



Merchant Marine Notice MMN-25-003

Title: Acceptance of IACS Members' Factual Statements as Part of Flag State Oversight Program

To: Recognized Organization, IACS Members

Issuance Date: 06 June 2025 **Revision No.:** N/A

MMN Superseded: N/A

1. REFERENCE

- International Maritime Organization (IMO) Resolutions and Circulars.
- IACS Quality System Certification Scheme (QSCS).
- SOLAS 1974, as amended, particularly Regulations I/6, II-1/3-1, and XI-1/1.
- RO Code (Code for Recognized Organizations).
- Implementation of IMO Instruments (III Code)

2. DEFINITIONS

IACS: International Association of Classification Societies.

RO: Recognized Organization authorized to perform statutory certification on behalf of the Flag State.

Factual Statement: A consolidated report issued by IQARB (International Quality Assurance Review Board) reviewing the certification process of IACS members' quality management systems.

QSCA: The Quality System Certification Scheme is the framework that defines the requirements for the quality management systems for IACS members.



IQARB: International Quality Assurance Review Board is an independent body established to review and assess the quality management systems (QMS) and certification processes of members of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS). IQARB's primary role is to ensure that the certification processes conducted by ROs and their Accredited Certification Bodies (ACBs) are robust, transparent, and compliant with international standards and regulatory requirements.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1. The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) recognizes the importance of maintaining high standards of safety, environmental protection, and operational efficiency for Belize-flagged vessels. To assist in the maintenance of these standards, the Administration has delegated some of its survey and certification duties to Recognized Organizations (ROs) while maintaining strict oversight of these organizations.
- 3.2. As part of its oversight program, IMMARBE acknowledges the role that the International Quality Assurance Review Board (IQARB) may play in reviewing the certification process of IACS members' quality management systems to ensure compliance with international maritime regulations. In line with this, the Administration has decided to accept Factual Statements issued by IQARB as part of its oversight program.
- 3.3. Consistent with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) vision, the International Quality Assurance Review Board (IQARB) has been developed to provide an independent review of the certification processes of IACS members. IQARB's Factual Statements offer a transparent and independent assessment of the quality management systems of IACS members, ensuring compliance with the RO Code and relevant IMO instruments.

4. PURPOSE

- 4.1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Notice is to confirm the acceptance of Factual Statements issued by IQARB to IACS members as part of the Flag State's oversight program. It further clarifies that the Flag State reserves the right to conduct additional audits of any RO (including IACS member) based on Administration criteria.



5. CONTENT

- 5.1. The primary purpose of IQARB is to review the certification process of the quality management systems of IACS members. This involves assessing the adequacy of the IACS Quality System Certification Scheme (QSCS) in meeting regulatory and industry objectives, as well as compliance with the RO Code and relevant IMO instruments, such as SOLAS 1974 regulations I/6, II-1/3-1, and XI-1/1, as well as the III Code. Additionally, IQARB evaluates the performance of Accredited Certification Bodies (ACBs) against the criteria of the QSCS, reviews the nature of findings identified during ACB audits, and assesses the robustness and effectiveness of corrective actions implemented by classification societies/ROs to address audit findings.
- 5.2. Seeing the value that IQARB can offer, IMMARBE has decided to recognize Factual Statements issued by IQARB to IACS members as part of its oversight program, provided they are issued in accordance with the IACS Quality System Certification Scheme (QSCS) and relevant IMO instruments. The Factual Statements must demonstrate compliance with SOLAS 1974, MARPOL 73/78, the RO Code, and other applicable IMO mandatory instruments. Furthermore, the Flag State reserves the right to conduct additional audits of Recognized Organizations (ROs) to verify compliance with Administration-specific criteria.

6. REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1. All IACS members performing statutory certification on behalf of the Belize Flag State must ensure their quality management systems are certified in accordance with the IACS QSCS.
- 6.2. ROs are to apply for flag State recognition of their annual Factual Statements via email at technicalservices@immarbe.com.
- 6.3. Applications should include a copy of the annual Factual Statements along with any findings and corrective actions completed.



- 6.4. ROs must cooperate with any additional audits or inspections conducted by the Flag State Administration in accordance with the oversight duties of the administration as outlined in the agreement between the administration and the RO.

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- 7.1. The acceptance of Factual Statements does not absolve ROs of their responsibility to comply with Flag State requirements.
- 7.2. IMMARBE may withdraw recognition of an RO if it fails to meet Administration criteria or demonstrate compliance with international standards.

8. ACTIONS REQUESTED

- 8.1. The Administration encourages all Recognized Organizations to review and comply with the contents of this Notice and to ensure that its provisions are enforced.

IMMARBE appreciates your cooperation and assistance.

This notice was issued in Belize City, Belize on 06 June 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eduardo Simon".

Eng. Eduardo Simon
Director of Technical and Seafarer Services
IMMARBE



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Gersok".

Mr. Paul Gersok
Managing Director
IMMARBE

Any queries related to this Notice shall be directed to inspections@immarbe.com; technicalservices@immarbe.com or