INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

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WORK PROGRAMME

Introduction of the Port Call Optimization (PCO) Guide: a guide for ports which provides access to a minimum set of port data for the safe and sustainable navigation of SOLAS vessels from port to port and berth to berth.

Submitted by IAPH and IHMA

SUMMARY

Executive summary:	This submission completements document FAL 50/17 (Netherlands et al) and introduces the PCO Guide: a guide for ports which provides access to a minimum set of port data for the safe and sustainable navigation of SOLAS vessels from port to port and berth to berth. This way, ports become part of a worldwide network of ports where their stakeholders have access to the same data at the same time, based on the same standards.
Strategic direction, if applicable:	5
Output:	Not applicable
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 19
Related document:	FAL 50/17; FAL.5/Circ.42/Rev.4; FAL.5/Circ.55; FAL.5/Circ.46; FAL 46/INF.3; FAL 49/INF.6; Resolution MEPC.323(74);

Background

1 Having agreed the need to encourage further cooperation between ports and shipping to facilitate the reduction of GHG emissions from ships, Resolution MEPC.323(74) invited Member States to, inter alia, support the industry's collective efforts to improve quality and availability of data and develop necessary global digital data standards that would allow reliable and efficient data exchange between ship and shore, as well as, enhanced slot allocation policies, thereby optimizing voyages and port calls and facilitating just-in-time arrival of ships.

2 Document FAL 50/17 by Netherlands, et al. proposes to include a new output on the development of Guidelines on port nautical information. Specifically, it highlights the need for a standardized and harmonized approach towards the collection and sharing of port nautical information to improve the safety and efficiency of shipping.

3 This submission complements this proposal by introducing a Port Call Optimization (PCO) Guide for ports on accessing a minimum set of port data for the safe and sustainable navigation of SOLAS vessels from port to port and berth to berth.

4 Optimization of voyages and port calls is based on a business process of port calls. This business process applies to all types of shipping and all types of ports as it is based on IMO regulations and BIMCO contracts. Within this process, three types of data sets are identified: nautical, operational and administrative data.

5 Nautical data: for optimizing ship-berth compatibility for chartering and for berth to berth navigation. IMO FAL 49/INF.6 introduced the "Guidelines for harmonized communication and electronic exchange of nautical data for port calls" based on standards of IHO and ISO and the business process of port calls.

6 Operational data: for optimizing ship speed, berth to berth navigation, and reducing fatigue for Captains and Crews. IMO FAL 47 approved the "Guidelines for harmonized communication and electronic exchange of operational data for port calls" based on standards on the IMO Compendium and the business process of port calls.

7 Administrative data: notifications and declarations to port authorities for vessel clearance and optimizing port stay, and to reduce the administrative burden on Captains, especially on voyages between nearby ports. IMO FAL approved the Guide for administrative data based on the IMO Compendium, FAL 5-Circ. 42-rev.2, and ISO standards.

8 Just as SOLAS compliant vessels are required to carry a minimum set of equipment on board in accordance with SOLAS requirements, stakeholders in ports and shipping have also discussed what constitutes the minimum set of port data necessary to facilitate the operation of SOLAS vessels from port to port and berth to berth. This includes:

- Identification of the port's terminals and their berths (nautical data).
- Planned Time of Arrival at Pilot Boarding Place and Planned Time of Departure from Berth (operational data).

9 These data elements have been identified as most critical for ensuring safe and sustainable navigation of SOLAS vessels from port to port and berth to berth. Each port may exchange additional data beyond the minimum requirements, as long as the port meets the minimum criteria. This is similar to how SOLAS vessels may carry extra equipment on board.

10 While notifications and declarations to port authorities are also important, especially as they can contribute to crew fatigue and delays, most port authorities do not control the Maritime Single Window. Therefore, administrative data is excluded from the scope of this guide for now.

11 A PCO Guide was developed to support harbor masters, as they are seen as the neutral facilitator to bring parties together. The guide can also support IT personnel of the port, policy makers and solution providers. The guide outlines how ports can join a global network of ports which provide access to this data through a global and ready-to-go connection, ensuring all stakeholders have access to the same data at the same time.

12 The PCO Guide is based on *"Guidelines for harmonized communication and electronic exchange of nautical data for port calls" and "Guidelines for harmonized communication and electronic exchange of operational data for port calls"* as discussed in paragraphs 3 and 4

13 The PCO Guide technical standards are based on the testing of nautical data in the Singapore Lab and the exchange of data between the port of Rotterdam and the Hydrographic Office of the Netherlands, and the testing of operational data in the Digital Corridor between ports of Singapore and Rotterdam, both presented during IMO FAL 49.

14 It is built on universally accepted IMO and IHO standards which are the same for every port and every vessel, ensuring consistency across all ports and vessels. Additionally, it incorporates the ISO standard for location identifiers and times in the supply chain, recognizing the port's central role in the global supply chain.

15 Acknowledging that both the port and shipping industries remain on a steep learning curve and are inherently conservative, the scope of data is deliberately restricted. Data exchange is based on simple yet robust techniques, following established chains of command and existing contractual frameworks.

16 Overall, implementing such technical standards will:

- Reduce ship emissions en route, in and around ports, terminals and port cities.
- Ensure greater safety and compliance and improve rest hour planning of crew on board.
- Have subsequent benefits on the overall efficiency of the global supply chain.

17 The guide is a Joint Industry Paper, developed in collaboration with all initiatives connected to the PCO Network and IMO NGOs, which can be viewed via the following link: https://sustainableworldports.org/wp-content/uploads/Port-Call-Optimization-Guide-1-0.pdf.

18 The guide will be valid from 1 April 2026 to 1 April 2031. Then the guide will be updated to ensure that the scope, their standards and guidelines are still up to date.

Action requested of the Committee

19 The Committee is invited to:

.1 not the information provided in this document; and

.2 attend a lunchtime presentation on 23 March 2026 introducing the PCO Guide.