

Further digitalization of Secretariat's operation

Development and introduction of improved registration and information sharing

Submitted by:	Secretary-General
Executive Summary:	The Secretariat is continuously striving to extend the use of digital technologies to improve its operations and create new value for Member States. Under the name "IHO portal" a pilot project was started to integrate the meeting registration process and the dissemination of relevant information through individual accounts.
Related document:	C7-7.2A Presentation

References

- A. Article 10 (a) of IHO General Regulations

Introduction/Background

1. The Secretariat is currently using a meeting registration system developed and technically maintained by KHOA (ROK). This sponsored approach will cease by end of 2023 and the system in use must be replaced.
2. The current arrangements for the provision of information/data/documents via the IHO website have limitations on file size and data storage, are cumbersome to maintain and also subject to mistakes.

Analysis/Discussion

3. The Secretariat is aiming to introduce a system which combines the meeting registration with a centralized internal document management approach based on individual accounts. Such accounts will be offered in principal to everybody who demonstrates interest for IHO themes but under different roles customized to the position and the needs of the applicant. The login to the new IHO Portal will be embedded into the IHO website. The development and maintenance of the portal will be contracted to an external partner. For efficiency purposes, the workspace component of the future IHO Portal aims to become mainly IHO Member States/Stakeholders-oriented, while the IHO website will continue to have a free accessible part available for the interested public outside the core IHO stakeholder community. This part will still maintain functions and content to discover and consult the main IHO public and communication means such as GIS functions, the relevant basic corporate documents (General Information, Strategic Plan, Organization, Work Programmes, Annual and Bulletin Reports etc.) and the entirety of IHO Standards.

4. The system will be introduced in a phased approach with the meeting registration module as the priority. This module is planned to be ready for testing in the fourth quarter of 2023 and for regular use from January 2024. The second module will be the centralized document management, to be tested in the first quarter of 2024 and taken into regular operation by end of the second quarter. Thanks to its modularity the system will be open for future extensions such as digital maintenance of IHO documents, C-55 and P-5 updating and GIS components. The decision about such expansion will be made as soon as stable operation of the first two modules have been achieved. Within the IHO Portal, the new concept for digital maintenance of IHO documents encompasses: the collaborative management of draft documents up to their final stage, the provision of these documents on the IHO website for consultation, the quick access to the documents of all active meetings (for the last three, the running and the forthcoming year), Assembly, Council, Committees, Working Groups and Project Teams, Circular Letters, the quick access to a new IHO digital structured archive (documents older than 4 years) with search functions, a “news-feed” in e-mail push mode to subscribers having an IHO portal account (useful when new documents/information are posted, revised, etc.)
5. In this context it should be noted, that all existing operational services in relation to IHO activities depending on other MoUs, administrative arrangements, management procedures (such as IHO DCDB, GEBCO Gazetteer, SCUFN Operational Web Services, SCUFN Archive, INTogIS, Github, IHO Geospatial Registry, Standards and Publications, voting and responses to CL using Formstack, etc.) are not yet planned to be incorporated into the new IHO-Portal at this stage of development.
6. The redesign of the provision of documents as envisioned by the introduction of the new IHO Portal results in needs for adaptation of the IHO website in some parts of the current structure. A migration plan to the adapted IHO website with the IHO Portal embedded will be developed and distributed to the IHO Member States by the end of 2023 via an “*ad hoc*” IHO CL.

Justification and Impacts

7. The Secretariat has undertaken a thorough market survey to determine if an *off-the-shelf* solution may be suitable to render the desired services or if a customized system would be more effective in terms of costs, efforts, and functionality. The envisioned solution combines the two worlds since it will be based on common technical means for encoding web oriented solutions, will be hosted locally to safeguard IHO native data and sensitive personal information and allow for later enhancement by third party contractors.
8. The introduction of the new IHO Portal, designed for meeting and document management, will result in some adaptations of the IHO website, but it will be kept to the minimum.
9. The costs for development of the IHO Portal and the resulting adaptation of the IHO website will be covered by the Special Project Fund; the technical maintenance will be covered by the annual IT budget.

Conclusions

10. The objective of this project is to improve the efficiency of the meeting and document management at the Secretariat and to ease the access to the relevant documents for all individuals involved or interested in the work of the IHO bodies.

Action Required of the Council

11. The Council is invited to:

- take note of the project,
- endorse the Secretariat's ambitions to further digitalize the services rendered to Member States;
- designate¹ representatives willing to be involved in the different testing and acceptance phases.

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