

**Minutes** of a meeting of the Association's MASS Committee  
held on 17 December 2025 from 1300hrs UTC via videoconference

Committee Members	
Name	Company
Gary Sanders (C) (GSA)	Ocean Infinity
Dan Stoyle (VC) (DST)	BP
Graeme Russell (GRU)	TechnipFMC
Lucas Marino (LMA)	Petrobras
Torsten Marten (TMA)	UTEC
Raimund Bjordal (RBJ)	Equinor
Nicolas Chasiotis (NCH)	Allseas
Kristian Breidfjord (KBR)	Reach Subsea
Shepard Smith (SSM)	XOcean
Mohammad Saslia (MSA)	Safeen Subsea
Peter Solvang (PSO)	DP Marine
Jeffrey Tuckerman (JTU)	Fugro
Richard Purser (RPU)	IMCA
Margaret Fitzgerald (MFI)	IMCA
Argiro Bell (ABE)	IMCA

## 1 Competition Law Compliance Policy

The IMCA Competition Law Compliance Policy, which had been circulated with the meeting agenda, was drawn to the attention of all present.

## 2 Welcome and Apologies for Absence and Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies for absence were recorded, with the latest meeting attendance now as follows:

Name	Company	Committee Meeting Attendance			
		Feb 2025	May 2025	Sept 2025	Dec 2025
Gary Sanders (C)	Ocean Infinity	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Dan Stoyle (VC)	BP	Attended	Attended	Absent	Apologies
Graeme Russell	TechnipFMC	Attended	Absent	Attended	Attended
Lucas Marino	Petrobras	Absent	Attended	Attended	Apologies
Torsten Marten	UTEC	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Raimund Bjordal	Equinor	Attended	Attended	Attended	Apologies
Nicolas Chasiotis	Allseas	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Kristian Breidfjord	Reach Subsea	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Shepard Smith	XOcean	Absent	Absent	Absent	Attended
Mohammad Saslia	Safeen Subsea	Attended	Attended	Absent	Attended
Peter Solvang	DP Marine	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
Jeffrey Tuckerman	Fugro			Attended	Attended

## 2.1 Apologies for Absence

Absentees were noted.

## 2.2 Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held in September 2025 were agreed and will be duly signed as an accurate record by the Chair.

## 3 Review of Actions from Previous Meeting (DP & Marine Combined)

The committee discussed the status and feedback on USV inspection documents, the ongoing review of document 257, and the need to align guidance with audit requirements, with Jeffrey and Christian's attendance updates noted for accuracy in records.

- ◆ **USV Inspection Documents Status:** GSA confirmed the USV inspection documents are published and have been promoted at industry events. PSO reported they are being used in practice, with feedback mainly from Reach Subsea, though wider industry input remains limited.
- ◆ **Alignment of Guidance and Audit Documents:** A gap was identified between the audit document and the guidance in document 257. The committee agreed a gap analysis may be needed, with potential expansion of guidance to properly support all audit requirements.
- ◆ **Terminology and Scope Considerations:** The committee discussed the use of the terms uncrewed and unmanned in the context of legal and regulatory clarity. IMCA confirmed that the current terminology reflects prevailing industry practice and is consistent with existing legal advice previously provided to the Association.

## 4 Regulatory Challenges and International Collaboration

The committee examined the complexities of regulatory acceptance, the impact of the North Sea MOU, and the challenges of achieving harmonised standards across jurisdictions, with practical experiences from Norway, Brazil, and the UK discussed

- ◆ **North Sea MOU Impact:** JIU explained that the North Sea MOU has facilitated smoother acceptance of UK-flagged vessels in Norway, shifting from a requirement for Norwegian flagging to acceptance of UK certification, though the MOU lacks detailed, binding regulations and is applied case by case.
- ◆ **Flag State and Local Requirements:** MSA described requirements from ADNOC for USV operators to hold chief mate or master tickets, even for small vessels, reflecting heightened safety concerns in complex offshore fields, while GSA and GRU discussed similar requirements from the MCA and other authorities.
- ◆ **Operator Competence and Responsibility:** The committee debated the legal implications of the 'master' role for remote operations, with examples from Brazil and the UK where a responsible person must be designated onshore, and discussed the need for clear assignment of responsibility in the event of incidents.
- ◆ **Feedback to Regulators and Industry Events:** GSA and others reflected on the slow pace of regulatory development, noting that operators provide feedback but are hesitant to take risks

without clear regulatory backing, and described recent industry events where these issues were debated with regulators such as the MCA.

## 5 Work Programme

### 5.1 Committee Objectives and Action Planning for 2026

- ◆ **The committee reviewed the status of 2025 objectives**, discussed shifting incomplete items to 2026, and proposed a process for collecting and prioritising new objectives, including the use of collaborative tools and regular review of progress.
- ◆ **Review of 2025 Objectives:** MSA and GSA suggested reviewing the 2025 objectives to determine which have been achieved and which should be carried forward, with RMO providing access to the draft objectives and terms of reference for committee input.
- ◆ **Process for Setting 2026 Objectives:** RMO proposed using a shared document for members to submit ideas, which will then be prioritised and finalised in early 2026, with the aim of focusing on achievable goals and documenting deferred items for future consideration. This was shared via meeting chat and is available to be expanded
- ◆ **Coordination with Other Committees:** GRU noted the importance of aligning objectives and deliverables with related committees, especially where there is overlap in audit and guidance documents for USVs, AUVs, and ROVs

## 6 Any Other Business

### 6.1 Development of Training and Competence Frameworks

The committee agreed there is a clear need for a standardised training and competence framework for USV operators, building on existing models such as DNV 0324 and current company safety case practices.

- ◆ **Existing Training Frameworks:** DNV 0324 was noted as the only widely recognised USV operator framework, with most organisations relying on in house training. The committee discussed the case for an industry wide standard.
- ◆ **Review of Marine Competency Documents:** Documents such as C 002 and C017 were identified as a strong starting point, with a review needed to map relevant content and identify gaps for remote and autonomous operations.
- ◆ **Integration with Committee Objectives:** A shared working document will be used to gather ideas for 2026 objectives, including training and competence guidance, with RMO and GSA coordinating contributions from members.

### 6.2 Audit and Guidance for AUVs and Hybrid Vessels

The committee reviewed audit and guidance needs for AUVs, particularly those operating without a mothership, and noted regulatory challenges linked to hybrid and battery powered vessels, including safety and class compliance.

- ◆ GRU outlined progress on an AUV audit document focused on subsea operations, highlighting difficulties where AUVs transit on the surface and are treated by some flag states as USVs, triggering navigation and safety requirements.

- ◆ Concerns were raised over lithium battery risks. Current class rules on battery management, compartmentalisation, and fire safety were discussed, with an expectation that future designs may move towards containerised battery systems.
- ◆ Document Scope and Exclusions: The group agreed to clarify boundaries between AUV and USV documents, recognising that dedicated AUV audit and inspection documents are under development and overlap should be avoided.

**Action: IMCA/Committee**

## 7 Summary of action items

Action	Responsible	Target
Continue updating the 257 guidance, incorporating feedback and sharpening its operational focus.	Committee	Q2 2026
Audit vs Guidance Gap Analysis, Carry out a gap analysis between the audit and guidance documents to identify missing or weak guidance sections.	Committee/IMCA	Q2 2026
2026 Objectives Collection: Create and share a Microsoft Form or similar tool for committee members to submit suggestions for 2026 objectives.	Committee/IMCA	Jan 2026
2025 Objectives Review: Review the 2025 objectives to determine which have been achieved and which should be carried forward to 2026.	Committee/IMCA	Jan 2026
Removal of Irrelevant Objectives: Remove the objectives related to drilling from USVs and drone use from the objectives list.	Committee/IMCA	Jan 2026
Battery Safety Requirements Discussion: Discuss battery safety requirements for hybrid and lithium battery-powered vessels with class societies as needed.	Committee	Q2 2026
Training and Competence Guidance: Review existing marine competency documents such as C002 and C017, identify gaps for remote operations, and develop addendum guidance for MASS operations.	C&T/Committee	

## 8 Date and location of next meetings

January/February 2025 (date TBC)

<b>Signed as a true record</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>