performance standards.

Note 1: VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) is a digital communication system that operates over the VHF band to provide secure and reliable data exchange, for example between ships and between ships and shore. VDES includes four components:

- (1) Automatic Identification System (AIS) component for the identification and tracking of vessels, along with additional communication capabilities;
- (2) Application-specific message (ASM) component;
- (3) Terrestrial component for VHF data exchange (VDE-TER);
- (4) Satellite component for VHF data exchange (VDE-SAT).

VDES offers a high level of availability and security, using both terrestrial and satellite components (including AIS).

Note 2: NAVDAT is intended for broadcasting digital data, including information related to MSI and SAR, on middle-frequency (MF) and high-frequency (HF) bands, from shore to ships.

Note 3: S-100 is a new standard for digital marine data developed by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and used in systems like ECDIS (Electronic Chart Display and Information System) to help ships navigate safely. It supports e-navigation by combining different types of information like depth, currents, and weather in one system, helping seafarers make better decisions and improving safety at sea.

References:

1. American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), News Brief: NCSR 12. https://absinfo.eagle.org/acton/ct/16130/s-10d3-2505/Bct/q-0d8a/l-0d89:3681/ct1_0/1/lu?sid=TV2%3AnHSBaUvii
2. Det Norske Veritas (DNV), IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications, Search and Rescue. News from DNV. <https://www.dnv.com/news/imos-sub-committee-on-navigation-communications-search-and-rescue/>
3. InterManager, IMO Sub Committee NCSR 12, 13-22 May 2025. <https://www.intermanager.org/2025/05/imo-sub-committee-ncsr-12-13-22-may-2025-166946/>
4. IMO, Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), 12th session, 13 – 22 May 2025. <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/MeetingSummaries/Pages/NCSR-12th-session.aspx>
5. Korea Register (KR), IMO News Brief NCSR 12. [http://www.krs.co.kr/TECHNICAL_FILE/NCSR%2012%20News%20Brief%20\(E\).pdf](http://www.krs.co.kr/TECHNICAL_FILE/NCSR%2012%20News%20Brief%20(E).pdf)
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II. IMO Technical Cooperation Committee (TC) 75th session (TC 75) Meeting Highlights

The Technical Cooperation Committee (TC) supervises the capacity-building programme and the implementation of technical cooperation projects for which the acts of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) serve as the executing or cooperating agency, ensuring that IMO supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 75th session meeting of the TC is held in the London headquarters from June 2nd to 6th, 2025. The key outcomes from the meeting are as follows:

1. Approved the draft Capacity Development Strategy and the associated draft Assembly resolution

TC 75 approved the draft Capacity Development Strategy and the associated draft Assembly resolution for submission to the IMO Assembly at its 34th session (A 34, November 2025). This draft revised comprehensive strategy is combined with:

- (1) the existing Capacity-Building Decade 2021-2030 Strategy (resolution A.1166(32));
- (2) the Revised financing and partnership arrangements for an effective and sustainable integrated technical cooperation programme (resolution A.1167(32));
- (3) the draft Strategy for resource mobilization for IMO's technical cooperation activities (TC 68/4(a)).

2. Approved the revisions made to the SMART indicators, targets, and milestones linked to the IMO 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

TC 75 established the "2030 Sustainable Development Agenda Working Group", the scope of its work includes reviewing the proposed revisions to the SMART indicators as outlined in TC 75/5/1, evaluating the IMO's most relevant other sustainable development goals (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) with maritime development; and reviewing and revising existing standards to enhance organizational coordination.

TC 75 also approved revisions made to the SMART indicators ([Note 4](#)), targets, and milestones linked to the identified SDGs (TC 75/WP.5), and had a request for the IMO Secretariat to integrate the information and report to TC 78. The report data will be used as a reference for the 2023/2027 standard setting.

3. Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) and Technical Cooperation Fund Allocation for 2026 and 2027

ITCP describes the types of activities that will be carried out under each project plan. These activities will be detailed planned based on the information and requirements analysis provided by the International Maritime Organization Member State Audit Scheme (IMO Member State Audit Scheme, IMSAS), and in accordance with the specific conditions of each region and country.

On the other side, TC 75 approved the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) for the 2026-2027 biennium, with a revised thematic programme structure on the inclusion of additional areas for technical assistance identified through the analysis of the consolidated audit summary reports (CASRs).

This reflects the strategic shift from a region-based approach to a theme-based approach. Moreover, it supports the adoption, implementation, and enhancement of compliance with IMO instruments.

4. Keep on promoting the capacity development for women in maritime

To strengthen the influence of women in the maritime sector, TC 75 had agreed to the IMO's Women in Maritime Association 2024-2029 global strategies, which will be released as IMO document TC.1/Circ.78.

TC 75 had noted the activities delivered through IMO's Women in Maritime Programme over the past year:

- (1) including supporting capacity development for women in maritime;
- (2) support for the IMO Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs); and
- (3) a range of specific activities implemented by the thematic long-term projects to advance SDG 5.

The report, IMO-WISTA Women in Maritime Survey 2024, which is conducted by IMO and the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association Limited (WISTA), was published in May. The data reveals ongoing gender disparity, underscoring the continuing need for targeted efforts to improve gender diversity in the sector.

TC 75 also agreed to include on its agenda an expanded output on "Capacity Development: Empowering all women and the promotion of diversity, equality, equity and inclusion in the maritime sector", with 4 sessions needed to complete the item, the target completion will be by the year 2029.

Note 4: SMART indicators are the data reference for standards, the data collection within IMO's mandate for technical cooperation, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2020 world maritime theme, Sustainable Shipping for a Sustainable Planet. The baseline indicator will be 2019, and further targets and milestones will be set out that are linked to the identified SDGs. SMART consists of 5 indicators: “Specific,” “Measurable,” “Achievable,” “Realistic,” and “Time-bound.”

References:

1. IMO, Technical Cooperation Committee - 75th session (TC 75), 2-6 June 2025.
<https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/MeetingSummaries/Pages/TC-75th-session.aspx>
2. IMO, Draft Report of The Technical Cooperation Committee on its Seventy-Fifth Session, TC 75/WP.1/Rev.1.