

International Maritime Information

Model Audit Scheme Now Under Development - The First Meeting of the Joint MSC/MEPG/TCC Working Group



The Ministerial Conference on Transport (Tokyo, 2001) opened the way for the establishment of the IMO audit program on Flag State Implementation.

It has been recognised among IMO Member States that strengthening of the Flag State implementation of the IMO Conventions is essential to secure an adequate level of maritime safety and marine environmental protection. In this context, in 2002, IMO started developing a scheme to measure a Flag State performance on the three key issues of implementation of IMO instruments, i.e., the enactment of appropriate legislation, its implementation and enforcement of the instruments.

The Council takes a lead in developing the Audit Scheme, but “the joint MSC/MEPC/TCC Working Group on the voluntary IMO Model Audit Scheme” was established in order to facilitate detailed consultations. The first meeting of the joint Working Group was held from 28 May to 4 June at the same time with MSC 77. It reached a general agreement on the framework of the Model Audit Scheme and a work plan targeting the adoption at the 24th Assembly in 2005.

The aim of the Audit Scheme is to determine to what extent Member States are implementing and enforcing the applicable IMO instruments, so as to further enhance their performance. The IMO instruments which should be covered by audits are considered as: SOLAS 74 (excluding Chapter XI-2 on Maritime Security for the time being); SOLAS 78 Protocol; SOLAS 88 Protocol, MARPOL 73/78; STCW, LL66, LL88 Protocol, Tonnage 69; and COLREG 72.

The Audit Scheme is on a voluntary basis, and a Member State wishing to be audited has to express its intention in accordance with procedures of the Audit Scheme, which will be developed in due course. IMO

Secretary-General will establish the audit team for the Member State from a list of possible auditors. The audit team is responsible for planning, performing and preparing a report of the audit in a fair manner and in accordance with an agreed time frame. The audit report will not be disclosed to other Member States, and only an anonymized summary report will be circulated after consultation with the audited State.

It is extremely important for some audited States to enhance their performance through preparation process or following up the Audit results. Therefore, capacity-building would be considered as an essential element for the success of the Audit Scheme. The capacity-building is to include an adequate supply of appropriately trained people, along with appropriate hardware and software systems.

There are still many substantive issues for the further development of the Scheme, including completion of the procedures, an audit standard, time frame, and so on. Subsequently, the joint Working Group established a correspondence group in order to facilitate discussion during the sessions, keeping in mind that the target of the adoption is at the 24th Assembly in 2005.

While it was agreed that the Model Audit Scheme should start out as a voluntary one, it is being debated whether it should become a mandate Scheme in the future, taking into account the ICAO's experience. The Council decided that the Scheme be developed in such a manner as not to exclude the possibility in the future of it becoming mandatory.

Essays



Klaipeda Seaport, Lithuania



Klaipeda Seaport Development

By Ms. Nadezda Kovtunova (Lithuania 2002)

Klaipeda Seaport is a landlord port. Currently, Klaipeda State Seaport Authority (KSSA) is working on a large investment program, which was agreed to by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and is to be implemented during the period 2002-2006. The objective of the program is to incorporate Klaipeda port in the Trans European network, in view of the coming Lithuanian membership in the European Union in May, 2004. The total cost of the investment program is estimated to amount to LTL 382 million (i.e. approximately EUR 107 million).

As a first step, the Port Entrance Rehabilitation Project was successfully implemented in 2002. The Klaipeda port's entrance breakwaters were rehabilitated and extended, whilst parts of the port, including the entrance channel, were dredged up to 14-14.5m. After rehabilitation, five quays have become available for handling vessels with 12.5m drafts and up to 60,000 tons of dry cargo and 80,000 tons of oil product capacities. The program also includes reconstruction of quays, as well as road and railway access to the port.

As a next step, the possibility of building a new deep-sea port (up to 17m depth) outside the entrance of the Klaipeda port is currently being examined by the Study for the Port Development Project in the Republic of Lithuania. Its main objectives are to examine the role of

the Klaipeda port in the regional and national economies of Lithuania, and to work out a long-term master plan and a short-term development plan. The study is being conducted as part of the Japanese government's cooperation with Lithuania. Its Scope of Work was signed in March, 2002, whereas actual work started in March, 2003. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the official agency responsible for the implementation of technical cooperation programs of the Japanese government, is at present undertaking the Study at the Klaipeda port in close cooperation with KSSA. The results will be announced in August, 2004.

In addition, the railway administrations and customs officials of the Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus are working on a combined railway transportation route Klaipeda - Odessa - Klaipeda, which was opened on February 8, 2003. The “Viking” shuttle train goes from Klaipeda to Odessa in less than 50 hours, once a week. At the same time, railway operators and forwarders of the three countries are working on improving the international transport corridor between the Baltic and the Black sea, aiming to create a transit cargo transportation route from Scandinavian countries to the regions of the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Far East. There are negotiations taking place to launch a shuttle train from Klaipeda to Moscow as well.