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CIRCULAR LETTER 57/2026
21 October 2026

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT TEAM ON BODY OF GOVERNANCE AS ESTABLISHED BY THE 10th MEETING OF THE IHO COUNCIL

Reference:

A. 10th Meeting of the IHO Council – Decision C10/74
B. IHO General Regulations - Edition 2.1.3, 2024.

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The IHO Council established, at its 10th Meeting in reference, a Body of Governance Project Team (BoGPT), to develop a *Body of Governance* documentation setting out staff code of conduct principles, protected reporting channels, complaint-handling principles (whistleblowing) and transparent procurement procedures. This Project Team, open to all Member States, will be officially activated from 1st December 2026.

2. In accordance with Art. 6. (b) and Art. 6. (g) (i) of the IHO General Regulations (Reference B) and following the instructions from the IHO Council, Member States are invited to indicate or confirm their intention to join the BoGPT as members and to indicate their readiness to act as one of the Office Bearers (Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary).

3. Member States are also invited to provide, if any, their comments on the draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures (ToRs & RoPs) provided as Annex and made available on the BoGPT section of the IHO Portal, **no later than 30 November 2026**, by email (cl-lc@iho.int).

4. A formal kickoff meeting is expected to take place as a virtual event in the week commencing in December, to be confirmed upon BoGPT activation.

Yours sincerely,

Rear-Admiral Luigi Sinapi
IHO Secretary-General

Annex: Draft Terms of References and Rules of Procedure of the Project Team.

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Body of Governance Project Team (BoGPT)
Terms of Reference & Rules of Procedure

1. Preamble

1.1. Recognizing the need to evolve IHO Workforce resolution (IHO Res. 05/2026) and Staff Regulations (M-7 Edition 10.0.0, June 2026), the IHO Council agreed (Decision C10/074) to establish a Project Team (**BoGPT**) on that matter.

1.2. This document provides the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures of that Project Team, as approved at the first (kick-off) meeting of the Project Team.

2. Terms of Reference

2.1. To develop a Body of Governance (BoG) documentation setting out:
- staff code of conduct principles,
- protected reporting channels,
- complaint-handling principles (whistleblower protections), and
- transparent procurement procedures.

2.2. Provide a draft final report at 11th IHO Council meeting for endorsement and recommendations.

2.3. These Terms of Reference can be amended in accordance with Article 6 of the General Regulations.

3. Rules of Procedures

3.1. The Project Team is open to all Member States. It shall be composed of representatives of Member States. The IHO Secretariat is invited to contribute to the activities of the Project Team via its Secretary-General and the Representatives of the IHO Staff, as Observers. Subject matter experts in relevant areas should also be involved to the activity of the Project Team, on case-by-case basis and if deemed necessary by the Chair.

3.2. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be a representative of a Member State having a seat at the Council. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary shall be confirmed at the first (kick-off) meeting of the Project Team. If the Chair is unable to carry out the duties of the office, the Vice-Chair shall act as the Chair with the same powers and duties.

3.3. The Project Team should normally work by correspondence, with the possibility to hold meetings if decided by the Project Team. The Chair or any member of the Project Team, with the agreement of the simple majority of all members of the Project Team, can call extraordinary meetings. Meetings of this Project Team should essentially be held as an online (VTC) event. Should an in person meeting be necessary, the schedule of such event should be done in conjunction with any other IHO meetings. Besides, all participants to a meeting of the Project Team shall ideally inform the Chair and Secretary in advance of their intention to attend.

3.4. Recommendations of the Project Team shall generally be made by consensus.

3.5. The draft record of meetings shall be distributed by the BoGPT Secretary within ten working days of the end of meetings. Participants' comments should be returned within ten working days of the date of despatch. Final minutes of meetings should be distributed to all IHO Member States and posted on the IHO Portal within thirty days after a meeting. The IHO Secretariat will provide its support to the BoGPT Secretary.

3.6. The working language of the Project Team shall be English.

3.7. Recommendations of the Project Team shall be submitted to the 11th IHO Council meeting for endorsement. The BoGPT Secretary shall prepare the documents required for submission to C-11.

3.8. The Project Team will be disbanded after C-11, if appropriate.

3.9. These Rules of Procedure can be amended in accordance with Article 6 of the General Regulations.