



INTERNATIONAL MARITIME PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL STUDY ON REMOTE PILOTAGE TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY MARITIME PILOTS

IMPA study to provide authoritative insights into the current and potential use of remote pilotage on conventional ships and those that might be navigated remotely or by software with autonomy in the future.

London, 27 August 2024: The International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA), which represents over 50 member countries, is partnering with the Canadian National Centre of Expertise on Maritime Pilotage (NCEMP) and the Canadian Coast Guard to rigorously explore remote pilotage to ground-truth its feasibility, readiness, and impacts on safe navigation practices and systems. This work aims to provide authoritative insights into the current and potential use of remote pilotage on conventional ships and those that might be navigated remotely or by software with autonomy in the future.

The International Maritime Organization recognises the importance of employing qualified, licensed pilots on board ships in areas where such pilotage services would contribute to the safety of navigation more effectively than other possible measures, including ports and other areas where specialised knowledge is essential. Countries rely on the expertise and local knowledge of maritime pilots to ensure the safe and efficient movement of ships in compulsory pilotage areas where marine navigation conditions are most challenging. Maritime pilots play a vital role in ensuring that shipping does not negatively impact coastal communities and the economic, social and environmental interests of nations relying on maritime trade.

Given the role of maritime pilotage, IMPA considers it critically important that any concept that could impact compulsory pilotage practices and systems, including remote pilotage, be carefully examined and assessed. Captain Simon Pelletier, President of IMPA says, "The number and variety of people talking about remote navigation and pilotage makes it necessary for IMPA to conduct a rigorous, objective analysis to help pilots' organisations, competent authorities, and industry make informed decisions. Providing authoritative, evidence-based guidance to support objective decision-making in maritime pilotage is key to ensuring the continued safety of marine navigation. It is part of the reason IMPA exists."

Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, Mario Pelletier, says, "The Canadian Coast Guard is at the forefront of innovation in navigation. We support Canada's economic growth through the safe and efficient movement of maritime trade. The collaboration with IMPA and the NCEMP will help us understand what role new technologies regarding remote navigation and autonomy might play in the future and how the Coast Guards around the globe must adapt to meet the evolving needs of mariners".

According to Captain Alain Arseneault, Executive Director of the NCEMP, remote navigation trials have different motivations, reflect different realities, and use various operational solutions. "A lot is being said about remote pilotage, but ensuring that aspirations and technological solutions do not get ahead of navigation safety is in everyone's interests. We need clear, evidence-based and authoritative guidance, not just in Canada but in other jurisdictions as well."

IMPA's project is unique because it brings together the know-how and experience of maritime

pilots from over 50 countries conducting over 2 million acts of pilotage annually, combined with other operational, academic and advisory expertise. The project will study pilotage as a socio-technical system and the impact of any new protocols on risk, cost-effectiveness, and social acceptance. The project will consider the findings of previous shore-based pilotage projects and seek to validate the insights delivered by the project with trials of technology and protocols on conventionally navigated ships, principally in Canada.

About IMPA

The International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA), established in 1970, represents pilots' organisations in over 50 countries and a professional community of over 8,000 maritime pilots. The Association is a not-for-profit organisation that uses its membership resources to promote effective safety outcomes in maritime pilotage as an essential public service. It achieves this objective by bringing together pilots' associations from around the world to share knowledge, expertise and experience on matters affecting maritime pilotage.

The Association is also the active, formal voice of maritime pilotage and pilots in relevant international fora. It has been a non-governmental organisation in consultative status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) since 1973. IMPA delegates make lasting contributions to different aspects of the technical work of the IMO.

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