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To: All IMO Members
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Online best practices information sharing forum on domestic ferry safety**

IMO attaches great importance to domestic ferry safety through technical cooperation activities, projects, model regulations and various initiatives, including comprehensive studies using IMO's formal safety assessment (FSA) methodology in volunteering Member States, the development of explanatory manuals and online training resources.

The Organization has been working for a long time with Member States, international and regional intergovernmental organizations, as well as industry stakeholders to promote domestic ferry safety. The Organization's efforts via the Maritime Safety Committee, supported by Member States and international organizations, resulted in the adoption of the *Model Regulations on Domestic Ferry Safety* (resolution MSC.518 (105)) in April 2022. Domestic ferry safety is one of the thematic priorities of the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme.

In keeping with thematic priorities, IMO - with funding from the Lloyd's Register Foundation (LRF), is currently supporting a programme of work in partnership with its capacity building and knowledge partners, the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) and the World Maritime University (WMU), designed to make long-term improvements in domestic ferry safety. Taking IMO's model regulations for domestic ferry safety as a starting point, the programme will deliver consultations, increase awareness, understanding and buy-in with the regulations, and support with adoption, implementation, and enforcement, including support for safety improvements via non-regulatory routes.

The project adopts a holistic approach, and engages with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, in order to realize its anticipated impact on safety. In this context, it is proposed to establish an online best practices information sharing forum on domestic ferry safety as one of the key activities being spearheaded by IMO through the project.

To be successful, such an initiative to develop and promote an online best practices forum would rely on the support received from all stakeholders in sharing their best practices that can help enhance domestic ferry safety.

The Secretary-General would, therefore, invite all stakeholders to join the initiative by sharing best practices that can help enhance domestic ferry safety so as to develop a global online forum.

Submissions are invited and should be sent to safety@wmu.se by **30 April 2025**. Guidelines for consideration of best practices and submission are contained in the annex. For any further clarifications or queries please feel free to reach out to Dr. Anish Hebbar at safety@wmu.se.

Furthermore, Member States are also invited, through the IMO Web Accounts Administrator or the person authorized by the Administrator, to use the reporting facilities of the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS), and its module on Non-mandatory Instruments, in order to report voluntary implementation of the above-mentioned *Model Regulations on Domestic Ferry Safety* (resolution MSC.518 (105)).

ANNEX

GUIDELINES FOR CONSIDERATION AND SUBMISSION OF BEST PRACTICES IN DOMESTIC FERRY SAFETY

What is a best practice in domestic ferry safety?

A "best practice" in domestic ferry safety can be described as a method, technique or process that is consistently showing good results compared to other approaches.

It should be a practice proven to effectively reduce risk, improve passenger and crew safety or enhance operational reliability.

What are the attributes of a best practice?

To help identify and report best practices, the following attributes may be used as a guideline:

- Effectiveness - the practice leads to improvements in ferry safety outcomes;
- Efficiency - it achieves safety goals in a way that is cost-effective, resource-efficient and sustainable;
- Compliance - it meets or exceeds applicable requirements;
- Innovation - it represents an advancement or a unique approach to solving a problem in ferry safety;
- Documented impact - the practice possibly has supporting data or a case study that shows it contributes positively to safety outcomes (e.g. reduction in incidents or accidents); and
- Inclusivity - where applicable, the practice addresses the diverse needs of passengers and crew, including those with special needs.

What are the formats for sharing best practices?

- **Video demonstrations and tutorials**
 - Videos can visually demonstrate a practice in action, making it easier to understand processes, equipment usage, or emergency protocols.
 - What to include: Step-by-step guides - videos that walk through procedures such as emergency evacuation drills, safety equipment usage, or passenger briefing protocols.
- **Success stories and case studies**
 - Success stories provide real-life examples of how a best practice has improved safety, reduced incidents or increased passenger confidence.
 - What to include:

- a description of a safety challenge faced by the regulator, company or ferry operator (e.g. a history of overloading incidents or a need for better emergency preparedness); and
 - an outline of the best practice, such as a strict overloading prevention policy, enhanced crew training or installation of safety monitoring technology.
- **Short stories for emulation**
 - Short stories give a narrative form to best practices, making them relatable and memorable. Stories can highlight small, impactful actions or routines that positively impact safety.
 - What to include: Real-life scenarios - tell a story of a specific situation where a safety practice was crucial, e.g. a successful evacuation due to well-trained crew.
 - **Examples of technology implementation for safety enhancement**
 - The purpose would be to illustrate how specific technologies can enhance safety and improve operational efficiency.
 - What to include:
 - a brief description of the technology (e.g. a new GPS system, real-time weather monitoring or passenger counting tools);
 - an explanation of how the technology is applied in day-to-day operations (e.g. weather alerts to avoid rough seas, real-time passenger tracking to prevent overloading);
 - an outline of the impact, such as improved decision-making, faster response times or higher accuracy in passenger counts; and
 - advice or recommendations considering similar technology.

Additional guidelines for sharing best practices

- Videos and stories should be straightforward and easy for all personnel from operators to regulatory bodies to understand.
- Whenever possible, include specific numbers or feedback to show the impact, such as "X% reduction in incidents" or "50% faster evacuation time."
- Highlight how other regulators, companies, ferry operators, etc. could implement similar practices in their own operations.
- For videos, include captions, diagrams, or animations to clarify complex points.
- For stories, include brief infographics or original, unpublished photographs wherever possible. Photographs should be of a high resolution (minimum 5 Mb).
- The submission should be original and unpublished work.
- The submission should be specific and brief to the extent possible.

How to submit best practices?

Submissions are invited and should be sent to safety@wmu.se and should include full name, full address, email and contact information of the contributor.

What happens after submission?

All contributions will be duly acknowledged.

A curated selection of best practices will be hosted on the online forum.

What if there are any queries or further clarification is needed?

For any further clarifications or queries, write to Dr. Anish Hebbar at safety@wmu.se
