

High Speed Craft Consultative Committee (HSCCC)

**Proposal to Revoke the Recognition of
Expired Foreign Certificate of Competency**

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to seek members' view on the proposal to revoke the exemption for Hong Kong seafarers holding expired Seagoing Certificate of Competency (CoC) issued by Recognized Maritime Administrations¹ from the requirement of examinations for the issue of Certificate of Competency (River Trade) of corresponding classes as specified in the "Certificates of Competency and Licences for Marine Engineer Officers and Electro-technical Officers Determinations, 2012 Edition" (Determinations).

Background

2. In accordance with Section 4, 6 and 9 of the Merchant Shipping (Seafarers) (Certification of Officers) Regulation, Cap 478J, officers serving on river trade high speed craft (HSC) shall hold either one of following certifications and a Type Rating Certificate:-

- 1 Hong Kong Certificate of Competency (CoC) (Sea-going);
- 2 Hong Kong CoC (River Trade);
- 3 Hong Kong Licence.

3. After the full implementation of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended in 1995 (STCW 95) on 1 February 2002, all CoCs and Licences are to be revalidated at interval of not exceeding five years. These rules apply to all foreign and Hong Kong CoCs. All CoCs expire if they fail to revalidate within the specified period.

4. Between 2007 and 2008, there were 14 Hong Kong registered HSCs joining the river trade services. These HSCs would require 120 additional qualified officers to maintain the services. Due to the surge in manpower demand, there had been a severe shortage of

¹ Recognized Maritime Administrations refers to Administrations whose seagoing certificate of competency is recognized by the Director of Marine for the issue of a Hong Kong licence.

qualified officers at that time. To solve the problem, the marine industry identified that there were sufficient Hong Kong seafarers available in Hong Kong holding a foreign seagoing CoC issued by a Recognized Maritime Administration but these CoC had not been revalidated and become expired.

5. The Marine Department conducted a study to find out the equivalent competence standard for the River Trade operation of these HSCs. The study revealed that these expired foreign seagoing CoC holders could meet the river trade competency standard provided that the CoC were obtained by examination, not by reciprocal recognition. Considering the imminent shortage of supply, it was agreed at that time that these expired foreign seagoing CoC holder would be issued with a River Trade CoC of the same grade and be permitted to work onboard the River Trade HSC.

Proposal

6. During the recent years, the number of HSCs plying between Hong Kong and Macau has been decreasing while the supply of qualified officers is in the increasing trend. Therefore the problem of shortage of supply of River Trade CoC officers does not exist and the recognition of the expired foreign seagoing CoC is no longer considered necessary. It is proposed that the practice of issuance of a River Trade CoC by virtue of an expired foreign CoC should be revoked.

Consultation

7. Members are requested to give their comments/views on the proposal.

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