



# The International Maritime Organization (IMO): Regulatory Developments on Underwater Radiated Noise

IMO-WMU Workshop on Underwater Radiated Noise  
15-16 October 2024

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# The International Maritime Organization

- The United Nations specialized agency responsible for safe, secure and efficient shipping and the prevention of pollution from shipping
- 176 Member States and three Associate Members, including all major ship-owning nations and all major coastal states



- IMO's mandate covers a wide range of issues to prevent and control pollution caused by ships and to mitigate the effects of any damage that may occur as a result of maritime operations and accidents
- IMO **develops global regulations** and adopts treaties and guidelines at intergovernmental level

*“Safe, secure and efficient shipping on cleaner oceans”*

## Developments on Underwater Noise at IMO

2014

- IMO adopted **Guidelines for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life** – (MEPC.1/Circ.833 )

2017/19

- Increased awareness of the issue and its impact on the marine environment through various submissions, presentations/webinars, events & technical workshops

2020/21

- MEPC 75-78: New work item to undertake review of the guidelines and identification of next steps approved and referred to the Ship Design and Construction (SDC) sub-committee

2022/23

- SDC 8/9 revision of guidelines and identification of preliminary next steps;
- **MEPC 80 approved revised guidelines**, and a 3-year experience building phase;
- Correspondence Group (coordinated by Canada) developed an action plan/next steps for finalization at SDC 10

2024 -

- SDC 10 agreed draft **Action Plan** to guide organizations work to prevent and reduce URN
- Action plan forwarded to **MEPC 81** for endorsement - **MEPC 82**

# IMO Guidelines 2014

## *IMO Guidelines for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine Life – (MEPC.1/Circ.833 )*

- Application: any commercial ship
- Purpose/definitions, standards and references
- Design considerations: **propellers**, hull design and onboard machinery
- Advice on: technologies for existing ships
- Operational and maintenance considerations: propeller cleaning, underwater hull surface, selection of ship speed, re-routing to avoid sensitive areas

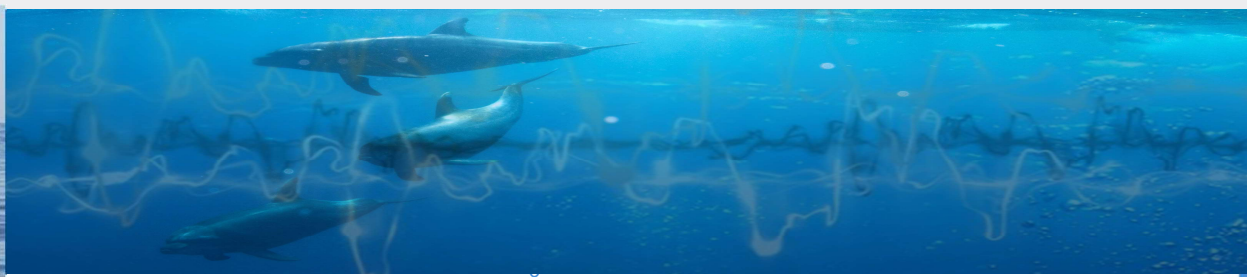


## IMO Revised Guidelines 2023

### *Revised Guidelines for the reduction of underwater radiated noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life – (MEPC.1/Circ.906 )*

Key structural changes to improve usability, main substantial changes include:

- Updated application; Guidelines now **apply to ships of all sizes and types**, including non-commercial ships
- **Maritime administrations** included as relevant stakeholders in helping establish mechanisms and programs through which noise reduction efforts can be realized
- Reflect **current state of knowledge in technologies** to reduce underwater radiated noise (URN)
- New guidance on **improved voyage planning** and on **national and international designated areas**





# IMO Revised Guidelines 2023

## *Revised Guidelines for the reduction of underwater radiated noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life – (MEPC.1/Circ.906 )*

New sections on:

- **Underwater Radiated Noise Management Planning (UNMP)**
  - Guidance on how to prepare a noise management plan
    - Establishing the baseline (predicted or actual) of a ship's URN
    - Setting URN goals
    - Evaluating/monitoring various technological, operational and maintenance approaches
    - Annex with template for the preparation of a UNMP
- **Incentivization**
- **Energy efficiency and URN reduction**



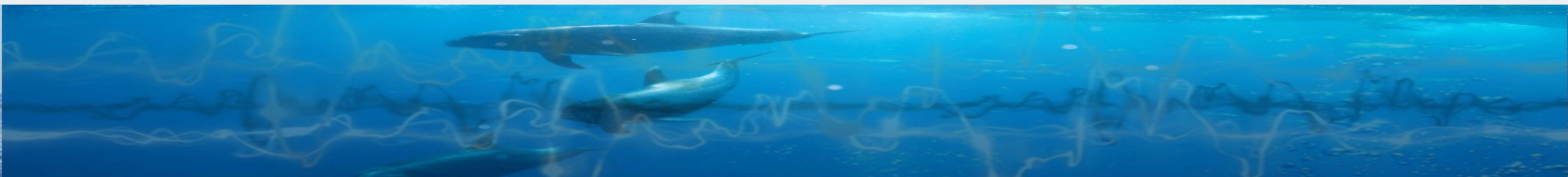
# Moving forward

## • Underwater Radiated Noise Action Plan

- The Action Plan agreed at SDC 10 outlines a number of tasks for implementation by relevant organs and bodies, including:
  - **Experience Building Phase (EBP) for the Revised Guidelines** \*
  - Enhance Public awareness, education and seafarers training
  - Standardization of noise management planning
  - Develop URN targets – how quiet do we want to be?
  - Databases/tools
  - Policy for URN reduction(including developing an IMO roadmap/vision)
  - Ongoing research – encourage research on GHG/URN biofouling management and on impacts on URN on species and habitats

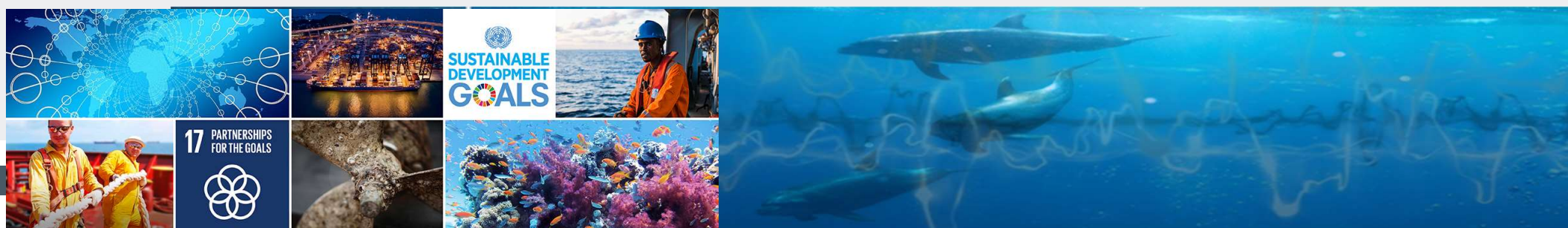
❖ *SDC 10 recommended a three-year experience-building phase (EBP) during which Member States and international organizations are invited to share lessons learned and best practices that have emerged in the implementation of the Revised Guidelines.*

- Action Plan was submitted for endorsement to MEPC 81 - 18-22 March 2024.



## MEPC 82

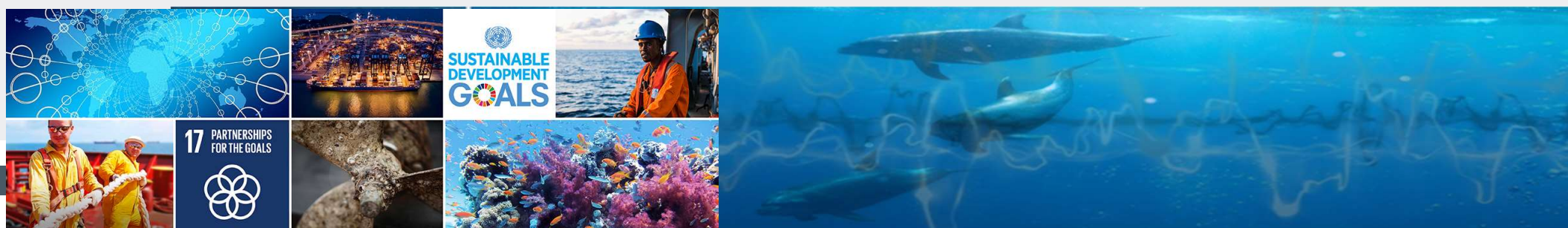
- Approved amendments to the Revised URN Guidelines (MEPC.1/Circ.906/Rev.1), to include a URN management planning reference chart.
- Approved the Action Plan for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping (URN Action Plan)
- Agreed to continue with the three-year experience-building phase (EBP) for the Revised URN Guidelines
- Agreed to include output on forthcoming agendas of SDC and MEPC “*Experience building pages (EMP) for reduction of underwater radiated noise from shipping*”





# GloNoise Partnership

- The Global Partnership for Mitigation of Underwater Noise from Shipping (GloNoise Partnership) project is currently under design by IMO, UNDP and the Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Project will:
  - support the regulatory work of IMO
  - Be based on Action Plan
  - Contribute to the 3-year experience building phase (EPB)
    - = Provide key contribution to global rule setting
    - = Lessons learned and best practices



## Next Steps

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- **Action plan** – aims to further prevent and reduce URN from ships by guiding the Organization's work on the issue
- **EPB - 3-year Experience Building Phase**
  - expected to conclude by MEPC 85 in 2026 but with a possibility of an extension of up to two years.
  - for experience to be gained and best practices in the use of the Revised URN Guidelines to be developed, followed by a review to make any necessary amendments to the Guidelines.
  - **Wide participation encouraged.**
- **GloNoise project**
- Submissions to SDC 11/12 and MEPC 82-85 and Action Plan review at MEPC 85



Thank you

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