

I. IMO Technical Cooperation Committee(TC), 76th session (TC 76) Meeting Highlights

The Technical Cooperation Committee (TC) is one of the five important committees of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and is primarily responsible for overseeing the implementation of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) capacity-building programmes and technical cooperation projects. Acting as either an executing or a cooperating agency, the IMO ensures that its activities support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 76th session of the Technical Cooperation Committee (TC 76) was held from 8th to 12th June 2026 at the IMO Headquarters in London.

The highlights of the meetings are as follows:

1. Approved the IMO Capacity Development Strategy Implementation Plan and Strengthening of Results-Based Management.

TC 76 has approved a new Implementation Plan for the IMO Capacity Development Strategy, placing greater emphasis on performance monitoring and on delivering measurable outcomes. Building upon the strategy adopted at TC 75, the Plan sets out training activities, regional outreach initiatives, partnerships, and targeted assistance programmes. It is structured around 11 thematic programmes designed to support Member States in the implementation of IMO instruments.

The Implementation Plan will be driven by the needs and priorities of Member States, taking into account direct requests for assistance, audit findings, regional assessments, and emerging maritime challenges. Particular attention will be given to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The Plan introduces a strengthened results-based management approach, including the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monitoring tools, while utilizing programme evaluations, audit outcomes, and digital platforms to enhance transparency and accountability.

The Committee supported the continued development of programme-level KPIs and invited the Secretariat to report further progress to future sessions.

2. Advancing the Digital Transformation of IMO Technical Assistance to Enhance Transparency and Information Sharing.

TC 76 has endorsed the continued development of digital tools and platforms to enhance the effectiveness of IMO technical cooperation activities and to promote greater transparency and data sharing. These digital tools include the IMO Technical Cooperation

Portal (TC Portal), which incorporates the Technical Cooperation Dashboard (TC Dashboard) and the Technical Cooperation Request Management System (TC Request Management System).

The Committee welcomed the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to strengthen the institutional framework supporting the delivery of technical cooperation programmes. These efforts include further development of digital tools and monitoring and evaluation systems, and revision of the Technical Cooperation Manual (TC Manual) to support the planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of IMO technical cooperation activities.

3. Strengthening the Regional Presence Scheme to Align Regional Priorities with National Needs.

TC 76 emphasized the important role of the IMO's "Regional Presence Scheme" in supporting the delivery of technical cooperation activities and enhancing engagement with Member States at both the regional and national levels. Under this scheme, Regional Coordinators are deployed in developing regions to provide proactive front-line support and assist Member States in implementing IMO standards and regulations.

Member States called for a stronger and more visible regional presence, while stressing that technical cooperation activities should be more closely aligned with regional priorities, audit findings, and national needs.

The Committee noted that regional forums, including the Asia-Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies Forum (APHoMSA), the Conference of the Association of African Maritime Administrations (AAMA), and the Meeting of Directors and Heads of Maritime Administrations for the Caribbean (DIHMAR), can serve as valuable platforms for regional dialogue and provide useful inputs for the development and delivery of technical cooperation activities.

4. Progress Report on the 2025 Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP): 72% Implementation Rate and Continued Delivery of Training Activities.

TC 76 reviewed the implementation progress of the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) for 2025. It noted that, of the 163 technical cooperation activities originally planned for the year, 118 activities had been completed, representing an implementation rate of 72%.

These activities included 70 training courses and workshops, through which 1,766 participants received training. In addition, 22 fellows successfully completed scholarship programmes at the World Maritime University (WMU) and the IMO International

Maritime Law Institute (IMLI), while 154 government officials participated in various technical cooperation activities.

The Committee supported targeted initiatives aimed at improving domestic ferry safety, strengthening maritime training and capacity-building, and addressing maritime fraud and fraudulent ship registration practices. It also emphasized the need to provide tailored assistance to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to address their specific capacity-building requirements and implementation challenges.

5. Formal Recognition of the Women in Maritime Associations (WIMA) Network and Advancement of Gender Equality in the Maritime Sector.

TC 76 welcomed ongoing efforts to strengthen and support the Women in Maritime Associations (WIMA) Network, recognizing it as an important platform for promoting women's participation and leadership in the maritime sector. The Committee also approved the formal recognition of the WIMA Network within the IMO Technical Cooperation Programme, thereby reinforcing its role in supporting gender equality and capacity development across the maritime industry.

The WIMA Network, established by the IMO, is a professional network aimed at addressing gender disparities in the maritime sector. At present, there are eight regional WIMAs worldwide, representing approximately 152 countries across Africa, the Arab States, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific. The Committee encouraged Member States to strengthen cooperation and engagement with their respective WIMA organizations.

Further welcomed the continued implementation of the IMO's Gender Equality Marker (GEM) Framework, which supports the integration and monitoring of gender equality considerations throughout technical cooperation activities. The Committee requested the Secretariat to explore the development of gender-responsive funding benchmarks for consideration at future sessions, with a view to further mainstreaming gender equality within IMO capacity-development programmes.

In addition, the Committee advanced preparations for the next Global Maritime Gender Survey, which is scheduled to be launched in 2027 and will be jointly conducted by the IMO and the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA International). Drawing on information provided by IMO Member States and private-sector stakeholders, the survey provides valuable insights into gender diversity and representation across the maritime sector.

Member States have been invited to review the survey questionnaire and submit comments or proposed amendments to the Secretariat by 31 December 2026. The next survey is scheduled to be launched on 18 May 2027. To support participation, the IMO will organize workshops and outreach activities in 2027 for Member State focal points and

industry representatives.

References:

1. International Maritime Organization (IMO), Technical Cooperation Committee - 76th session (TC 76), 8-12 June 2026.
<https://www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/meetingsummaries/pages/tc-76th-session.aspx>

I. IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), 13th session (NCSR 13) Meeting Highlights

The Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) deals with all matters related to navigation and communications, including the review and approval of ships' routing systems and ship reporting systems; the development of performance standards and carriage requirements for navigation and communication equipment; the Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system; and the advancement of e-navigation. The Sub-Committee also addresses matters relating to search and rescue (SAR) and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), including the recognition and oversight of service providers.

Reporting to the NCSR Sub-Committee are two joint bodies: the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue, and the IMO/International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Joint Experts Group on Maritime Radiocommunication Matters.

The 13th Session of the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR 13) was held at IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom, from 22 to 26 June 2026. The highlights issues discussed during the 13th session are summarized as follows:

1. Finalization of Amendments to European Ship Reporting Systems and U.S. Routeing Measures.

NCSR 13 has finalized draft amendments to European ship reporting systems and United States ship routing measures. These draft amendments will be submitted to MSC 112 for adoption and are expected to enter into force six months after adoption.

The Sub-Committee also considered proposals submitted under SOLAS Chapter V concerning ships' routing systems and mandatory ship reporting systems ([Note 1](#)), including amendments to existing IMO-adopted systems and the expanded use of digital reporting platforms such as SafeSeaNet.

Electronic reporting through the SafeSeaNet platform (<https://www.emsa.europa.eu/ssn-main.html>) is expected to become the primary reporting method, significantly reducing congestion in VHF voice communications. In addition, new mandatory reporting requirements relating to insurance certificates were introduced, covering the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1992 (CLC 1992), the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (Bunkers Convention), and the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007 (WRC).

However, these reporting requirements apply only where the flag State is a Party to the relevant convention. In other words, the scope of reporting is being expanded beyond

navigational safety considerations to encompass regulatory compliance obligations as well.

2. Finalization of the Draft MSC Circular on Guidelines for the Transition to Digital VHF Voice Communications.

NCSR 13 finalized a draft MSC circular containing guidelines for the transition to digital Very High Frequency (VHF) voice communications. The transition framework retains certain existing analogue VHF channels to ensure the continuity of critical GMDSS distress, urgency, and safety communications. The draft circular will be submitted to MSC 112 for approval.

In recent years, the number of available voice channels within the maritime VHF mobile band has steadily decreased, resulting in channel congestion, particularly in areas of dense maritime traffic. At the same time, there is a need to improve spectrum efficiency while maintaining the integrity of safety-of-life communications, including the distress, urgency, and safety services provided under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). Accordingly, MSC 109 agreed to include a new output on the development of a transition framework for introducing digital technologies into VHF voice communications, with a target completion year of 2027.

At NCSR 13, the Sub-Committee agreed to a draft MSC circular outlining a phased transition from analogue VHF voice communications to digital VHF voice communications. The proposed transition framework includes the gradual introduction of digital channels. To ensure maritime safety and avoid disruption to GMDSS distress, urgency, and safety communications, the existing assignments for analogue Channels 06, 13, 16, 75, and 76, as well as Channel 70 (Digital Selective Calling, DSC), AIS 1 (AIS Search and Rescue Transmitter, AIS-SART), and AIS 2 (AIS-SART), will be retained.

In addition, within the frequency bands currently allocated to the maritime mobile service, additional digital VHF channels will be identified in accordance with Appendix 18 of the Radio Regulations. The implementation process is intended to minimize the financial burden on both ship operators and shore-based administrations.

The indicative timeline is summarized as follows:

- (1) 2025–2028: Development of the transition framework;
- (2) 2028–2031: Development of the regulatory framework and technical standards;
- (3) 2032–2045: Phased implementation and gradual equipment replacement and retirement.

The draft circular will be submitted to MSC 112 for approval.

3. Finalization of Draft MSC Circulars on Global IP-Based Data Exchange and Secure

Connectivity for ECDIS S-100 Products, and Operational Guidance on Route Exchange.

NCSR 13 finalized a draft MSC circular on guidelines for global IP-based data exchange and secure connectivity for S-100 products used in Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS), as well as operational guidance on route exchange. These draft circulars will be submitted to MSC 112 for approval.

Pursuant to resolution MSC.530(106)/Rev.1, ECDIS equipped with S-100 functionality may be installed on a voluntary basis from 1 January 2026 and will become mandatory for all newly installed ECDIS equipment from 1 January 2029.

To support the transition to the next generation of S-100 products, IMO has recognized the need to establish a robust framework for secure and standardized IP-based data exchange between shore-based facilities and ships. Such a framework will facilitate the real-time integration of hydrographic, environmental, and navigational safety information, thereby enhancing maritime safety and situational awareness while supporting improvements in operational efficiency.

Based on the preceding technical work, NCSR 13 finalized the following draft MSC circulars:

(1) Data distribution framework (IP-based connectivity):

Guidance to establish a framework for data distribution and global IP-based connectivity for shore-based facilities and ships supporting ECDIS S-100 products. The guidance also emphasizes the need for appropriate cybersecurity measures, including network segregation, to protect shipboard systems against external threats. The meeting further clarified that there is currently no mandatory requirement for ships to be equipped with IP-based connectivity or continuous internet access.

(2) Operational guidance for digital route exchange:

This circular is intended to facilitate the secure and efficient exchange of route plans between ships and shore-based services. The meeting also noted that digital route exchange is entirely voluntary and does not replace any mandatory ship reporting requirements.

The development of the above guidance follows the adoption in 2022 of the revised ECDIS Performance Standards under resolution MSC.530(106), which enabled the introduction of the next generation of electronic navigational charts. The revised Performance Standards 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 either with the existing standards under resolution MSC.232(82)

or with the new Performance Standards.

The new draft MSC circulars will be submitted to MSC 112 for approval.

4. Development of the Draft NAVDAT Manual and the Roadmap ([Note 2](#)) for Introducing the Digital Navigational Information System

NCSR 13 updated the roadmap for the introduction of the Digital Navigational Data System (NAVDAT). The roadmap is intended to serve as a living document that may be updated in response to future developments. It adopts a phased implementation approach without establishing a fixed timeline.

The roadmap covers the development, testing, and standardization of NAVDAT and envisages its gradual introduction alongside the existing shore-based NAVTEX system, which is currently used to broadcast Maritime Safety Information (MSI) and search-and-rescue information.

New NAVDAT medium-frequency transmitters are expected to support the transmission of both NAVTEX and NAVDAT messages. By contrast, NAVDAT high-frequency transmitters may be deployed as a standalone solution dedicated exclusively to transmitting NAVDAT messages.

It should also be noted that the following NAVDAT-related performance standards and recommendations have already been developed:

- Resolution MSC.569(109);
- Resolution MSC.509(105)/Rev.2;
- Recommendation ITU-R M.2010-3 ([ITU-R M.2010.3](#));
- Recommendation ITU-R M.2058-2 ([ITU-R M.2058-2](#)); and
- Recommendation ITU-R M.2443-0 ([ITU-R M.2443-0](#)).

However, the relevant IEC testing standards for NAVDAT equipment have not yet been finalized.

5. Finalization of Draft Amendments to Resolution MSC.471(101) to Introduce Two-Way Communication as an Optional Function for 406 MHz Float-Free EPIRBs.

NCSR 13 finalized draft amendments to resolution MSC.471(101) to incorporate the Two-Way Communication (TWC) capability provided through the Galileo Search and Rescue Return Link Service (SAR RLS) as an optional supplementary function for 406 MHz float-free Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs). This enhanced capability will enable confirmation that a distress alert has been received and allow the exchange of predefined messages between the rescue coordination centre and persons in distress.

At NCSR 13, the Sub-Committee agreed to draft amendments to the performance standards for 406 MHz float-free EPIRBs, adopted by resolution MSC.471(101). The draft amendments introduce the TWC capability provided by the Galileo SAR RLS as an optional function. Two-way communication will enable acknowledgement of the receipt of a distress alert and facilitate the bidirectional exchange of predefined messages between Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) and the party in distress.

The ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group was instructed to develop operational guidance for the use of EPIRBs equipped with two-way communication services and to submit recommendations to the NCSR Sub-Committee, as appropriate. The draft amendments will be submitted to MSC 112 for approval.

Note 1: Ships' routing measures and ship reporting systems contribute to enhancing the safety of navigation and protecting the marine environment. Ship reporting systems further improve navigational safety by providing real-time information on vessel movements. SOLAS Chapter V designates IMO as the sole international body responsible for establishing such systems, thereby ensuring the safety and efficiency of navigation at sea.

Note 2: NAVDAT is a shore-to-ship digital broadcasting system designed to transmit navigational warnings, weather forecasts, safety-related messages, and search and rescue information over the medium-frequency (MF) and high-frequency (HF) bands.

References:

1. American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), News Brief: NCSR 13. <https://ww2.eagle.org/en/rules-and-resources/regulatory-updates/regulatory-news/ncsr-13-brief.html>
2. Bureau Veritas (BV), Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue Sub-Committee 13th Session (NCSR 13) Summary Report. <https://marine-offshore.bureauveritas.com/newsroom/navigation-communications-and-search-and-rescue-sub-committee-13th-session-ncsr-13-summary>
3. Det Norske Veritas (DNV), The IMO sub-committee on navigation, communications, search and rescue (NCSR 13) <https://www.dnv.com/news/2026/the-imo-sub-committee-on-navigation-communications-search-and-rescue-ncsr13/>
4. InterManager, Summary report on IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communication and Search and Rescue 13th session (NCSR 13). <https://www.intermanager.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/IMO%20SUB-COMMITTEE%20ON%20NAVIGATION,%20COMMUNICATIONS%20AND%20SEARCH%20AND%20RESCUE,%2022-26%20JUNE%202026.pdf>
5. Lloyd's Register (LR), NCSR 13 Summary Report. <https://maritime.lr.org/NCSR-13-Summary-Report>