

IHO File No S1/0623

CIRCULAR LETTER 46/2021
10 December 2021

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS IN HYBRID FORMAT

Reference: IHO Circular Letter 36/2018 dated 18 June 2018 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IHO WORK PROGRAMME AND REQUEST FOR MEMBER STATES TO CONSIDER HOSTING MEETINGS.

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The last two years have been characterized by the COVID 19 pandemic, which still has an enormous impact both on the work of the Secretariat and on the conduct of the IHO meetings, which have been almost entirely reconfigured into video conferences, with almost exclusive remote participation.
2. In view of the general evolution of the situation and the implementation of behavioral and health measures to contain the virus from spreading, in addition to the existing recommendations and guidelines issued in Reference, it is the intention - starting in 2022 - to schedule meetings at the IHO Secretariat. The meetings will be in "Hybrid format", encouraging participation in person as a priority, while guaranteeing - at the same time - the possibility for all those unable to travel to France/Principality of Monaco from their respective countries, to participate remotely.
3. The above participation will be bound by the following general rules:
 - a. Possibility of travel to and from France/Principality of Monaco, according to the rules under the following France and Monaco government's link for travelers from abroad: <https://mobile.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/L-actu-du-Ministere/Certificate-of-international-travel> and <https://covid19.mc/en/travel/i-come-from-abroad/> (updates will be communicated in proximity of the meetings);
 - b. Strict compliance with the World Health Organization's health regulations and with the rules of social distancing in force in the Principality of Monaco. Please note that antigen tests on the spot may be requested as prerequisite to attend the meeting prior to the start of each session;
 - c. All individuals granted access to the Secretariat's building will be asked to present their vaccination status certificate (*pass sanitaire* in French) or proof of a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of travelling and observe social distancing guidelines, which includes the wearing of facemasks where mandatory inside the Secretariat and use of hydro-alcoholic gel or spray (provided by the Secretariat);
 - d. Maximum capacity in the main conference room of the Secretariat is around 30 (maximum 40) attendees. The exact number will be fixed depending on the meeting. The priority order for participation in the meetings is the order of on-line registration by the participants. It is highly recommended to register no later than 2 months before the meeting;
 - e. Meetings will be arranged in hybrid format under the condition that the in-person participation meets the quorum of one third of the official Membership list of the working

- group, of the sub-committee, etc. The meeting will be in VTC format only otherwise, for a duration of more than two full business days;
- f. Hybrid meetings will normally be conducted in the Monaco time zone, during normal business hours. In addition to the normal arrangements available in the conference room, all in-person participants will be requested to use their own laptop, headsets and microphone allowing them to be fully connected to the meeting platform selected for the event. Information on the specific conduct of meetings and social breaks will be communicated in the run-up to the meeting;
 - g. Where required, information and support can be provided by the Secretariat regarding any post-arrival or pre-departure testing or quarantine requirements for participants travelling to Monaco. Any support required must be indicated before a participant begins travel in their home country. All associated costs will be borne by the participant and the Secretariat declines all responsibility in the event of infection or difficulties that occur before, during and after the meeting in Monaco.
4. The IHO Secretariat encourages IHO Member States that have planned to host IHO meetings to review the way they conduct them, giving preference to the "Hybrid format" as of 2022, if the evolution of the COVID 19 pandemic and the locally applicable rules allow it.
 5. It is recommended that the prospective hosts of "Hybrid" IHO meetings use the guidelines above and adapt as required by the relevant local circumstances and regulations in place at the time of the meeting. Hosts are invited to inform the registered participants about the applicable rules well in advance of the meeting.
 6. To maintain remote participation in such "hybrid" meetings, a well-functioning technical infrastructure is essential. This includes high quality equipment for camera, loudspeaker, microphones and beamer technology as well as sufficient bandwidth for broadband transmission and receipt. Preference should be given to popular VTC providers and pretesting of connectivity well in advance of the commencement of the meeting is recommended.
 7. The incoming and outgoing remote contributions to the meeting should be recorded if technically possible to assist with record keeping. The recording should be brought repeatedly to the awareness of the participants at the start of every session.
 8. The work of the various Committees, Subcommittees, Working Groups and Project Teams of the IHO is usually based on consensus. Voting should be avoided on "Hybrid" meetings. For cases of a compelling need to vote, clear regulations for the technical conduct by means of the VTC technology in use have to be explained by the chair. This explanation shall be individually confirmed by each remote participant before the voting procedure commences.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Mathias JONAS
Secretary-General