

**IHO File No S3/0104 & CBSC**

**CIRCULAR LETTER 37/2026**

**29 June 2026**

**NEW EDITIONS OF IHO PUBLICATIONS S-5A, S-5B, S-8A AND S-8B STANDARDS OF COMPETENCE  
– CALL FOR APPROVAL -**

References:

- A. IRCC14 – List of Decisions, Actions and Recommendations – Decision IRCC14/31
- B. IHO Circular letter 31/2024 dated 26 July 2024
- C. IHO Resolution 2/2007 as amended - Principles and Procedures for Making Changes to IHO Technical Standards and Specifications
- D. IHO Circular letter 48/2025 dated 19 December 2025

Dear Hydrographer,

1. In accordance with the FIG/IHO/ICA International Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers (IBSC) Work Plan which was endorsed by the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) at its 14th meeting (Reference A), the IBSC developed new editions of the IHO Publications S-5B and S-5A Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors, and S-8B and S-8A Standards of Competence for Nautical Cartographers and Marine Geospatial Analysts.

2. The interrelated consultation process with stakeholders began in 2023 and has included more than eight workshops, as well as a survey issued under Reference B.

3. In order to complete the consultation process in accordance with IHO Res. 2/2007 as amended (Reference C), the draft new editions of the IHO Publications S-5A, S-5B, S-8A and S-8B were made available for Member States' and Stakeholders for their comments by Reference D. Comments and feedback received were considered by the IBSC and integrated into the respective Standards.

4. IBSC reported to the IRCC at its eighteenth meeting in June 2026 in Lima, Peru together with the revised draft Editions 2.0.0 of IHO Publications S-5B, S-5A, S-8B and S-8A. IRCC endorsed the four draft Editions 2.0.0 of IHO Publications S-5B, S-5A, S-8B and S-8A (Decision IRCC18/055) and requested the IHO Secretariat to seek approval directly from Member States (Action IRCC18/56) through Circular Letter voting.

5. Member States are invited to take note of the endorsement provided by the IRCC and to consider adopting Editions 2.0.0 of IHO Publications S-5B, S-5A, S-8B, and S-8A. These draft publications are available on the IHO website under Publications > [Draft Publications](#) > Draft Publications Awaiting Approval by Member States.

Member States are requested to submit their votes, no later than **17 August 2026**, via the following link: [https://IHO.formstack.com/forms/cl\\_37\\_2026](https://IHO.formstack.com/forms/cl_37_2026).

6. In accordance with Article IX (f) of the IHO Convention as amended, the decision shall be taken by a majority of the Member States that cast a vote before the deadline, with the minimum number of affirmative votes being at least one-third of all Member States entitled to vote on the date of issue of this Circular Letter.

7. Subject to approval by the Member States of the new editions of IHO Publications S-5B, S-5A, S-8B, and S-8A, institutions seeking recognition of their programmes by the IBSC in 2027 (at the IBSC50 meeting) will be required to submit their programmes in accordance with Edition 2.0.0 of IHO Publications S-5B, S-5A, S-8B and S-8A. To allow institutions additional time to prepare their submissions, the usual submission deadline has been extended by one month, from the end of December 2026 to the end of January 2027.

On behalf of the Secretary-General

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luigi Sinapi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Luigi SINAPI  
Director