



**Marine Notice Nr. 03/ 2024, 03/06/2024**

**Subject: “G-B I.S.R. Policy on the Issuance of E-Certificates on Board G-B I.S.R. Vessels”**

**To:** Ship owners, managers, Masters of G-B I.S.R. vessels, Approved Nautical Inspectors, MoUs, Flag State Surveyors, and Recognized Organizations.

## **1. Scope**

**1.1.** This Marine Notice informs shipowners, operators, masters, recognized organizations (ROs), and other interested stakeholders about the G-B I.S.R. E-Certificates policy and in particular on the eminent issuance of electronic certificates (E-Certificates) for vessels registered under the Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry and outlines the scope, issuance process, and verification procedures for these certificates.

**1.2.** To enhance efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and improve the accessibility and authenticity of ship certification, the Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry has adopted the electronic certificates policy. These E-Certificates comply with the relevant international regulations and standards, notably those established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

## **2. Background**

**2.1.** All ships are required to carry certificates that establish their seaworthiness, type of ship, competency of seafarers, and other relevant requirements. These certificates are provided by the flag State of the ship and may be inspected by port State control officers. The FAL Committee agreed in 2014 (FAL 39) that electronic certificates should be treated as equivalent to traditional paper certificates, provided that the certificates and the website used to access them conform to the guidelines approved by the Organization and that specific verification instructions are available on board the ship. To facilitate the use and acceptance of electronic certificates, FAL approved the Guidelines for the use of electronic certificates (FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2). The GISIS module "Survey and Certification" provides information on electronic certificates issued by flag States and the relevant website links for verification of authenticity.

## **3. Applicability:**

**3.1.** This Marine Notice applies to all vessels registered with the G-B I.S.R. and incorporates relevant to the issuance of E-Certificates proceedings of G-B I.S.R. Deputy Registrars, Ship Owners, Managers, Operators of G-B I.S.R. registered ships, Masters and Crew of G-B ISR registered ships, Recognized Organizations and Flag State Surveyors of G-B I.S.R.

## **4. Compliance with IMO Technical Specifications & Standards**

**4.1.** Given the above, particular reference is made to the Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Certificates (FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2) adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Guidelines provide guidance to facilitate the use and acceptance of electronic certificates to reduce the administrative burden on Administrations, port State control officials, ships' crew, and other stakeholders caused by, amongst other reasons, the reliance on traditional paper certificates



## **5. Use of E-Certificates on Board G-B I.S.R. Vessels**

**5.1.** The introduction of the use of electronic Certificates [E-Certificates] onboard G-B ISR registered ships aims to optimize the relevant processes and procedures and reduce the administrative burden on Administrations, Port State Control officials, ships' crew, and other stakeholders caused by, amongst other reasons, the reliance on traditional paper certificates.

**5.2.** The G-B I.S.R. Electronic Certificates (E-Certificates) will be generated by a specialized Software Developer. The relevant E-Certificates Verification Solution: EN-Trust app for online verification of the E-Certificates, complies with the requirements prescribed in the IMO FAL Guidelines (FAL.5/Circ.39/ Rev.2 – Guidelines for the use of electronic certificates), which provide guidance to facilitate the use and acceptance of electronic certificates.

**5.3.** The electronic certificates [E-Certificates] issued by the G-B ISR of which the template formats - which shall gradually replace the current formats- will be uploaded on the IMO GISIS website, shall be deemed valid in accordance with the respective requirements of applicable Regulations, International Conventions, Codes or Agreements to which the Republic of Guinea-Bissau is or may become a party to.

**5.4.** This Marine Notice, as amended, shall be kept onboard G-B ISR registered ships to facilitate the acceptance of electronic certificates [E-Certificates] issued by G-B ISR and shall be accepted by all relevant authorities and stakeholders.

## **6. E- Certificates Development and On-Line Verification Procedure**

**6.1.** Each individual E-Certificate developed, can only be generated via the specific “ENSIGN Software”, and each is automatically allocated a new unique E-Certificate Number whilst historic records reflecting the date, time, and person authorizing the issuance of each E-Certificate are automatically maintained within the ENSIGN Software.

**6.2.** The G-B I.S.R. electronic certificates (E-Certificates) have been developed and shall be maintained at all times by carrying all required features as per FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2, including:

- .1 Use of the G-B ISR certificate formats ensuring validity and consistency with the format and content required by the relevant International Convention(s) or Instrument(s), as applicable;
- .2 G-B ISR's logo as a printable and visible symbol that confirms the source of issuance of each E-Certificate;
- .3 Electronic signature(s) of the issuer(s) [General Ships Registrar's Office (GSR OFC) – Deputy General Ship's Registrar's Office (DGSR OFC) and Deputy Registrar(s) (D.R.S)];
- .4 An embedded QR Code as well as a Unique Tracking Number –which for ease of reference coincides with the unique e-Certificate Number- which may be also used for verification purposes via the EN-Trust app, using the “Search” function.
- .5 Measures preventing unauthorized edits, modifications, or revisions of the e-Certificates:
  - i. for electronic e-Certificates via measures implemented directly within the software generating the e-Certificates.
  - ii. for both electronic as well as printed e-Certificates, as the ENSIGN e-Certificates Verification Solution: EN-Trust app provides the ability to view online and/or download the currently valid



# G-B INTERNATIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL SHIPS REGISTRY OF GUINEA-BISSAU

version of each e-Certificate, for confirming its actual contents against the presented printed version of the e-certificate (<https://app.gbISR.com/entrust>)<sup>1</sup>.

iv. Each ENSIGN Software generated E-Certificate has the following note reflected:

*“This document is an electronic certificate pursuant to the requirements of IMO FAL.5/Circ.39 as amended, based on G-B ISR relevant Circular as amended.  
Validation and Authentication of this e-Certificate can be obtained via the EN-Trust app [entrust.app.com], by scanning the embedded QR Code and/or searching in the app using the e-Certificate Number.”*

**6.3.** Parties seeking to verify the authenticity and validity of the electronic certificates [E-Certificates] issued by Guinea-Bissau (G-B ISR) shall apply the following procedure:

.1 Online Verification via the En-Trust App, by using the Quick Response (QR) Code found in each e-Certificate.

.2 Online Verification via the En-Trust App and/or via the Guinea-Bissau (G-B ISR) website, by visiting the relevant address and entering the unique tracking number at the online verification system.

**6.4.** All verification information is digitally protected from alteration or tampering. In addition, to the above specific instructions on the [“GUIDANCE ON VERIFICATION OF VALIDITY & AUTHENTICITY OF G-B ISR E-CERTIFICATES”](#) shall be provided onboard for any relevant party who may wish to verify the validity and authenticity of the G-B ISR E-Certificates.

## **7. TimeLine for the Issuance of E-Certificates**

**7.1.** The G-B ISR will commence the implementation of its E-Certificates policy by June 2024; and will be progressively moving towards the full implementation in a structured timeline to be communicated to its stakeholders and customers in advance. Further technical instructions, as appropriate will be provided by an additional Marine Notice.

## **8. Hard-copy format of Certificates in Use during the Intermediate Adaptation Period**

**8.1.** Hard Copy (paper) certificates issued by the G-B ISR prior to the issuance of E-Certificates, shall remain valid and shall be carried onboard until the E-Certificates are available on board or for the period deemed necessary by owners and operators.

**8.2.** If deemed required, this Administration may authorize on an ad-hoc basis the issuance of hard copy format of Certificates.

---

<sup>1</sup> G-B I.S.R. will provide to all relevant parties concerned detailed instructions for the usage of access rights and the granting of individual password, as deemed necessary.



## **9. E-Certificates Issued by Recognized Organizations.**

**9.1.** Pursuant to the current Marine Notice, Recognized Organizations being recognized by the G-B I.S.R. and issuing electronic certificates on behalf of the G-B I.S.R., shall contain at minimum the features as provided in FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2.; while they may also contain additional security features as may be deemed appropriate and shall be accepted by all relevant authorities and stakeholders.

**9.2.** In this regard, ROs issuing statutory certificates to G-B I.S.R. vessels are being authorized and encouraged to develop capabilities to issue electronic versions of the statutory certificates to replace the traditional paper statutory certificates, as may be deemed necessary. The electronic statutory certificates issued by ROs to G-B I.S.R. registered ships shall comply with FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 which, inter alia, identifies the following features:

- i. validity and consistency with the format and content required by the relevant international convention or instrument;
- ii. protected from edits, modifications or revisions;
- iii. a unique tracking number for verification;
- iv. reliably and securely verifiable through a conveniently accessible and continuously available platform; and
- v. a printable and visible symbol that confirms the source of issuance.

## **10. Exercise of Due Diligence**

**10.1.** Notwithstanding, the compliance to the requirements of the International Ships Registry of Guinea-Bissau (G-B ISR), the owners of Guinea-Bissau registered ships should continue to exercise due diligence to address any entry and clearance requirements that are specific to each port that the ship calls at.

## **11. Effective Date**

**11.1** The current Maritime Notice has immediate effect as per the day of issuance.

## **12. Inquiries**

**12.1.** For inquiries or further information regarding LRIT compliance, please contact G.B. I.S.R. – Operation Department (E-mail: [ops@gbi-lb.org](mailto:ops@gbi-lb.org), Tel.: +30 210 4537950, +30 210 4537914).

## **For the Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry**

Authorized Signatory:

**Office of the General Ships Registrar**



## **Attached**

ENSIGN Software Technical Annex on GB ISR E-Certificates (p. 7)