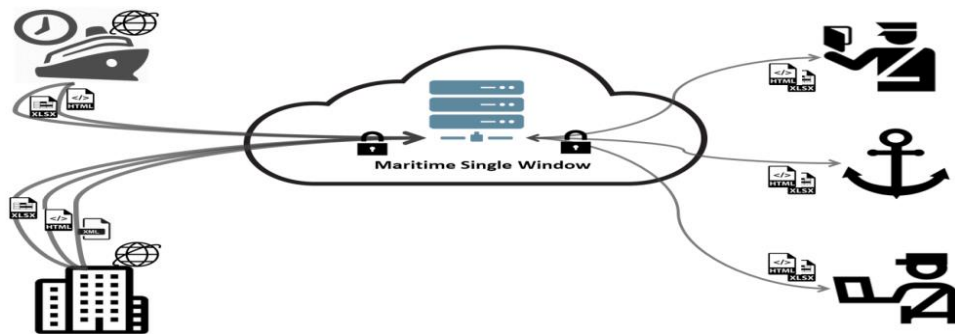


Technical Service Circular Nr. 01/ 2024, 02-02-2024
IMO Developments

Subject: “FAL Committee: IMO Maritime Single Window - Advancing Digitalization in Shipping”



Ref.: (a) IMO Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention), 1965.
(b) IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business.

Summary: Since 1st January 2024 it is compulsory for ports around the world to operate Maritime Single Windows (MSWs) for the electronic exchange of information required on ships' arrival at a port, their stay and their departure. The year 2024 marks a milestone in the acceleration of digitalization in shipping, notably a significant transformation in the maritime industry with the mandatory implementation of the “Maritime Single Window” system.

1. Requirement under the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL)

1.1. This pivotal shift, mandated under the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL), compels governments to adopt a unified digital platform for exchanging information with ships during their port calls. In particular the concrete requirement under the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL), requires Governments to use a single digital platform or “Maritime Single Window” to share and exchange information with ships when they call at ports, since 1st January 2024.

1.2. The above is expected to streamline procedures to clear the arrival, stay and departure of ships and greatly enhance the efficiency of shipping worldwide. The annex to the Convention makes it mandatory for public authorities to establish, maintain and use single window systems for the electronic exchange of information required on arrival, stay and departure of ships in ports. In addition, public authorities will have to combine or coordinate the electronic transmission of the data to ensure that information is submitted or provided only once and reused to the maximum extent possible.

2. Streamlining Maritime Procedures

2.1. This innovative approach aims to simplify and speed up the processes associated with the arrival, stay, and departure of ships, thereby boosting global shipping efficiency. The Maritime Single Window ensures that all necessary data is shared seamlessly between ships, ports, and government agencies. The main characteristics of a single window environment, at least between individual ports within the same

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country, are harmonization, standardization and interoperability, avoiding proprietary technology and/or data models, and supporting the goal of international interoperability between single window environments in the future

3. Global Impact and Implementation

3.1. The relevance of this initiative becomes clear when considering that more than 4.6 million port calls were recorded globally in 2022, with ships spending a significant amount of time in ports. The IMO has through various technical cooperation programs played a pivotal role in supporting countries to implement the Maritime Single Window.

3.2. The digitalization of maritime information exchange is not just about efficiency; it's about accuracy, safety, and environmental protection. The IMO Compendium ([FAL.5-Circ.44.pdf](#)) developed in collaboration with standards bodies like ISO (International Organization for Standardization), UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), and WCO (World Customs Organization), ensures that different stakeholders can effectively communicate through harmonized data standards. The mandatory Maritime Single Window system marks a new chapter in maritime trade, promising a future of more efficient, transparent, and secure shipping operations. With the support of the IMO and its guidelines, nations around the globe are set to make this innovative digital leap, revolutionizing the way maritime trade functions.

4. Guidelines and Support from the Facilitation Committee

4.1. The Facilitation Committee of IMO has issued guidelines to assist Member States to implement the MSW, including the [revised guidelines for setting up a maritime single window](#), approved by the Facilitation Committee, at its forty-seventh session (13 to 17 March 2023).

For the Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry

Authorized Signatory:

Office of the General Ships Registrar

