

Review and modernization of the GMDSS

Submitted by IHB

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document provides comments on the Report of the Correspondence Group containing an outline of the Detailed Review of the GMDSS, which are relevant to WWNWS-SC

Action to be taken: Paragraph 2.

Related documents: NCSR 2/9/2 dated 16 January 2015

1. See attached document.
2. The Sub-Committee is invited to note the information provided and take action as appropriate.

SUB-COMMITTEE ON NAVIGATION,
COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND
RESCUE
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Agenda item 9

NCSR 2/9/2
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**FIRST OUTLINE OF THE DETAILED REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS
AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS)**

**Comment on the Reports of the Correspondence Group –
Additional satellite systems in the GMDSS**

Submitted by France and Spain

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document comments on the report of the Correspondence Group on the Detailed Review of the GMDSS concerning additional mobile satellite communication systems. The way the different future mobile satellite systems would be integrated must be examined very closely in terms of interoperability and operating costs.

Strategic direction: 5.2

High-level action: 5.2.5

Planned output: 5.2.5.2

Action to be taken: Paragraph 11

Related documents: COMSAR 16/17, annex 2; NCSR 1/13/3; NCSR 2/9 and NCSR 2/13

Introduction

1 This document is submitted in accordance with paragraph 6.12.5 of the *Guidelines on the organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.4/Rev.3) and comments on the report of the Correspondence Group (NCSR 2/13). It is also related to the suggestion by the Maritime Safety Committee at its eighty-eighth session that a study of mobile satellite communication systems could be carried out during the review of the GMDSS.

2 The use of additional mobile satellite communication systems poses different operational problems and it must be examined very closely in terms of interoperability and operating costs how different future mobile satellite systems would be integrated. The operational impact that these mobile satellite communication systems could have on GMDSS

and the manner in which they would be integrated would have repercussions for personnel requirements and for the search and rescue infrastructure, as well as for the organization and dissemination of maritime safety information.

Compelling need

3 Modernization of GMDSS should provide flexibility, simplification of procedures and generate no extra cost to Member States. The acceptance of additional mobile satellite communication systems would have implications in sea areas A3 which is based on mobile satellite coverage. In addition, ships could be fitted with different ship earth stations (SES) that are not interoperable from one system to another. This may lead to serious consequences on many functional requirements of GMDSS (such as shore to ship distress alert, on-scene communication, search and rescue coordinating communication and maritime safety information).

4 It is obvious that there is a need of interoperability between all operators to ensure the relay of distress alerts from shore to all ships at sea. It should be transparent for Rescue Coordination Centres (RCC) when requesting a distress alert relay to an operator, this latter should manage to relay the distress alert to the other operators of mobile satellite systems in order for all ships at sea to be informed on their SES accordingly and without any extra cost for Member States. Maritime Safety Information (MSI) should be duplicated as well on the different recognized mobile satellite systems in transparency for coastal States and without any extra cost.

5 The facilities and resources available to RCCs and the nature of the communication link between the RCC and coast earth stations (CES) are strictly a matter for the country concerned. In processing maritime distress, urgency, safety and routine communications, the satellite system and the earth station should, whatever the mobile satellite system used, be capable of giving distress alerts and distress calls immediate access, if necessary by pre-empting ongoing communications of routine priority.

Analysis of implications

6 The greater the number of mobile satellite systems used in GMDSS, the higher the costs and the more difficult it will become for RCC to stay connected. The suppliers of additional mobile satellite systems will need to provide additional ship terminal identification systems, which could have consequences for, among others, ITU and the MARS database and the identification of mobiles by RCC.

7 There might be difficulties in relaying distress alerts if more than one approved satellite provider offered services through different systems, as RCC would not know what particular equipment is fitted on any particular ship. While the many possibilities for broadcasting a distress alert from a ship must not be ignored, GMDSS must remain consistent with its principle of distress alerts being received by a RCC. The RCC would be confronted with multiple means of communication for carrying out a distress alert relay to ships in the vicinity of a ship in distress as well as a distress call to the ship in distress if RCC is not using the same mobile satellite provider as the ship's.

8 To ensure that maritime safety information (MSI) is broadcast to all ships, the various NAVAREA and METAREA coordinators will have to broadcast on all the various mobile satellite communication systems. This identified fundamental subject is linked to the recognition of every new operator: it is about the impact on all the coastal States of the arrival of new operators under the administrative, technical, operational, and financial aspects for the SAR and broadcasting activities of maritime safety information (MSI) covering navigational

warnings of navigation for the World-Wide Navigation Warning Service and meteorological warnings and forecasts. Different Member States are coordinating NAVAREA and METAREA. These States assume the costs every year for the broadcasting of maritime safety information. The operating costs of the MSI broadcasting are currently supported only by the coordinators and will inevitably increase. It would not be a fair modernization of GMDSS if the contribution to MSI will remain in the hand of the same coordinators and with the prospect of increased operating costs due to an increase of mobile satellite communication operators recognized to operate in the GMDSS. It is suggested that the operators of mobile satellite communication systems have to organize and make proposals to ensure that there is no increase in the costs of broadcasting and SAR operations States providing MSI and SAR services.

9 Last but not least, interoperability is in the core of the architecture of e-navigation as well as the use of multiple radio communication systems. Then the concern of interoperability is meeting the needs for modernization of GMDSS and e-navigation as well should be the main focus of the Organization.

Comments

10 For the reasons given above, there is a need to consider interoperability and operating costs in the review and modernization of GMDSS.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

11 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider and address the impact of additional providers of GMDSS services regarding the administrative, technical, operational, and financial implications for member States and take action, as appropriate.
