

**Report and recommendations from the Correspondence Group
for the preparatory process of IHO Strategic Plan 2027-2032**

Submitted by:	IHO Council Vice-Chair and Correspondence Group (Brazil, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States)
Executive Summary:	This submission provides a report on careful consideration of the Correspondence Group lead by the IHO Council Vice-Chair on the ways and means to prepare the next IHO Strategic Plan 2027-2032, and a recommendation on the establishment of the Strategic Plan Review Working Group (SPRWG) to provide a draft Strategic Plan in time for consideration by the 4 th IHO Assembly in 2026.
Related document:	Decision A3/8(e) List of Decisions and Actions from C-7

Introduction/ Background

1. IHO is promoting various initiatives to contribute to the safety of navigation throughout the world, such as the development of worldwide hydrographic standards including S-100 product specifications, the promotion of utilisation of hydrographic data for the benefit of society, and the improvement of each Member State's hydrographic capacity, based on the IHO Strategic Plan (SP) 2021-2026.
2. At the 3rd IHO Assembly, held in Monaco in May 2023, the Assembly instructed the Council to develop the next IHO SP covering the six-year period of 2027-2032, and to submit the result for adoption by the 4th IHO Assembly (A-4) to be held in 2026. The Council was empowered to establish a working group for this discrete purpose, if appropriate. (*Decision A3/8(e)*)
3. At the 7th IHO Council in October 2023, the Council acknowledged that the current structure of the SP was still relevant at the conceptual level (vision, goals, etc.), and agreed that the revised IHO SP will be positioned as a revision of the current SP in view of the ongoing transition to S-100 (*Decision C7/36*) and that a bottom-up approach, receiving inputs and comments from the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) and the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC), should be taken to prepare the draft IHO SP to be submitted to A-4. (*Decision C7/37*)
4. The Council has also agreed to establish a correspondence group (CG) to discuss on how to revise the current IHO SP, and to report the results of consideration to the 8th IHO Council (C-8) under the leadership of the Council Vice-Chair. BR, DE, DK, FR, GB, HR, JP, NO, NZ, SE, SG and US expressed their membership to the group (*Decision C7/38*).
5. CG has started its activity via e-mail from November 2023 to seek a feasible and tangible way to prepare the draft IHO SP for submission to A-4.

Discussion

Ways and means to prepare the next IHO SP

7. The next IHO SP, which defines the long-term goals of the IHO, should not be confined to the existing framework within the IHO; but rather, it is necessary to collect and discuss opinions from each committee with a broad perspective. For this purpose, the CG agreed to establish the Strategic Plan Review Working Group (SPRWG), an ad-hoc working group assigned to provide the draft IHO SP for A-4, as was the case for the drafting process of the current IHO SP.
8. As there is not much time left before the submission of proposed documents on the next IHO SP to A-4 (December 2025), SPRWG is required to draft them efficiently and effectively. Following the previous SPRWG system which led successful development of the current IHO SP, CG agreed to adopt two successive phases, the Scoping Phase and the Drafting Phase, as the basic activities of SPRWG. The Scoping Phase is a review of the current IHO SP, and the Drafting Phase consists of a review of the Strategic Performance Indicators and the preparation of the specific drafts.

Timeline of the SPRWG activity

9. As mentioned in the background, this revision is a bottom-up approach. SPRWG shall introduce the draft IHO SP to HSSC17 and IRCC17 before the 9th IHO Council (C-9) in 2025 for inputs and comments during the Drafting Phase. To achieve it in time, SPRWG should start the Drafting Phase in December 2024, aiming to make a first draft by the deadline of middle March 2025 for submission to HSSC17.
10. According to the above timeline, the Scoping Phase is required to conduct the review efficiently in a short period. For this reason, the Scoping Phase and the Drafting Phase should not necessarily be clearly separated but should be flexible to some degree.
11. After the endorsement of the draft IHO SP by C-9, the Council will propose it to A-4, and SPRWG will assist the Council in preparing the proposed documents and finalizing the draft of the next IHO SP.

ToR and RoP of SPRWG

12. The roles of SPRWG and the process to develop the IHO SP proposed in this document are much the same to the previous ones, except for two points: adoption of the bottom-up approach and a shorter allotted time frame for drafting. Therefore, ToR and RoP of SPRWG of this time (Annex A) were drafted based on the previous ones with modification of the above two points.

Recommendations

13. To establish SPRWG with its proposed ToR, RoP and timeline table (Annex B) to efficiently and effectively revise the current IHO SP.
14. To select the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary of SPRWG for enabling its early actions after C-8, if the establishment of SPRWG is approved.

Action Required of the Council

15. The Council is invited to:

- a) note this report.
- b) approve the establishment of SPRWG.
- c) select the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary of SPRWG.
- d) approve ToR and RoP of SPRWG as presented in Annex A.
- e) notify SPRWG to consider the timeline in Annex B.
- f) task the IHO Secretariat to issue an IHO Circular Letter to invite the Member States to SPRWG at the earliest possible time after C-8, so that SPRWG can start its relevant activity on 1 November 2024.
- g) take any other action if appropriate.