

E-Newsletter

MARITIME MATTERS

INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE

NAVIGATING THROUGH CONFLICT

The maritime industry is no stranger to disruption. But conflict brings a unique and profound challenge, one that tests not only vessels and crews but the very framework of flag state responsibility.

As conflict continues to reshape global shipping routes, close ports, and introduce rapidly shifting sanctions, the reality is clear: Belize-flagged vessels will not be immune to its effects. For a flag state, the question is not whether our ships will be impacted, but how prepared we are to respond when they are.

At IMMARBE, we are taking deliberate steps to ensure that when the time comes, our response is immediate, practical, and unwavering.

We are currently strengthening our communication channels with shipowners, operators, and Deputy Registrars to better identify Belize-flagged vessels operating in or near affected areas. Our Technical and Seafarer Department is developing clear guidance on rerouting, risk assessment, and compliance with international sanctions regimes, so that when owners need answers, we are ready to provide them.

Where vessels may become stranded or delayed, we are preparing expedited documentation procedures and exploring options for certificate flexibility, in close coordination with Recognized Organizations.

Seafarers on affected vessels face extraordinary pressures. IMMARBE is reviewing its verification and endorsement processes to ensure that crews caught in conflict zones are not further burdened by administrative delays. Should maritime education and training institutions be disrupted, we are evaluating flexible pathways to maintain certification integrity while prioritizing seafarer welfare.

War brings a rapidly shifting landscape of international sanctions and trade restrictions. IMMARBE is enhancing its internal screening and monitoring procedures to help our clients remain compliant while avoiding unintended violations. Our legal and technical teams are monitoring developments daily, preparing timely updates and guidance for our global network.

The conflict will not end tomorrow. But IMMARBE's commitment to our vessels, our seafarers, and our global partners will not waver. We are investing in real-time communication tools, strengthening our crisis response protocols, and ensuring that every Belize-flagged vessel will have access to the guidance and support it needs, when it needs it most.

In times of war, a flag state's true value is not measured in tonnage or registration numbers. It is measured in responsiveness, reliability, and the willingness to stand by those who sail under its flag.

IMMARBE is preparing now to navigate through any conflict or challenge.

Strategic Investment in Maritime Compliance

Compliance goes beyond mere awareness; it demands proactive and sustained engagement.

Over the past quarter, IMMARBE has taken deliberate steps to strengthen its expertise, including active participation in key national conferences and specialized sessions on a range of critical topics such as countering maritime proliferation financing. These engagements are not simply learning opportunities; they are strategic investments in organizational resilience.

Furthermore, IMMARBE recently participated in regional workshops organized by the International Maritime Organization's Technical Committee. The sessions on the ISM code and STCW Convention were instrumental in aligning operational frameworks and emphasized the urgent need for enhanced vessel monitoring, timely reporting and escalation protocols.

The true value of these engagements lies in how insights are translated into practice. In response, IMMARBE has reinforced its efforts to strengthen screening and monitoring procedures, while actively promoting cross-departmental knowledge sharing to ensure organization-wide alignment. Compliance is most effective when embedded across every function, not confined to a single unit.



By actively participating in regional and international compliance initiatives, IMMARBE reaffirms its commitment to maintaining the highest standards. These experiences not only strengthen our internal capabilities but also position us as a proactive, responsible and trusted leader within the wider maritime community.



The workshop provided an invaluable platform for Caribbean maritime administrations and maritime training institution to share experiences and align approaches to STCW compliance. This level of regional cooperation is essential for strengthening regulatory effectiveness and mutual within and beyond the Caribbean region. – David Guerra, IMMARBE

Attending the regional ISM workshop was a highly rewarding experience, as it provided valuable insights into shared challenges and best practices from a Caribbean perspective, while also facilitating meaningful networking with regional counterparts who share similar cultural contexts and development levels. - Cleopatra Cuevas, Port of Big Creek.

Celebrating the Top Performing Deputy Registrars in Vessel Registration

As we close the first quarter, IMMARBE takes this opportunity to recognize the consistent efforts of our Deputy Registrars across our global network. Their work, rooted in accuracy, resilience, and adherence to established standards, remains essential to our operations.

Throughout this quarter, several Deputy Registrars have delivered consistent performance, demonstrated timely responsiveness, and maintained effective coordination with both clients and Head Office. These contributions have enabled the smooth execution of registration activities and reinforced the reliability that defines our services.

At IMMARBE, excellence is measured not solely by results, but by the consistent application of procedures, accountability, and collaborative engagement. The Deputy Registrars recognized this quarter embody these values in their day-to-day work.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all Deputy Registrars for their professionalism throughout Q1. Their continued commitment strengthens our operations and directly supports the shipowners and operators who rely on IMMARBE's dependable registration framework.



YoYo Wang
CHINA



Erik De Koning
ROTTERDAM



Young Mo-Gu
KOREA



Diego Corrado
SINGAPORE

Keeping Belize Seafarer Standards Globally Aligned *IMMARBE Engages Key IMO Meetings*

As the flag state administration under the Belize Merchant Ships (Registration) Act, and in line with IMO conventions to which Belize is a Party, the Technical and Seafarer Department carries a vital responsibility: ensuring that our national policies, certification standards, and seafarer procedures stay fully aligned with fast-evolving international requirements.

Recently, the Acting Director of Technical and Seafarer Services, Mr. Anique Sabal, and Seafarer Supervisor, Mr. Elias Gonzalez, represented IMMARBEL at two major IMO gatherings: the 12th session of the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW 12) and the second meeting of the Intersessional Working Group on the Comprehensive Review of the STCW Convention and Code (ISWG-STCW 2).

Participation in HTW 12 gave our team direct insight into upcoming amendments on seafarer training, watchkeeping, fatigue management, and the quality standards of Maritime Education and Training (MET) institutions. For a flag state that issues, endorses, and verifies certificates of competency, staying ahead of these developments is not optional, it is essential. It ensures that Belize-flagged seafarers and training providers continue to meet global expectations.

During ISWG-STCW 2, our representatives joined critical discussions on modernizing and restructuring the STCW Convention and Code. As the flag state authority, IMMARBEL is already preparing for future implementation of revised competencies and transition arrangements. This includes updating national circulars, DR/RO instructions, and examination or endorsement requirements, so our seafarers and industry partners experience a smooth, well-communicated transition.

These engagements are more than attendance, they are active steps to protect the credibility of Belize-issued seafarer documents, support the safe operation of Belize-flagged vessels, and reinforce our promise of international compliance.

IMMARBEL remains fully dedicated to keeping Belize a trusted, responsible flag state, at sea and in the global maritime community.



Expanding Horizons, Strengthening Connections: IMMARBE's Global Engagement and Forward-Looking Vision

The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) continues to expand its global footprint, actively engaging with partners through strategic regional visits and meaningful industry dialogue.

Recent engagements in Saudi Arabia and Taiwan provided valuable opportunities to connect with maritime and port administrations, shipowners, agents, and key stakeholders. Discussions focused on registration efficiency, regulatory compliance, and responding to the evolving needs of the maritime industry.

Looking ahead, IMMARBE will sustain this momentum with an upcoming visit to Singapore in April, followed by participation in the Posidonia Shipping Exhibition in Athens this June. Each engagement reaffirms IMMARBE's commitment to remaining connected, accessible, and responsive, ensuring our services remain evolve in step with a dynamic global maritime sector. **Because strong relationships keep us moving forward, together.**



Driving Innovation from Within

Alongside our active participation in IMO meetings, IMMARBE is advancing internal initiatives aimed at modernizing operations and enhancing service delivery. Building on the groundwork laid last year, we have been working to streamline key processes, strengthen compliance mechanisms, and expand the range of services available to shipowners and operators.

These efforts are designed to create a more efficient client experience while maintaining the quality and reliability expected of the Belize Flag.

Our commitment to innovation, whether through digital improvements, updated procedures, or expanded support tools, reflects a long-term vision of a more accessible and responsive registry. At the same time, we continue to explore opportunities that reinforce our competitiveness and add tangible value for our global network.

With several initiatives now progressing, we look forward to sharing more dynamic updates as soon as these efforts take shape. IMMARBE remains dedicated to strengthening its international presence and delivering services that meet the demands of today while proactively preparing for the challenges of tomorrow.



Giving to Gain: Celebrating the Women of IMMARBE Who Lead, Collaborate and Inspire

At IMMARBE, we believe that progress is rooted in the collective strength of our people. Across our organization, women continue to demonstrate how leadership, collaboration, and generosity fuel meaningful growth.

This month, we celebrate the women of IMMARBE whose contributions embody the spirit of *Give to Gain*, giving knowledge, support, and dedication to help strengthen our Administration and the wider maritime community.

Women play a vital role across every area of our work, from technical supervision and vessel operations to legal oversight, registration services, customer engagement, and executive leadership. Their commitment not only advances our mission but also helps build a workplace where teamwork, innovation, and professionalism thrive.

The principle of *Give to Gain* reminds us that every act of support or shared insight creates opportunities for collective success. At IMMARBE, this is reflected daily in how our female team members mentor colleagues, share their expertise, and cultivate an environment where everyone is encouraged to grow. Their willingness to contribute beyond formal roles strengthens the Administration's capacity to serve the Belize Flag with reliability and integrity.

As we highlight the achievements of women within IMMARBE, we also acknowledge their broader impact on shaping a more inclusive maritime sector, one where skill, dedication, and collaboration are genuinely recognized and valued.

We extend our deepest appreciation to the women of IMMARBE who continue to lead by example, give with intention, and inspire those around them. Their efforts remind us of a simple yet powerful truth: when we uplift one another, we all gain.



Meet our Staff

Uncover the Stories of our Dynamic Team

Ms. Sharon Escalante
TECHNICAL SUPERVISOR



This July marks my 20th year with IMMARBE, where I currently serve as Technical Supervisor within the Technical and Seafarer Department. Throughout my career, I've built my work on regulatory knowledge, practical experience, and a strong commitment to supporting the Belize Flag.

In this role, I collaborate closely with the Technical & Seafarer Team to oversee technical compliance and ensure that Belize-flagged vessels meet both international and national requirements. I review and coordinate statutory surveys, audits, and inspections conducted by Recognized Organizations (ROs), helping ensure accuracy, consistency, and alignment.

I am also responsible for assessing and issuing Technical Certificates including exemptions, dispensations, and voyage-specific authorizations while monitoring RO performance and supporting technical decision-making when special interpretation is required.

My work extends to ISM, ISPS, and MLC compliance, where I review documentation, support audit readiness, and collaborate with the Seafarer Unit on crew certification, manning requirements, and labor-related matters.

Across my two decades, I have remained focused on professionalism, accuracy, and teamwork. I'm proud to contribute to the Administration's mission of maintaining a safe, reliable, and internationally respected ship registry.

Ms. Darlin Gaitan
TECHNICAL OFFICER



As a recent addition to the IMMARBE team, I am honoured to share my journey in this fascinating industry. Looking back, I am filled with gratitude to those who shaped my journey.

Like many young college graduates seeking a career, I recall stumbling upon the maritime sector seventeen years ago. While soul-searching for a career path in college, I knew I was passionate about the sea and what it represents for Belizeans. As I entered the maritime workforce, I quickly realized I was on the right course. I found that the maritime sector is cross-cutting. It brings to life crucial issues such as workers' welfare, marine environmental protection, trade and development, and the rights and obligations of state and non-state actors under the law of the sea, to name a few.

My seventeen-year journey in this industry has been ever-rewarding. As my career progressed, I had the opportunity to hone academic skills, grow, and lead national maritime imperatives. This was achieved with the support and guidance of peers and mentors alike. And having held many hats, from VTS, PSC, MET, Projects and executive leadership, I am prepared to tackle new challenges. As I navigate the future, I hope to now contribute to IMMARBE's invaluable role in achieving Belize's shared maritime vision.

I close with a reflection from the 2026 NWA's Women's Month theme, "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future."



Mr. Gian Cajun
REGISTRATION OFFICER III

My journey in the maritime industry has been both defining and deeply rewarding, particularly in my role as a Registration Officer. Entering this globally connected sector, I quickly realized that maritime administration is not only dynamic but essential to the safety, sustainability, and integrity of international shipping.

In my role, I support IMMARBE's mandate to promote safe and secure shipping while helping to prevent marine and atmospheric pollution caused by vessels. This places me at the heart of global maritime governance, where international standards are translated into practical oversight that protects lives, oceans, and commerce.

A key aspect of my responsibilities involves ensuring compliance with international liability and compensation regimes for maritime incidents. Conventions such as the Civil Liability, Bunkers, Wreck Removal, and Athens Conventions supported by Protection and Indemnity (P&I) insurance form the backbone of accountability, ensuring that victims receive fair and timely compensation.

As I look ahead, I aim to strengthen IMMARBE and advance Belize's reputation in maritime services. I remain committed to professional growth, deepening my expertise, and contributing innovative solutions that enhance efficiency, compliance, and service excellence.

Registration Services at IMMARBE: A Partnership Built on Reliability, Clarity and Trust

At IMMARBE, we are committed to delivering registration services that inspire confidence and meet the evolving needs of shipowners in an increasingly competitive global market. Our processes are built on three core pillars: reliability, clarity, and responsive support—from start to finish.

Whether your vessel requires provisional or permanent registration, our team provides timely, practical guidance to ensure every step is straightforward and efficient. Backed by a robust legal framework and fully aligned with leading international maritime conventions, we place compliance and quality at the very center of our operations.

With a worldwide network and a service-first mindset, we treat the registration of ships, yachts, and fishing vessels with the urgency and attention they deserve. Our focus is simple: ensuring that owners and operators experience a seamless process, no matter where they are in the world.

As the maritime industry continues to evolve, IMMARBE remains dedicated to investing in innovation, strengthening our people, and enhancing service delivery. We aim to provide registration solutions that meet today's demands while remaining flexible enough to adapt to tomorrow's challenges.

At IMMARBE, registration is more than an administrative procedure, it is a partnership. A partnership that keeps vessels moving, businesses growing, and trust firmly anchored under our flag.



From the Helm: Steering Forward with Purpose

There is a rhythm to life at sea, and, as it turns out, to life at a flag registry. The tides change. The winds shift. New charts arrive. And yet, the work of staying the course continues, day by day, with quiet resolve and steady hands.

In the opening of this newsletter, we spoke frankly about the realities of conflict and our preparations to support Belize-flagged vessels and seafarers when the time comes. Those are not small challenges. And they are not distant ones.

But preparation is only one part of our responsibility. The other is persistence—the quiet, steady work of showing up every day, strengthening our people, and ensuring that when uncertainty knocks, we are ready to answer.

This past quarter, that persistence has taken many forms.

Our team has been present where it matters most, at IMO sessions shaping the future of seafarer training and STCW standards, at regional workshops sharpening our approach to the ISM Code, and at conferences where countering maritime proliferation financing is no longer a niche concern but a core responsibility. These engagements are not simply learning opportunities. They are strategic investments in resilience.

But technical expertise is only half the story. The other half is people.

Across our global network, Deputy Registrars have delivered with accuracy, responsiveness, and quiet professionalism. From China to Korea, Rotterdam to Singapore, their work has kept registrations moving, clients confident, and operations smooth. At home, the women of IMMARBE have shown us what it means to lead

with generosity and collaboration, mentoring colleagues, sharing expertise, and proving that when we uplift one another, we all gain.

We also took time this quarter to listen to our own team. Sharon Escalante, with twenty years of service, reminded us that excellence is built on regulatory knowledge and teamwork. Gian Cajun spoke of the privilege of translating international conventions into practical oversight. Their stories, like so many others, are the true engine of this Administration.

And then there is the work of connection. Recent engagements in Saudi Arabia and Taiwan reminded us that strong relationships are not built in boardrooms alone, they are forged in conversation, in listening, and in showing up. As we look ahead to Singapore in April and Posidonia in Athens this June, we carry that same mindset forward: accessible, responsive, and committed to partnership.

Because at its heart, registration is not an administrative procedure. It is a partnership. One that keeps vessels moving, businesses growing, and trust firmly anchored under our flag.

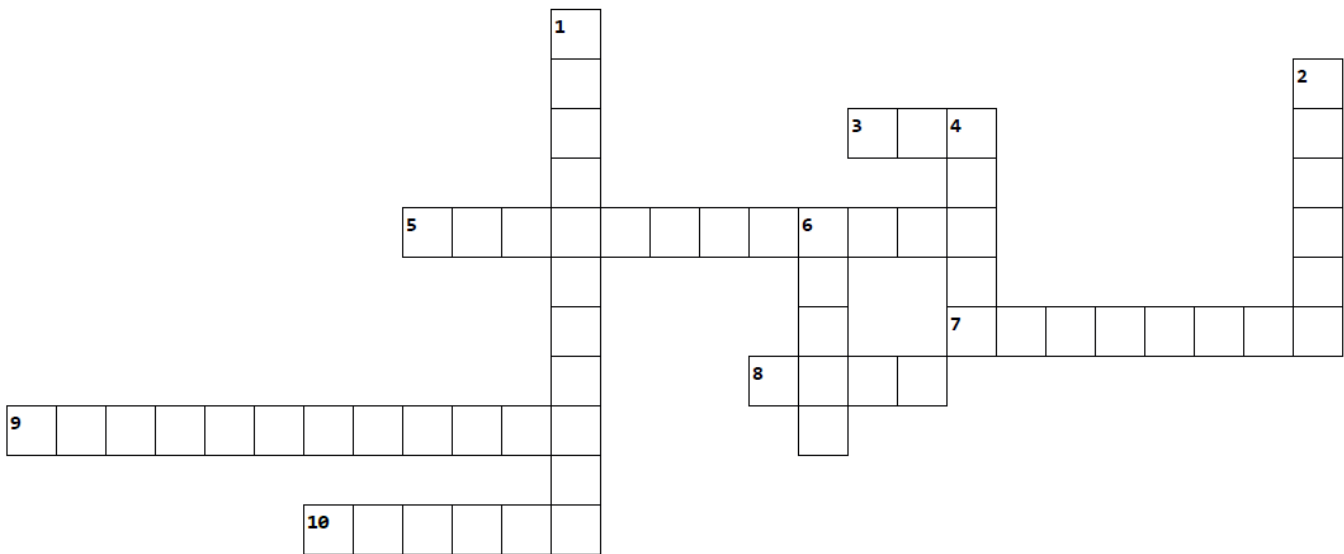
The journey ahead will bring more change, including the very real challenges of a world at conflict. That is not something we pretend to ignore. But it is also not something we face alone.

We face it together, with purpose, with preparation, and with a clear view of the horizon.

Stay agile. Stay prepared. And steer forward.

Vessel Registration Services

Cross word puzzle



Across

- 3. Essential number assigned to every registered vessel
- 5. Maritime paperwork giving a ship its legal identity
- 7. Organization that keeps a vessel on its books
- 8. Official indication of a vessel's nationality
- 9. Country where a ship is formally listed
- 10. Dues Fee paid to maintain a vessel's active status

Down

- 1. Temporary certificate issued before full enrollment
- 2. Inspection ensuring compliance before registration
- 4. Person or company responsible for registering a ship)
- 6. Document confirming lawful ownership

