

CIRCULAR

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TO: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu Vanuatu, Australia and New Zealand

SUBJECT: **Invitation to the IMO Regional Workshop on the Ballast Water Management Convention and Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonization of procedures in the Pacific region pursuant to the Convention Nadi, Fiji, 28 to 31 October 2025**

Dear Members,

It is our pleasure to inform you that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) will conduct a regional workshop supporting implementation of the *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004* (BWM Convention), and a regional expert meeting on the harmonization of procedures in the Pacific region pursuant to the Convention. The workshop and meeting are organized under the IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) with support from the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the IMO and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and in alignment with DAFF's 2022 to 2027 Pacific Biosecurity Strategy. The workshop and meeting will be kindly hosted by the Government of the Republic of Fiji through the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF). The workshop and meeting will be held at the Novotel Hotel, Votualevu Rd, Nadi, Fiji, from 28 to 29 October 2025 and from 30 to 31 October 2025, respectively.

The objective of the regional expert meeting is to enable the countries of the Pacific region to establish a framework for a regional harmonized approach in the Pacific on ships' ballast water control and management that is consistent with the requirements and standards of the BWM Convention, as outlined in its Article 13(3). This will entail discussing, with a view to finalization, draft harmonized regional procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Pacific region, which have been prepared by the IMO and DAFF for the consideration of the Administrations of the region.

In this context, the principal objective of the regional workshop, which will precede the regional expert meeting, is to enhance awareness of the BWM Convention and related Guidelines and to strengthen regional capacity for effective implementation and enforcement, with a special emphasis on compliance monitoring and enforcement (CME), including flag State survey and certification, port State control, and risk assessments. This is intended to facilitate the subsequent discussions at the regional expert meeting, as well as more broadly assist the Administrations of the Pacific region in the ratification (where relevant), implementation and enforcement of the BWM Convention.

A provisional programme for the workshop and meeting is attached as annex 1 to this letter, for your information.

The target audience for the workshop and meeting is Government officials who have responsibilities for the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments to prevent the introduction of invasive aquatic species, and for the ratification, implementation and enforcement of the BWM Convention. In order to have a constructive debate during the workshop and the meeting, and especially on the finalization of the regional harmonized procedures, you are kindly requested to

ensure that the nominated participants have the required technical and policy expertise and that they are fully proficient in the English language including the specialized terminology associated with ballast water management, as the workshop will be conducted solely in English.

You are hereby invited to nominate two representatives from your country to attend the regional workshop. The nominees should be at an appropriate level within their Administrations with areas of responsibility involving both technical and policy-making decisions, and should be directly involved in the aspects of implementation and enforcement of the BWM Convention. Please note that the acceptance of the nominees will strictly be based on relevance to the subject matter; the nominating authority is requested to ensure that the professional background and responsibilities of the nominated candidates are fully in accordance with the workshop and meeting requirements as outlined above. Depending on the allocation of responsibilities relating to ballast water management within the Government of your country, one participant may represent an authority/organization responsible for the regulation of shipping, and one may represent an authority/organization in charge of issues related to the marine environment, as appropriate and relevant. Moreover, in support of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on Gender Equality under the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, nominations of female participants are strongly encouraged, and the nominating authority is requested to ensure that at least one of the two nominated participants be female.

The nominated representatives will be expected to provide a brief oral overview of the current status and arrangements in their country relating to the ratification (where relevant), implementation and enforcement of the BWM Convention, as well as any arrangements for the management of ships' ballast water and sediments.

To enhance the effectiveness of the event, nominated participants will be required to complete the IMO e-Learning course on "Introduction to Ballast Water Management and Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement" before attending the in-person workshop.

A presentation by the Fiji chapter of the Pacific Women in Maritime Association (PacWIMA) is expected to be planned during one of the coffee or lunch breaks to raise awareness of this IMO-established Women in Maritime association in the region by presenting on the work of the Association, highlighting gender considerations in marine environmental governance. Further information will be provided in the final programme of the workshop and meeting that will be circulated in due course.

Please be advised that IMO will bear the cost of participation of two representatives from each of the following eligible countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Australia and New Zealand are invited to nominate two participants each on a self-funded basis. As host country, Fiji may nominate additional participants in consultation with IMO (also on a self-funded basis).

Financial assistance by IMO for the accepted representatives of the aforementioned eligible countries will include:

1. an economy class round-trip air ticket between the respective international airports and Nadi, Fiji;¹
2. accommodation for the entire duration of the workshop and meeting, including breakfast in the hotel from the first day of the workshop to one day after the end of the meeting;
3. a daily subsistence allowance at the applicable UN rate for Nadi, Fiji, for the duration of the workshop; in addition, on the days of the workshop, lunch will be provided at the training venue

¹ For any nominated and accepted participants who may be travelling directly to the BWM workshop and meeting from the Marine Environment Protection Committee – 2nd Extraordinary Session (MEPC/ES.2) and the 20th Intersessional Working Group on the Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 20), held at the IMO in London, United Kingdom, from 14 to 24 October 2025 (refer to Circular Letter No. 5011), the necessary logistical and administrative arrangements, including travel and payment of DSA, will be coordinated through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

4. terminal expenses at the prevailing rate, in accordance with UN travel regulations and rules; and
5. if travel arrangements to be made require participants to transit overnight at an intermediary city enroute to/from Fiji, the payment of a daily subsistence allowance at the applicable UN rate for the appropriate duration.

Participants may wish to bring additional funds to cover any other expenses in Fiji or miscellaneous expenses that might be incurred prior to receiving their training allowance.

Actual travel arrangements for these participants shall only be made by IMO after written confirmation by IMO of acceptance of the country's representatives.

All participants will be required to bear the expenses in their home country incidental to travelling abroad, including expenditure relating to passport, visa processing fees, medical/travel insurance and any other miscellaneous items. Furthermore, IMO will not assume responsibility for any of the following costs, which may be incurred by the participants in connection with attending the programme:

1. compensation for salary or related allowances during the period of the workshop;
2. compensation in the event of death, disability or illness; and
3. loss or damage to personal property of participants.

Participants should ensure that they are in possession of any necessary entry and transit visas prior to their departure.

Please note that additional representatives from each country are also welcome to attend the workshop. However, IMO cannot support the associated costs and therefore any additional representatives would attend on the basis of self-funding only.

You are kindly requested to send the names and details of your representatives (one nomination form per nominee) to Dr Theofanis Karayannis, Head, Marine Biosafety, Marine Environment Division, IMO (tkarayan@imo.org), and to Dr Mohammed Asid Zullah, Pollution Adviser, SPREP (zullahm@sprep.org), **as soon as possible, but not later than Friday, 1 August 2025**. Participation of sponsored nominees after that date cannot be guaranteed. To assist the organizers in facilitating the preparatory work, please complete the nomination forms in annexes 2 and 3, as appropriate (annex 2 for ITCP-funded participants; annex 3 for self-funded participants including host country participants), and return these to the addressee indicated therein.

We look forward to receiving your early response.

Yours sincerely,



Anthony Talouli
Officer-In-Charge

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