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# IALA MEMBERSHIP

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Effective from August 2024, IALA has become the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation, an Intergovernmental Organization (IGO)**

**Join our organization to spread maritime navigation safety around the world and experience the benefits of fostering “successful voyages, sustainable planet”**

IALA's motto of “successful voyages, sustainable planet” encapsulates its principal aim: to foster the safe, economic, and efficient movement of vessels, through improvement and harmonisation of aids to navigation worldwide and other appropriate means, for the benefit of the maritime community and the protection of the environment.

### **Why you should join IALA**

Being a member of this dynamic and proactive organization will enable you to influence aids to navigation developments, taking account of evolving science and technology and based on proper risk assessment to ensure the right balance between traditional aids to navigation and new systems and technologies available in the digital age. Specifically, you will benefit from:

- sharing knowledge and expertise in specific areas with peers from around the world;
- learning about experiences of others including best practices and risk control measures developed for navigationally difficult or confined waterways and sea areas, where the appropriately adequate provision of aids to navigation can make the difference between life and death for mariners and prevent accidents resulting in costly damage or loss;
- meeting with authorities responsible for the provision of marine aids to navigation, manufacturers and suppliers of equipment, systems and technologies;
- participating in the creation and updating of IALA Standards, Recommendations and Guidelines for aids to navigation and related services, such as Vessel Traffic Services, as appropriate; and
- be part of a worldwide maritime community that speaks with one voice in international forums and on regulatory matters impacting on safety of navigation

### **Membership Categories**

There are four types of Members in IALA

- **Member State** : a State that has consented to be bound by the Convention and for which the Convention is in force.
- **Associate Member** : a territory or group of territories for which a Member State has responsibility for its international relations and for which it has requested membership which has been approved by the General Assembly, and national members of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities from States that are not Member States, in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Annex.
- **Affiliate Member**: any other organization or scientific agency concerned with Marine Aids to Navigation which has applied for membership, and which has been approved by the Council.
- **Affiliate Industrial Member**: a manufacturer or distributor of Marine Aids to Navigation equipment for sale, or an organization providing Marine Aids to Navigation services or technical advice under contract which has applied for membership, and which has been approved by the Council.

On 6 February 2026, IALA counts 345 members consisting of 46 Member States, 48 Associate members, 78 Affiliate members and 173 Affiliate Industrial members. More information on IALA membership can be found at the dedicated page of the IALA on the website: <https://www.iala.int/about-iala/membership/>

### **Status, Structure, Strategy and Objectives**

IALA is now an Intergovernmental organization established under international law. However, it remains a technical and consultative organization. Its aim is to bring together governments and organizations concerned with the regulation, provision, maintenance or operation of Marine Aids to Navigation in order to further the objectives of fostering the safe and efficient movement of vessels through the improvement and harmonization of Marine Aids to Navigation worldwide ; promoting access to technical cooperation and capacity building on all



matters related to the development and transfer of expertise, science and technology; encouraging and facilitating the general adoption of the highest practicable standard; and providing for the exchange of information on matters under consideration by the Organization in matters in relation to Marine Aids to Navigation for the benefit of the maritime community and as defined in Art. 3 of the Convention.

IALA is governed by a General Assembly and administrated by 25 Council members elected, including the President and Vice-President, all consisting of Member States.

The IALA Strategic Vision for the period 2024-2027 sets two principal goals:

- (i) Ensure that Marine Aids to Navigation are developed and harmonised through international cooperation and the provision of standards, and that
- (ii) All coastal States contribute to a sustainable and efficient global network of Marine Aids to Navigation through capacity building and the sharing of expertise.

Since its inception in 1957, enjoyed its status as an International Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) In 2014, the General Assembly determined that IALA should strive to achieve international Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) status as soon as possible and for this purpose develop an international treaty instrument “IALA Convention” open for entry by all members of the United Nations. The new Convention was adopted at the Diplomatic Conference which took place in Kuala Lumpur from 25-28 February 2020. Then it was open for signature on 27 January 2021 for a one-year period in Paris by France as Depositary State. This ended up on 26 January 2022 with 50 signatures at a signing ceremony organized by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs at IALA Headquarters.

The International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) constituted as an Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) on 22 August 2024, when the Convention entered into force, after the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs has informed the Secretariat that they, in their capacity as depositary for the Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation, received the 30<sup>th</sup> instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession on the 24 May 2024.

The IALA Convention provides IALA with a robust international legal identity, in accordance with modern principles of transparent and sound governance. IGO status strengthens further the existing close cooperation between IALA and other intergovernmental organizations but also allows for a broader participation in IALA by States, through direct involvement at Government level. Ever closer co-operation with governments and with other intergovernmental organizations will benefit efforts to meet IALA’s principal aim of continuously improving upon the safety of navigation worldwide, by achieving greater harmonization of aids to navigation and related services, such as VTS and increasingly also the shore-based aspects of e-navigation.

Global harmonization, through the establishment of international cooperation and the provision of coherent standards, is critically important to the enhancement of maritime safety and the protection of the environment because it eliminates ambiguity, thus avoiding confusion on the part of mariners as the principal users of aids to navigation and reducing the risk of accidents.

Furthermore, the synergies resulting from better coordination and greater integration of standards will help to optimize available resources in the interests of maritime safety. IALA firmly believes that IGO status, underpinned by the IALA Convention, will ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose for decades to come and foster its work as the peak international technical body in its field. A most updated information on the progress of the ratifications can be found on the dedicated page of the website through the following link: <https://www.iala.int/the-igo-project/>

## Activities and Achievements

IALA is at the forefront of several international endeavours. Its contribution in the development of these major initiatives is universally acknowledged and has been recognised by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

For example, the IALA Maritime Buoyage System (MBS) is universally implemented and referenced in the IMO's International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS regulation V/13). The uniformity it introduced has radically improved navigational safety for mariners, who, in the 1970s, had to contend with some thirty disparate systems around the world.

The IALA Conference, held every three years, brings together the world's leading experts in the provision of aids to navigation and related services. World experts also gather at the three-yearly Symposia.

IALA develops guidance documents through the regular work of its technical committees also called "the engine room" which comprise Marine Aids to Navigation authorities, subject matter experts, manufacturer and consultants from around the world.

Over the years, key achievements of IALA have included, in addition to the MBS, and in no particular order of priority, model courses for the training and certification of aids to navigation managers, technicians and Vessel Traffic Services(VTS) personnel; the development of waterway risk models (PAWSA and IWRAP Mk2); a harmonised maritime Differential Global Navigation Satellite System (DGNSS) service; guidance on the marking of offshore structures; guidance on heritage; the development of the IMO-mandated Automatic Identification System (AIS).

## Cooperation with International Sister Organizations

IALA works closely with the International Hydrographic Organisation (**IHO**) and plays an active part in the work of the **IMO**. IALA is represented regularly at relevant IMO committee and sub-committee meetings and the SOLAS Convention draws directly on the work of IALA. In 2012, the IMO supported the establishment of the IALA World-Wide Academy – the training and capacity building arm of IALA – and requested to be kept updated on the work carried out jointly by the IMO, IALA and IHO in capacity building under the United Nations "Delivering as One" initiative.

In addition, IALA cooperates with other relevant international organizations and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Navigation Association (**PIANC**), the Comité International Radio Maritime (**CIRM**), the International Harbour Masters Association (**IHMA**), the Nautical Institute (**NI**), the International Mobile Satellite Organization (**IMSO**), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (**SPC**), the International Maritime Pilots Association (**IMPA**), the Service Hydrographique et Océanographique de la Marine (**SHOM**) and the Maritime Organization for West and Central Africa (**MOWCA**).

## IALA World-Wide Academy

The IALA World-Wide Academy (WWA) is the vehicle by which IALA delivers training and capacity building around the world. It is an integral, but independently funded part of IALA. Its strategy is to facilitate the delivery of aids to navigation and VTS model courses by accredited training organisations in each of its target regions (for more details see the IALA Guidelines 1014 and 1100).

The Academy has been operating since 2012 and its activities in developing countries continue to grow at a rapid pace, in the context of maritime development, as these countries need to have a cadre of competent personnel to ensure they meet their obligations under international law (i.e. SOLAS Convention) to provide marine aids to navigation and, where appropriate, VTS.

IALA and its Academy together are in a uniquely strong position to assist Coastal States for the purpose of awareness raising, training and capacity building in aids to navigation and VTS management matters, through the network of IALA-endorsed experts.

A dedicated WWA webpage is accessible through the following link : <https://academy.iala.int/wwa/>

## IALA Conferences and Symposia

Every three years, the IALA Conference brings together all its membership categories leading experts in the provision of aids to navigation service and the IALA VTS Symposium all its leading VTS experts.

## IALA Committees

The IALA Committees develop the wide-ranging technical guidance documents for which IALA is renowned and truly are its 'engine room'. They bring together marine aids to navigation authorities, subject matter experts, manufacturers, and consultants from all parts of the world.

Participation in the work of the Committees offers the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of maritime safety worldwide in a variety of ways, in particular by:

- Contributing expertise and comparing experiences with other IALA members;
- Exchanging views with peers in the international maritime community;
- Participating in the development of guidance on new systems and technologies;
- Enabling the worldwide maritime community to speak as one voice in international forums at a time when marine requirements run the risk of being lost within a fast developing technological context;
- Meeting with suppliers or customers and contribute to the development of "best practice" products.

There are four IALA Committees and each meets twice a year:

- Aids to Navigation Requirements and Management (**ARM**)
- Digital Technologies (**DTEC**)
- Aids to Navigation Engineering and Sustainability (**ENG**)
- Vessel Traffic Services (**VTS**)

The Committees periodically organise seminars and workshops on specific subjects to share information and research new and developing techniques for the provision of aids to navigation benefiting maritime safety. These events are held in key locations around the world. Calendar of meetings is available on IALA website: [www.iala.int](http://www.iala.int)

Participation in the Committees is open to all IALA members. A more detailed information on the structure of the Committees and their respective tasks ("technical domains") is enclosed, covering the work programme for the current four-year period 2023-2027.

## IALA Panels and Heritage Forum

The **IALA Policy Advisory Panel (PAP)** coordinates the work of the four IALA Committees, ensuring that there is proper liaison and full cooperation on matters of common concern. It also has the task to consider and, as appropriate, advise the Council on the coordination of policy matters to enhance international co-operation with regard to the development and maintenance of aids to navigation systems, and to draw attention to any policy changes that are implied and submit them to the Council for approval or adoption, as appropriate.

The **IALA Legal Advisory Panel (LAP)** provides expert legal advice and support on legal issues pertaining to the provision of aids to navigation and related services and which affect the members an in particular, Member States, Associate members and IALA as an organization.

The **IALA Heritage Forum** is a discussion forum concerned with the preservation of historic structures and artefacts. Items brought to its attention range from the maintenance and repair of historic lighthouses (e.g. protection from the impact of modern technology) to ownership and management of surplus property, public access and complementary use (e.g. for tourism).

## IALA Publications

The principal result of the work of the IALA Committees is the production of IALA documentation with a view to publication. IALA publications comprise:

- **Standards**, which form an overarching framework aimed at fostering the safe and efficient movement of vessels; their implementation by all coastal states will enhance both the quality and the harmonization of marine aids to navigation worldwide.
- **Recommendations**, which specify *what* practices shall be carried out in order to comply with that recommendation, and may be referenced, in full or in part, in an IALA Standard.
- **Guidelines**, which describe how to implement practices normally specified in a Recommendation.
- **Manuals**, which give a detailed overview of a specific topic. Currently, this includes : NAVGUIDE; VTS Manual; Complementary Lighthouse Use Manual; and MarCom Manual.
- **Model courses**, which are training documents defining the level of training and the knowledge needed for VTS personnel, Aids to Navigation Managers and Aids to Navigation Technicians

These publications, although guidance documents and therefore not legally binding, are universally acknowledged as forming an authoritative package of best practices. A Technical Catalogue covering the technical guidance and containing an overall view of the standards, recommendations, guidelines, and model courses in force with a summary is available for free download at the dedicated on our website through the following link: <https://www.iala.int/guidance-publications/>

### **What you need to do to become a member**

- **Any State non- member** of IALA (Association) that has signed the Convention may ratify, approved or accept the Convention to become a **Member State** of IALA.
- **Any State member of the United Nations** which did not have the opportunity to sign the Convention may accede to it, as stated in the Convention Art. 18.3. to become a **Member State** of IALA.
- **Any Territory or group of territories** may join the organization as **Associate member** upon request by the Member State which has responsibility for its international relations, subject to approval by the General Assembly.
- **Any organization** which is eligible for Affiliate or Affiliate membership may fill out the application form attached and send it back to [lmb@iala.int](mailto:lmb@iala.int) to become a member.

All applications are submitted for approval to the IALA Council, which meets twice a year, in June and December.

IALA is prepared in certain cases to accept applications in principle to enable an organization to benefit from its membership rights as early as possible. In such fast-track cases, a provisional letter of acceptance and a first year's fee invoice are sent to the new member. Once the fee is settled, the new member is granted full rights. Applications that are accepted in principle are however subject to formal endorsement by the Council.

### **Membership contributions and fees**

Membership is automatically renewed every year unless a formal resignation notice is received by 31<sup>st</sup> December at the Secretariat. The rates are adjusted and agreed by the General Assembly for a three-years period. Calls for contributions (Member States) and for fees (Associate, Affiliate and Affiliate Industrial members) are sent out in early September. The deadline for payment is 31<sup>st</sup> January of the year which they are due.

IALA relies heavily on membership contributions and fees from its members. Without these funds, IALA would not be able to provide the high -quality services expected of it. Therefore, the importance of their payment before the due date cannot be overstated.

More information on the organization can found on the IALA website: <https://www.iala.int/>. For membership matters, please refer to the Head of International Relations, Lorraine Mbong, at [lmb@iala.int](mailto:lmb@iala.int).





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