

Information Paper

Hong Kong Fleet Operation Advisory Committee **Revised Eligibility Criteria for the Authorization of Recognized Organizations (ROs)**

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to inform members on the revised eligibility criteria (Eligibility Criteria) for authorizing ROs to perform statutory certification and services¹ for Hong Kong registered ships on behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Background

2. The Code for Recognized Organizations (RO Code) sets out the minimum international criteria for flag Administrations to assess the competence and performance of ROs through harmonized and transparent mechanisms. To further enhance and clarify the authorization process, the Marine Department (MD) revised the Eligibility Criteria for authorizing ROs.

Revised Eligibility Criteria

3. To uphold the quality of Hong Kong-registered ships and the performance of ROs, organizations seeking recognition as ROs and currently authorized ROs shall meet the following revised Eligibility Criteria:

- (i) ROs shall hold full membership in the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) to ensure effective risk management and quality assurance;
- (ii) ROs shall maintain a representative office in Hong Kong to facilitate effective communication and technical support;

¹ This includes statutory certification and services related to Merchant Shipping (Safety) Ordinance (Cap. 369), Merchant Shipping (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Ordinance (Cap. 413), Merchant Shipping (Seafarers) Ordinance (Cap. 478), Merchant Shipping (Security of Ships and Port Facilities) Ordinance (Cap. 582), etc. (where applicable).

- (iii) ROs shall be capable of assigning exclusive surveyors to conduct surveys and audits onboard Hong Kong-registered ships in major trading ports worldwide within five working days upon notification;
- (iv) ROs shall comply with all applicable international conventions, codes, and Hong Kong laws governing statutory certification;
- (v) ROs are capable of transferring class and statutory data to MD in accordance with IACS Recommendation No. 75 (Format for Electronic Exchange of Class and Statutory Data), as amended from time to time, or equivalent on monthly basis as specified by MD;
- (vi) The RO's quality management system shall be certified by an accreditation body that is signatory to the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Multinational Recognition Agreement as detailed in the RO Code;
- (vii) The RO's five-year annual average number of Port State Control (PSC) inspections under major PSC – Memorandums of Understanding (PSC MOUs²), including Tokyo MOU, Paris MOU and the United States Coast Guard, shall rank the twelfth or better among all classification societies;
- (viii) The five-year annual average of the ROs' PSC detention rate shall not be 50% higher than the respective average detention rate under major PSC MOUs; and
- (ix) the organization shall be initially audited by MD at its headquarters, followed by subsequent audits if necessary.

Way Forward

4. Members are invited to note the revised Eligibility Criteria outlined in paragraph 3 above.

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Shipping Division

Marine Department

² PSC MOUs as detailed in IMO resolution A.682(17) on Regional co-operation in the control of ships and discharges promoting the conclusion of regional agreements.