



## REMOTE INSPECTION TECHNIQUES

### Technical Notice IRO.7

#### *Notice to Recognised Organisations and Interested Parties*

The Directorate wishes to inform all concerned that the use of Remote Inspection Techniques (RITs) are accepted onboard Malta Flag vessels in order to facilitate and to enhance the continued maintenance of safety and pollution prevention standards.

RITs are defined as a means of survey that enables examination of any part of a ships structure and equipment without the need for direct physical access of the surveyor, this includes close-up surveys and thickness gauging. The use of RITs has the potential of enhancing safety by providing the possibility of inspecting areas that would otherwise be difficult to reach under normal circumstances. RITs can also assist in the performance of physical survey in confined spaces or at heights, thus reducing the risks of accidents. RITs may be carried out whilst the vessel is at sea thus allowing for any potential risk/deficiency to be 'inspected' by the surveyor and mitigating measures/temporary repairs carried out before the vessel reaches port.

RITs acceptance criteria on Malta flagged ships is subject to the below listed conditions being satisfied:

- The Recognised Organisation (RO) deems that it is applicable and satisfactory as practicable to apply;
- Any inspection techniques shall reflect those listed in the latest IACS REC 42 *Guidelines for Use of Remote Inspection Techniques for surveys*. The techniques shall be in accordance with the RO's Rules and acceptable to the RO. The techniques include:
  - Divers;
  - Unmanned robot arm;
  - Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs);
  - Climbers (inc. Rope Access);
  - Drones;
  - Any other means acceptable to the RO.
- Surveys using RITs, shall only be carried out when the conditions are satisfactory, and the proper equipment and suitably qualified staff is available;
- The quality of inspection outcome and the level of safety onboard shall not be compromised and shall provide the same confidence as the ones performed by the physical inspection;
- Surveys using RITs, including the final survey reports shall be completed in full compliance with the contents of the latest IACS REC 42, IACS Unified Requirements UR Z7, Z7.1, Z7.2, Z10.3 as applicable depending on the ship type, in their latest version, and the applicable IMO Regulations;



- Where applicable; service suppliers/firms carrying out RITs shall be approved by the RO in accordance with IACS UR Z17 *Procedural Requirements for Service Suppliers*. Procedure for approval of service suppliers/firms shall also be incorporated in the procedures of the RO; and
- Surveys conducted using a RIT are to be completed to the satisfaction of the attending surveyor.

Further to the above, when the use of RIT is applied to Enhanced Survey Programme (ESP) surveys, the RO shall ensure that:

- The inspection techniques used are at least, equivalent to the means of access as prescribed in Sections 5.3 of both Annex A and Annex B of the ESP Code; and
- The close-up survey criteria, by ESP Code definition being “details of structural components are within the close visual inspection of the surveyor, i.e. normally within reach of hand” shall be fulfilled using the most suitable and preferred Technique/s;

In line with the above, Recognised Organisations acting for and on behalf of this Administration are requested to update their Malta Country File/Instructions to Surveyors, accordingly. Any deviation from the above instructions shall be communicated directly to the Administration for further consideration.

Merchant Shipping Directorate

02 April 2024