

SUB-COMMITTEE ON SHIP DESIGN AND
CONSTRUCTION
10th session
Agenda item 5

SDC 10/5/7
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**REVIEW OF THE 2014 GUIDELINES FOR THE REDUCTION OF UNDERWATER NOISE
FROM COMMERCIAL SHIPPING TO ADDRESS ADVERSE IMPACTS ON MARINE LIFE
(MEPC.1/CIRC.833) (2014 GUIDELINES) AND IDENTIFICATION OF NEXT STEPS**

Comments on document SDC 10/5 (Report of the Correspondence Group)

Submitted by Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document comments on the report of the Correspondence Group on the Review of the 2014 Guidelines for the Reduction of Underwater Noise and outlines a proposal to be included in the Action Plan and experience building phase framework being considered at SDC 10.

*Strategic direction,
if applicable:* 1

Output: 1.16

Action to be taken: Paragraph 11

Related documents: MEPC 75/14, MEPC 75/14/2; SDC 8/14, SDC 8/14/2; SDC 9/INF.2, SDC 9/5; MEPC 76/15; SDC 9/16, SDC 9/5/3; MEPC 80/17, SDC 10/INF.3 and SDC 10/5

Introduction

1 This document is submitted in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6.12.5 of the *Organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.5) and comments on the report of the Correspondence Group on the Review of the 2014 Guidelines for the Reduction of Underwater Noise (SDC 10/5).

Background

2 In July 2023, MEPC 80 approved the Revised *guidelines for the reduction of underwater radiated noise from shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life* (MEPC.1/Circ.906), which entered into effect on 1 October 2023, as well as the *Guidelines for underwater radiated noise reduction in Inuit Nunaat and the Arctic* (MEPC.1/Circ.907) which were circulated on 3 October 2023 by the Secretariat. MEPC 80 also approved convening an expert workshop on the relationship between energy efficiency and underwater noise (URN)

from ships, held from 18 to 19 September 2023 at IMO Headquarters. Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) participated in that workshop and provided an Inuit perspective on URN in Inuit Nunaat, and a consideration of the utilization of Indigenous Knowledge in the ongoing management and reduction of URN. The outcomes of the workshop were reported by the Secretariat in document SDC 10/INF.3.

3 MEPC.1/Circ.907, *Guidelines for Underwater Radiated Noise Reduction in Inuit Nunaat and the Arctic*, is intended to provide additional information and guidance to operators transiting Inuit Nunaat and the Arctic. It is also intended to enable the engagement of Inuit and other Indigenous communities and make practical and effective use of Indigenous Knowledge in the review of the Guidelines for reducing underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life.

4 It should be highlighted that document SDC 9/5, paragraph 7 includes a reference to the terms of reference of the Correspondence Group on the Review of the Underwater Noise Guidelines, which instructed the Group to: "enable engagement of Inuit and other Indigenous communities and the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge."

5 MEPC 80 also endorsed the updated work plan submitted by SDC 9. It encouraged interested Member States and international organizations to submit lessons learned/best practices in the implementation of the Revised Guidelines to the Committee by MEPC 85, including outreach and awareness efforts to support uptake with a view to identifying necessary modifications to the Guidelines (MEPC 80/17, paragraph 10.4).

Inclusion of an Implementation Framework for the Inuit Nunaat Supplementary Guidelines within the Experience Building Phase and Action Plan

6 SDC 9 established a Correspondence Group to identify the next steps to reduce URN from ships (SDC 9/16, paragraph 5.18.2). The final report of the Correspondence Group includes a list of next steps, presented in the format of an Action Plan (SDC 10/5, paragraph 15.2). An important task in that Plan is the proposal of a three-year experience building phase (EBP) of the revised Guidelines, with an invitation for Member States and interested organizations to submit lessons learned and best practices in implementing the revised Guidelines (SDC 10/5, annex 2).

7 Document SDC 10/5, paragraph 26 states "...as the draft supplementary guidelines for underwater radiated noise reduction in Inuit Nunaat and the Arctic were approved at MEPC 80 during the second round of work of the Group, the supplementary Guidelines were reflected within the draft action plan, where applicable." ICC thanks the Correspondence Group coordinators and members for integrating the Inuit Nunaat supplementary guidelines into the Action Plan.

8 Given the explicit inclusion of the "...engagement of Inuit and other Indigenous communities and the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge", in the revision of the 2014 Guidelines and identification of next steps, the recent approval and communication of the Inuit Nunaat guidelines, and the upcoming discussion at SDC 10 to finalize the Action Plan and an EBP for the guidelines, ICC would like to propose the inclusion of an "Arctic and Inuit Nunaat Implementation Framework" be considered as part of the Action Plan, with findings, insights and experiences submitted on an ongoing basis to the EBP. The "Enhanced public awareness, education, and seafarer training" section of the Action Plan could be an appropriate section for this proposed framework to be added and considered.

9 The "Arctic and Inuit Nunaat Implementation Framework" would use MEPC.1/Circ.907 as a foundation and create a "how to" protocol for shipowners and operators. This "how to" document would be prepared by ICC in consultation with Member States and interested organizations to ensure a clear understanding and a further articulation of the *Guidelines for underwater radiated noise reduction in Inuit Nunaat and the Arctic* (MEPC.1/Circ.907).

10 ICC would like to support the United States proposal in document SDC 10/5/5 that recommends the EBP be a standing agenda item at MEPC to promote greater access to knowledge and research on URN and to encourage wide participation in the information-sharing stage for the revised Guidelines. ICC also supports document SDC 10/5/8 (FOEI et al.), paragraphs 9 to 11, which outline steps to foster the integration of energy efficiency measures and URN reduction. Multiple studies,¹ including industry sponsored,² are pointing to the connection between speed reduction, energy efficiency and reduced GHG and URN emissions, and less vessel whale strikes.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

11 The Sub-Committee is invited to note the information, consider the proposals in paragraphs 8 to 10 and take action, as appropriate.

¹ <https://seas-at-risk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2019.6.11.-Mitigation-ship-speeds.pdf>

² <https://www.ics-shipping.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Final-report-ver-4-02-11-Vahid-Without-track-changes.pdf>