Guidance on the IMCA eCMID System

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Version History

Date	Reason	Revision
Aug 2024	New requirements for vessel particulars completion (4.1, 4.4.2) Introduction of risk-based question categories (4.4.4, 4.5.4) Revised guidance on template selection in section 2 Updated information on eCMID database and inspection app interfaces.	Rev. 5 DRAFT
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1 System Overview

1.1 Purpose

The IMCA eCMID system provides the marine and offshore industry with standardised formats for vessel inspection. It offers a safety management system (SMS) 'health check' and can help improve the quality and consistency of inspections, as well as reducing the frequency of inspections on individual vessels through the adoption of a commonly recognised inspection process.

In this document the terms "eCMID system", "eCMID database" and "eCMID inspection" include the use of all available inspection templates (see section 2), so can be read as including "eMISW inspection" and similar.

The aim is to provide a tool that delivers a holistic SMS assessment. The eCMID system is aligned to the International Safety Management (ISM) Code for Ships and follows the principles of ISO 19011 – *Guidance for the Auditing of Management Systems*. An eCMID inspection assesses a vessel's operational safety status by examining the SMS as implemented onboard. This includes observations regarding the vessel's integrity, the safety of personnel, and compliance with environmental protection requirements. As with all such audits, the eCMID process can only provide a 'snapshot' of the state of the vessel and it must be recognised that inspectors can only report on what they find during the inspection.

An eCMID inspection is an SMS assessment tool and is not a suitability-for-task assessment, which is the product of client expectations/requirements and the capability of the vessel to deliver against these.

The inspection should be completed by a competent and independent third-party who understands and is familiar with the type of vessel being inspected. The inspector must be an accredited vessel inspector (AVI) with in-date accreditation (see Section 3).

Completed inspection reports are available, at vessel operators' discretion, to all those with a justifiable requirement to confirm a vessel's safety and environmental integrity status. A new client should generally check for an existing current report before commissioning a new inspection. Existence of a previous report does not necessarily remove the need for an updated inspection of the vessel, even if it is less than 12 months old, but it should at least be taken into consideration when assessing the degree/extent of any further inspection requirement. If the latest report is over 12 months old, a new inspection should be conducted.

An eCMID inspection report is designed to be a 'live' document, which the crew and management can use to prepare for an inspection and subsequently maintain. By keeping 'vessel particulars' updated and adding operator comments as finding from previous reports are addressed, they can ensure that safety and environmental management system integrity is sustained, and administrative work required at subsequent inspections is minimised.

1.2 IMCA-Recognised Reports

Only reports available in the online eCMID database at www.ecmid.com, which will have been prepared and uploaded by an AVI, are recognised as valid by IMCA.

Copyright of the inspection templates belongs to IMCA, and the question sets must not be copied for use outside the eCMID system. Previous blank PDF/paper copies of the inspection templates have been withdrawn. IMCA reserves the right to take appropriate action against

any companies or individuals violating copyright and using the inspection templates outside of the online eCMID system.

PDF and paper copies produced from the online eCMID database will bear an appropriate watermark showing their draft or live status. Their validity can be verified by logging in to the website and requesting access to the online version, which will include any subsequent operator comments.

1.3 Online System

The online eCMID system comprises two elements:

1) the eCMID website – www.ecmid.com – and the online database behind it, which holds company, user, vessel, and report data
2) the eCMID inspection app, which is used by inspectors to carry out the inspection and upload into the online database.

1.4 System Users

The eCMID system accepts registrations from four user types. All user types can request access to existing inspection reports.

- **Vessel operator** – including vessel owners and operators of third-party owned vessels. This account type is able to add and manage vessel data, to review and comment on uploaded inspections and to control access to published inspection reports.

  Operators can also act as clients, both for the situation where they charter a third-party vessel and to enable them to commission independent inspections as part of their own internal SMS assurance processes.

- **Inspection company** – including freelance/sole trader inspectors and larger inspection companies. This account type provides access to the eCMID inspection app, which is used to download inspection templates, prepare, and upload inspection reports.

  This category is also used to register consultancies, which offer related services, although they will not be able to upload into the database without users gaining AVI status.

- **Client –** all clients requiring eCMID inspections should register for free with the eCMID system, as only reports uploaded into the online database are recognised as valid by IMCA. They can then be identified in the inspection application, notified of report availability, and provided with access to other reports in the database where approved to do so by the vessel operator.

- **Industry organisation** – bodies such as classification societies, shipping associations and regulatory authorities can register to gain access to inspection reports of vessels of interest to them.

1.5 Control of Data

Once uploaded by an inspector, inspection reports and their underlying data are controlled by the vessel operator (see Section 5).

It may be that an inspection is commissioned by a third-party client. Even so, that data will be controlled by the vessel operator regardless of which party has funded the inspection and

upload. All users benefit from the shared system – clients may access multiple reports commissioned by others on vessels from a variety of operators with no further payment required. Clients are identified in inspection reports, which publicises their contribution to the wider eCMID system.

For the avoidance of doubt, uploaded reports may be passed by the vessel operator to other parties in pdf format, for use in the marine assurance process.

The eCMID system itself, including inspection template content, database structure, website, and software functionality, are the intellectual property of IMCA.

Further details are set out in the terms and conditions of use and the privacy policy, as updated from time to time, as available on the eCMID website.

1.6 Funding and Fees

Company/user registration and access to published report data is available to all users free of charge.

To cover the costs of hosting, maintaining, supporting, and developing the eCMID system, a nominal charge is required for adding new inspection reports to the database. Fee levels are published on the eCMID website. Fees levied from the upload of reports are re-invested in the eCMID system.

1.7 System Oversight

The IMCA Marine eCMID Committee, comprising representatives from industry covering all user categories plus IMCA and International Institute of Marine Surveying (IIMS) staff, oversees the operation of the eCMID system, subject to direction from IMCA's Board and senior management.

The committee reviews the system's operation, recommends policy improvements, and regularly reviews and updates the inspection templates and question sets to reflect industry and regulatory developments and user feedback.

Committee members also participate in the quality assurance process set out in Section 7.

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2 Inspection Types

The eCMID system currently includes two inspection formats, with indicative usage cases below. However, it is for the vessel operator, client, and inspector to agree the most appropriate format for each circumstance.

2.1 eCMID – Common Marine Inspection Document – IMCA M149

This document should be used as a basis for inspecting any type of vessel of 500grt and more.

AVI accreditation with 'eCMID General' endorsement is required to be able to perform eCMID inspections.

The following supplements, based on vessel type and/or operation, are available in Issue 13 and should be selected where relevant to a vessel. Additional accreditation is required by inspectors for certain supplements, as shown. The available supplements may be updated in subsequent revisions to the inspection template.

Supplement	Type of accreditation required
LNG OSV	LNG fuelled vessels
Jack-up vessels	Jack-up vessels
Heavy lift vessels	eCMID General
DP vessels	DP vessels
Pipe and cable laying vessels	Pipe and cable laying vessels
Anchor handling vessels	eCMID General
Offshore supply vessels (OSV)	eCMID General
Standby vessels (emergency response rescue vessels)	eCMID General
Survey vessels	eCMID General
Diving support vessels	eCMID General
AUV and ROV vessels	eCMID General
Helicopter operations	eCMID General
Accommodation vessels	eCMID General
Oil recovery vessels	eCMID General
Barges (non self-propelled)	eCMID General
Gravel discharge, dredgers, and trenching	eCMID General
Vessel reactivation from lay-up	eCMID General
High Speed Craft Code compliance	eCMID General
Walk to work	eCMID General
Hybrid battery systems for DP vessels	eCMID General
Battery propulsion systems for non-DP vessels	eCMID General

2.2 eMISW – Marine Inspection for Small Workboats – IMCA M189

This document may be used as a basis for inspecting any vessel less than 500 gross tonnage – vessels which are, therefore, not required to comply with the ISM or the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) codes, although the principles outlined within the two codes are worth following.

In this document, 'small workboat' means a small vessel in commercial use for purpose other than sport or pleasure, including a dedicated pilot vessel. These small workboats could be used for various appropriate tasks such as inshore survey, repair of remote equipment, shallow water air dive support, construction support, dredgers, and personnel transfer.

AVI accreditation with eMISW endorsement is required to be able to perform eMISW inspections.

The following supplements, based on vessel type and/or operation, are available in Issue 6 and should be selected where relevant to a vessel. The available supplements may be updated in subsequent revisions to the inspection template.

Supplement	Type of accreditation required
Dynamic positioning	DP vessels
Towing	eMISW
Diving	eMISW
Anchor handling	eMISW
Barges (non self-propelled)	eMISW
High Speed Craft Code compliance	eMISW
Walk to work	eMISW
Hybrid battery systems for DP vessels	eMISW
Battery propulsion systems for non-DP vessels	eMISW

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3 Inspector Competence and Accreditation

3.1 IMCA Policy

Inspector competence is a key part of delivering a consistently good eCMID inspection report. To ensure sufficient levels of competence and current experience in vessel inspection, as agreed by the industry, IMCA requires those preparing eCMID inspection reports to hold AVI status for the inspection type undertaken (see 3.2).

Only those with relevant AVI certification (including holding additional supplementary accreditation for certain vessel types) are able to upload reports into the eCMID database. Only those reports uploaded into the database are recognised as valid by IMCA (see 1.2).

3.2 Accredited Vessel Inspector (AVI) Scheme

IMCA recognises the AVI scheme operated by the Marine Surveying Academy (MSA) of the IIMS. The scheme provides assurance that AVIs are suitably qualified and experienced personnel (SQEP) for inspecting the categories of vessel for which they are endorsed, with requirements for continuing professional development (CPD) and five-yearly revalidation.

IMCA and IIMS recognise that professional inspectors reach competency via different career paths and that objective evidence of competence may take various forms. The assessment criteria are designed to be as flexible as reasonably possible, while retaining credibility and effectiveness as an assurance process.

Full information on the accreditation process and assessment criteria, together with a searchable directory of current AVIs, is available at www.ecmidvesselinspectors.com.

The scheme was developed in conjunction with IMCA, and the two organisations work closely to review and update accreditation requirements and training provision as required.

3.3 Trainee Status and Supervision

Trainee AVIs (those individuals working towards accreditation) may use the database and perform vessel inspections, as long as they are supervised during the inspection (i.e., on the vessel) by an accredited inspector, which will assist them in achieving the minimum number of inspections required for their accreditation application. It is not sufficient for an AVI to review a trainee's draft report without having accompanied them during the inspection.

Similarly, inspectors holding AVI status but whose certification is not endorsed for those supplements requiring additional accreditation will need to be supervised during all relevant parts of the inspection by an AVI holding the necessary endorsements. As an example, where accreditation does not yet cover the dynamic positioning (DP) supplement, the supervisor should be present throughout the entire inspection, as complex DP systems are linked into all aspects of the vessel and its operations.

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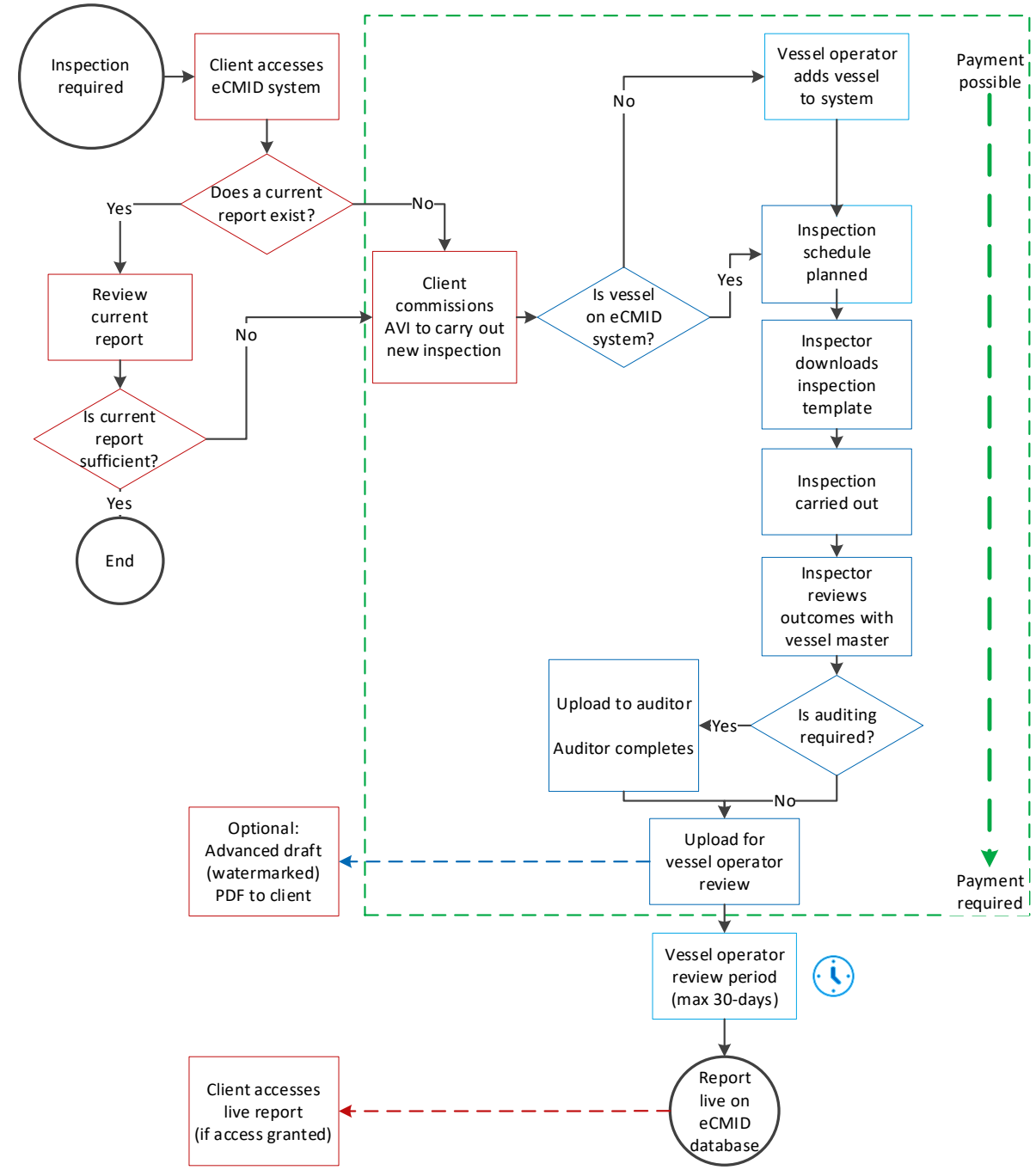
4 Inspection Process

The inspection should adhere to a recognised standard for auditing/inspection, such as ISO 19011 – *Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems*.

The inspector should confirm, through the inspection process, that shore-based management has demonstrated a satisfactory commitment to the vessel's health, safety, and environmental issues. This should be achieved through observation and discussion with the vessel's crew on relevant matters.



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4.1 Vessel Registration and Initial Data

A vessel needs to be registered on the eCMID system before an inspection is commenced, as this makes available a tailored inspection template with all available data pre-filled.

When adding a new vessel, the vessel operator (administrators only) is required to provide certain information, such as name, International Maritime Organization (IMO) number, vessel type(s) and inspection type(s):

- For vessels not requiring an IMO number, an 'eCMID substitute' or 'IMO Replacement' identifier can be provided by the eCMID Helpdesk. It should be noted that this is not an IMO number but is only a unique identification number for eCMID database operational purposes.
- All relevant vessel types (and operational modes) applicable to the vessel in order that future inspections cover all required elements via the report supplements.
- Most vessels can be clearly categorised as appropriate for either eCMID or eMISW inspection. The choice made in the vessel details will determine which inspection template(s) is/are available to inspectors in the eCMID application (and thus which inspectors will be able to carry out the inspection). In limited cases, it may be appropriate to offer both options, in which case the decision about which type of inspection is required is agreed between the client and vessel operator on a case-by case basis.

Vessel operators should normally complete the 'Vessel Particulars' and, for eCMID inspections, the 'Crew Qualifications' sections via the eCMID website. This helps ensure that the vessel crew are prepared ahead of the inspection, and that time is not wasted during the inspection locating such information for the first time (although the inspector will need to verify this data during the inspection). Vessel operators may find it helpful to keep this information regularly updated. If the vessel particulars section is not completed before the inspector downloads the inspection template, a finding will be recorded in the inspection report[1].

4.2 Downloading the Inspection Template

The latest version of the eCMID inspection app, which is used for downloading the inspection template, completing, and uploading the report, will need to be installed by the inspector. They should also ensure that their eCMID account email address is held on file by the MSA so that AVI data is live upon login.

The inspector should log in to the app and download the inspection template prior to departing for the vessel, as internet access is required at this stage. This process involves selecting the operator, vessel, inspection type and client, following which the application will download the latest question set together with any data entered by the operator in the 'Vessel Particulars' and 'Crew Qualifications' sections.

4.3 Preparing for the Inspection

The inspection should be planned and undertaken in liaison with the vessel operator to maximise the availability of resources and to minimise disruption to ongoing activities. Sufficient flexibility should be built into the programme to reflect changing operational demands.

[1] The inclusion of a finding for non-completion of vessel particulars by the vessel operator is to be introduced from 1 October 2024.

Wherever possible the inspector should discuss the following in advance with the vessel operator:

- the timing and programme (opening meeting, scope of inspection and closing meeting)
- approximate duration and format of the inspection
- the personnel expected to be made available
  - During the inspection, crew members from all departments should be talked to – able-bodied seamen (ABs), engine room staff and catering staff, etc.
  - Appropriate entries should be made in the relevant section of the report.
- documentation expected to be available for inspection (including any previous inspection reports)
- requirements to observe operating plant, equipment, or drills.

The inspector should be accompanied by vessel personnel familiar with the area being inspected whenever possible – for example, by the master for certification and crewing, the chief engineer for the engine room, the chief officer for the deck, the second mate for the bridge and navigation, the chief cook/camp boss for the galley, etc. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn at all times and the inspector should be given all necessary safety information before commencing the inspection.

4.4 Carrying Out the Inspection

4.4.1 Inspection Overview

The inspection shall be carried out in person onboard the vessel being inspected. Preparation work can be carried out prior to embarking the vessel.

The inspector should record the location of the inspection and a note of the operations underway at the time of the inspection.

The report can be customised with company logo, disclaimer text and a cover photograph.

4.4.2 Special Format Question Groups

All elements in the ‘Vessel Particulars’ section must be completed. A ‘not applicable’ option is available for selected questions. If there is insufficient information available to make an entry, then this should be explained in the report.

Previous versions of the eCMID report required ‘Crew Qualifications’ to be recorded. However, it has been recognised that personnel may change vessels on such a frequency that this record may not be of significant value, unless requested by the client or needed by the vessel operator for their own purposes. Names and other identifying details must not be included, given data protection considerations.

4.4.3 Standard Format Question Groups

All questions in the inspection templates are ‘closed’ questions that require an answer of ‘Yes’, ‘No’, ‘NA’ (not applicable) or ‘NS’ (not seen). For each question, explanatory comments may be added:

- Some responses require a comment, while for others these are optional – the inspector should use professional judgement to determine where a comment will add vital information or context.
- Some questions require a comment even when 'Yes' is recorded. Such comments provide greater detail, but do not appear as 'findings or in the 'additional comments' section of the report.
- Where an inspector selects 'Not Seen' (NS) or 'Not Applicable' (NA), an explanatory comment must be entered, giving a valid reason for this selection.

The report should only include objective information supporting the selected response. The inspector should not make subjective comments or recommendations on ways to resolve any non-conformance/shortcoming but may provide comments to highlight matters likely to cause a non-conformance in the immediate/near future, e.g., fire extinguishers being in-date on the day of inspection, but which are imminently due for re-testing.

Guidance is provided for most questions, to aid the inspector in completing the report. However, this guidance is not exhaustive and is provided as a minimum level of guidance only. Inspectors should ensure that the guidance for each question is appropriately followed, and suitable comments made in the comment box. A separate summary of the guidance is included as reader notes in the final report.

Where the question asks for the name of the designated person ashore (DPA), full name and contact details should be entered.

Where a question asks about the condition of equipment, a check of all items may not be possible, so the inspector will have to rely on crew comments, sample auditing and professional judgement. In such cases, the opinion of the senior crew member could be taken as the official opinion on the matter. For machinery, this will be the Chief Engineer, for deck equipment the Chief Officer or the Master. A statement should be made along the following lines: "*The Chief Engineer reported that all machinery was fully operational*." Avoid non-attributable statements such as, "*It was reported that …*".

4.4.4 Risk Classification

To assist in the identification of findings requiring urgent action by the vessel operator, IMCA may identify certain questions within an inspection template as 'high-risk'. Any findings against these questions will be highlighted in a separate section at the front of the inspection report, ahead of the list of other findings.

4.4.5 Use of Images

Most standard questions include an option for the inspector to upload an image via the inspection app. For some questions, uploading of an image may be mandatory. Photographs can be added using the built-in camera or annotated/edited outside of the inspection app then added as a file (most devices have software for this purpose).

Inspectors are strongly encouraged to use photographs to illustrate their findings where appropriate. However, as the number of images increases, so will the final report file size (and upload time from the inspection app). Clients will generally prefer

a concise report, so` inspectors should consider both aspects when adding images to their report.

The comments field shall be used to describe the photograph, i.e. where it was taken, what it shows and how this supports the selected answer.

Data protection and privacy regulations must be considered, with care taken to omit or obscure any personal identifiable information.

An 'Additional Images' appendix can be added from the supplement selection page, allowing a small number of additional images to be added. These might be where a single image is insufficient to explain a specific finding or may be more general in nature.

4.4.6 Inspection Summary

The summary section should be completed last. This area also provides an opportunity to add comments on areas not specifically covered in the question sets. The addition of such comments is not mandatory and, where included, such comments do not constitute 'findings'; rather they provide information the inspector deems relevant to support the safety and environmental management system.

A closing meeting report can also be entered or uploaded (see Section 4.5.2 below).

4.5 Findings

4.5.1 Findings List

A list of findings will be created automatically, based on the answers selected throughout the question sections. This is displayed in the Summary section of the inspection app and at the front of the final inspection report.

There is an opportunity for the inspector to add further comments at the end of each section; these should be comments for which the inspector considers add value to the report and for which there is no other place elsewhere in the report. The vessel operator will be able to respond to the findings when they review the report after uploading.

4.5.2 Closing Meeting

A closing meeting must be held to present the inspection findings and conclusions.

The closing meeting should be chaired by the inspector and attended by the vessel master and the appropriate heads of department, in addition to other interested parties as determined by the master, e.g. chief officer, chief engineer, chief steward etc.

The closing meeting should be formal and minutes, including records of attendance, should be completed and submitted with the final inspection report. This can be entered in the eCMID Inspection App, Summary section, as text. Alternatively, a template is available in the same location which can be downloaded, completed then uploaded as an image file.

As appropriate, the following should be explained to the closing meeting attendees:

- advising that the inspection evidence collected was based on a sample of the information available and is not necessarily fully representative of the overall effectiveness of the vessel's processes
- the method in which the report will become available, i.e. eCMID database
- presentation of the inspection findings and conclusions in such a manner that they are understood and acknowledged by the vessel's management.

Any diverging opinions regarding the inspection findings or conclusions between the inspector and the vessel management team should be discussed and, if possible, resolved. If not resolved, this should be recorded in the closing meeting minutes. All such information must be documented factually with no subjectivity.

The inspector should note that the closing meeting is not a forum to accept or agree on any corrective actions or responses to the findings. The inspector should advise the vessel master that the responses or corrective actions to inspection findings are to be managed as per the vessel's safety management system. The vessel operator should provide responses on the eCMID database as appropriate.

For further information on closing meetings, refer to ISO 19011.

4.5.3 Resolution of Findings

The recommended course of action is for the parties involved to review the findings of the inspector and follow an agreed course of remedial action. It should be noted that Section 9 of the ISM Code provides guidance on the remedial action for non-conformance.

The inspector's work will normally be complete when their inspection report is uploaded. Any involvement in follow-up work, such as remedial action, will normally require a separate arrangement between the inspector and the vessel operator.

The vessel operator may add comments to the report to indicate that findings have been rectified, resolved, or otherwise dealt with in an appropriate fashion. This can be undertaken at any point following upload, which may be during the review period prior to publication or at any point during the report's one-year validity.

It is expected that inspection reports in the eCMID database will include findings and comments in response. Where findings have been rectified, the inspection report should show this, and it is not permitted to replace a report with a 'clean' version.

4.5.4 Categorisation of Findings

As described in section 4.4.4, questions may be categorised by IMCA as 'high-risk'. Any findings against these questions will be highlighted in a separate section at the front of the inspection report, ahead of the list of other findings.

IMCA strongly recommends that findings are not further categorised by inspectors ('red/amber/green', 'high/medium/low risk' or similar), as this would have a degree of subjectivity for which the inspector may not be deemed by vessel operator or client to be SQEP. The inspector's task is to objectively record any findings which are identified during the inspection and not to become an assessor on behalf of the other

parties. In this way, the inspector retains integrity as an impartial element in the assessment of SMSs. Prejudicing this integrity is, in IMCA's opinion, likely to compromise the inspector's ability to gain confidence from all parties and therefore degrade their ability to complete the inspection in accordance with the principles of ISO 19011, upon which the inspection process is based.

Should the company giving the inspection instructions (either a vessel operator or a client) want findings to be further categorised by the inspector, then this information should be provided in another document and not recorded in the eCMID system. IMCA will not recognise or accept any responsibility for reports containing finding categorisations. If a report is identified with additional finding categories included, it will be removed from the database. A copy of the report will be sent to the vessel operator concerned and the inspector uploading such reports may be suspended from using the system pending investigation.

4.6 Completion, Auditing and Upload

While the inspector can upload the inspection report directly for vessel operator review, it is generally recommended that the report be circulated internally within the inspection company for quality assurance purposes and as a good industry auditing practice. The eCMID inspection app allows for this, including the ability for inspection companies to audit reports prepared by freelance inspectors, with a separate user guide available on this aspect.

Once completed, the inspection report can then be uploaded to the eCMID database. At this point, payment is required (a separate user guide is available on this aspect), following which the report is released for operator review (see 4.7).

The inspector can include an email address for notifying the client when the completed inspection is uploaded for approval by the vessel operator. This ensures that the inspector's client knows that the inspection company has completed its work. They may also provide advance access to the inspection report by exporting a PDF copy from the application, which will be watermarked with its draft status.

4.7 Operator Review and Publication

The designated vessel contact (as set by the vessel operator) will receive an email advising that a new inspection report is ready for vessel operator comment before it is made available to view on the database. The vessel operator has 30 days to complete this review, following which the report will automatically become live on the database. Reminders will be sent to the vessel operator during this period.

The report is presented for review in sections, making it easy for each part to be signed off. The guidance notes for inspectors are available for reference, together with the reader notes that will be shown in the final PDF report. Operator comments can include responses to the inspector's comments plus updates on the rectification of any findings identified during the inspection. A photograph can be added where appropriate.

After the report becomes 'live' on the system, the vessel operator can continue to add comments to the report during its period of validity (12 months from date of inspection).

Once a report is 'live', its availability will be visible to all eCMID system users. However, the vessel operator retains control over access to the report, able to approve or deny requests from third parties and to assign access rights to other companies as required – see section 5.

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4.8 Supporting Files

PDF and image files can be uploaded as 'supporting documents' linked to an inspection report. Uploading can be undertaken by both inspectors and vessel operators but the operator can determine which files are published alongside a report.

This feature is intended to enable additional evidence to be provided alongside an inspection report which may not be suitable for the image options incorporated into the main reports. These files may relate to the inspection itself or to follow-up actions undertaken by the vessel operator.

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5 Access to Inspection Reports

All vessel operators active in the eCMID system and their registered vessels are listed within the eCMID website and inspection app (login required).

Clients and other interested eCMID system users may request access from vessel operators to any vessel/inspection report of interest to them. Vessel operators may also assign access to a third-party without first requiring an access request to be made. It is for vessel operators alone to determine who may access the online inspection reports relating to their vessels.

A client will automatically be notified that an uploaded report has been made available to the vessel owner or operator for review. Until the owner or operator has reviewed and approved the report (or a 30-day period has passed since upload), it will not be visible to third parties within the database, but the client may be provided with advance access via a PDF file exported from the eCMID application or website, which will bear an appropriate watermark.

Inspectors can generate a PDF copy of the final uploaded report via the inspection app, but this will not include any subsequent vessel operator comments. To obtain the latest version, inspectors must request access from the vessel operator.

Inspection reports are valid for a 12-month period, after which they will automatically cease to be available for downloading, except by the vessel operator. The operator may choose to extend availability beyond the expiry date, as they may still be of use (particularly for those preparing to undertake a new inspection) but such reports will be marked as expired and are not considered live nor valid. Vessel operators are encouraged to plan for reinspection and are alerted by email automatically ahead of the report expiry.

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6 Findings Analytics

The eCMID database website includes an Analytics Hub, available to all registered users, which provides analysis of anonymised aggregate data from all reports currently live in the system. Vessel operators can also view aggregate data from across their own fleet.

The hub enables identification of common findings and trends, enabling action to be taken by:

- vessel operators through updates to their own procedures and communication with vessel crews
- inspectors, who can compare the data to their own findings and could allocate additional time during the inspection focusing on known high-risk areas
- IMCA and its committees, through updating or extending guidance and promoting good practice through guidance, bulletins, videos, and other routes.

7 Quality Assurance Process

IMCA has established the following process to ensure that vessel inspection reports are produced to a good standard, supplementing the inspector accreditation required to upload reports to the system. A sample of uploaded reports is reviewed against the criteria set out below, in order to:

- identify areas for improvement in the inspection templates, this guidance document and the IT platform (information website, database and inspection app)
- highlight areas for improvement in the training programme for inspectors
- provide feedback to inspectors, either as general notices on frequent findings or individually if appropriate
- ensure compliance to the inspection protocols set out elsewhere in this document.

7.1 Background

Based on feedback from IMCA members (vessel operators and their clients), inspectors and the accreditation scheme provider (IIMS/MSA), IMCA's Marine eCMID Committee recognised the need for an additional quality check of the vessel inspection reports uploaded to the eCMID system.

Therefore, the committee has developed this process, together with associated reviewer documentation which ensures that such assessments are consistent, impartial and of benefit to the eCMID system and its users.

7.2 Confidentiality

A unique reference number will be used as the sole identifier of sampled reports during the review process. The IMCA secretariat will ensure that information that could be used to identify the inspector, vessel or companies involved is removed from reports prior to them being submitted for review. The secretariat will also ensure that the reviewer is independent of these parties. Reviewers will be required to keep all information relating to the reports confidential.

7.3 Report Sampling

A randomised sample of all reports uploaded to the database (of each inspection type) will be subject to this review process. A weighting is applied to this sample to select proportionately more AVIs who have gained accreditation in the preceding 12 months, to enable meaningful feedback on areas for individual improvement or training, and to identify any potential general improvements to inspector training. Review may also be triggered by receipt of feedback by IMCA or IIMS.

Selection will take place over a defined reference period, to balance periods of peak inspection activity with assessor availability. The sample size, new inspector weighting and period will be determined by the Marine eCMID Committee and may be adjusted from time to time.

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7.4 Reviewers

Those performing these reviews will be drawn from the IMCA secretariat and, if necessary, any additional independent and non-biased individuals approved by the committee for this purpose.

7.5 Review Process

The IMCA secretariat will prepare an anonymised review version of each report for submission to the reviewer. The report will identify the version of the inspection template used and whether the inspector was training under supervision (if so, in respect of the whole report or specific supplements), a newly accredited inspector or an experienced inspector

A standard spreadsheet will be provided to the reviewer, together with guidance on its use, to ensure consistent completion. The spreadsheet will set detailed review criteria with columns for scoring and comments. Overall scores will automatically be calculated, and a summary will be entered by the reviewer. On completion, the spreadsheet will be returned to the secretariat.

It is intended that this process will be completed within a reasonable timeframe, particularly if any areas of concern are identified, requiring direct feedback to individual inspectors. However, it is recognised that reviewers are volunteers, and their work commitments may not always permit this. Reports may be returned to the secretariat for allocation to an alternative reviewer if required.

In general, review spreadsheet data will be compiled and analysed for generalised feedback to IIMS/MSA and, through them, to the wider inspector community. Where deemed necessary (see Section 7.7), IIMS/MSA will be advised of the inspector's identity, to enable them to contact the inspector and discuss the findings.

7.6 Review Criteria

The review spreadsheet will include the following sections, each with specific review criteria reflecting the guidance in Section 4.4 of this document. These will be scored individually, with comments added as appropriate.

- Completeness, including aspects such as whether:
  - the overview details and inspection summary have been completed
  - the vessel particulars have been reviewed in full and updated where required
  - an appropriate commentary has been included throughout, with information set out in question guidance notes reflected and explanations of questions marked as 'not applicable' or 'not seen'
  - all supplements relevant to the vessel have been included – for example, by considering class notation
  - a closing meeting has been held and recorded in sufficient detail.
- Language, seeking to ensure the report is clear for its ultimate recipients, including whether:
  - the summary/comments use clear language in full sentences, rather than more basic notes which could be misinterpreted later

- correct terminology is used and if non-standard abbreviations are spelt out
- the summary, comments and selected answers reflect consistent outcomes.

- Content, checking that the narrative is objective and evidence-based, including use of objective statements and supporting evidence, such as reference to specific equipment, document titles and crew rank/designation.
- Recording of findings, ensuring that the selected answer is supported by a clear narrative in the comments section as an objective statement of fact supported by evidence, and that negative outcomes are correctly included as findings.
- Photographs, with images uploaded to support the selected answers and comments and referred to in those comments. Images should be clear and any text legible, bearing in mind size and compression in the PDF file produced by the system.

7.7 Review Outcome

The spreadsheet will automatically calculate weighted scores within each section and for the report overall. Its use will allow both qualitative and quantitative evaluation of each report based on the review criteria.

Scores will align to the following grades, with actions by IMCA and IIMS/MSA described:

Excellent	An exemplary report where the AVI had not only completed the report in line with guidance in the inspection template and this document but added value to the inspection report through their commentary and evidence.
Good	A report produced in accordance with the guidance, with any minor comments only to be included in aggregated feedback to IIMS/MSA and inspectors.
Satisfactory	A report generally produced in accordance with the guidance, with positive scores. Lower scores may have been achieved in specific sections, which might result in direct feedback to the inspector for their consideration.
Poor	A report with significant areas achieving low review scores. Detailed feedback will be provided by the reviewer and passed to IIMS/MSA. They will consider the review and may engage with the inspector to discuss areas of concern, to identify any training needs or, in extreme cases, to consider whether their accreditation should remain active. Inspectors whose reports fall into this category will automatically be subject to inclusion in future review cycles.

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8 Glossary

This section sets out key terms and abbreviations used in the inspection templates.

8.1 Key Terms

Operator	The company or entity which exercises day to day operational control of, and responsibility for, a vessel/unit and, where applicable holds the Document of Compliance under which the vessel/unit is named. The registered owner of a vessel/unit may or may not be the operator.
Inspector	The person inspecting the vessel. The qualifications, technical knowledge, experience and competence of the person (or persons) performing the inspection should be appropriate to the type of vessel being inspected, with accreditation for the relevant inspection format and supplements being required (see Section 3).
International voyage	A voyage from a country to a port or place outside such country or the converse.

8.2 Abbreviations

AIS	Automatic Identification System
ARPA	Automatic Radar Plotting Aid
AVI	Accredited Vessel Inspector
BA	Breathing Apparatus
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CMID	Common Marine Inspection Document
COLREG	Convention on International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
CSO	Company Security Officer
DP	Dynamic Positioning
DPA	Designated Person Ashore
DPO	DP Operator
DSC	Digital Selective Calling
EEBDs	Emergency Breathing Devices
eCMID	Electronic Common Marine Inspection Document
eMISW	Electronic Marine Inspection for Small Workboats
EPIRB	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon
FFA	Firefighting Apparatus
FMEA	Failure Modes and Effects Analysis
FMECA	Failure Modes and Effects Criticality Analysis
FRC	Fast Rescue Craft
GMDSS	Global Maritime Distress and Safety System
GRT	Gross Register Tonnage
H&M	Hull and Machinery
HAV	Hand Arm Vibration
HLO	Helicopter Landing Officer
HRU	Hydrostatic Release Unit

HV	High Voltage
ICS	International Chamber of Shipping
IIMS	International Institute of Marine Surveying
IMCA	International Marine Contractors Association
IMDG	International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INLS	International pollution prevention certificate for the carriage of noxious liquids substances in bulk
IOPP	International Oil Pollution Prevention Certificate
ISM	International Safety Management
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISPS	International Ship & Port Facility Security Code
ISS	International Ship Security
LARS	Launch and Recovery System
LOA	Length Overall
LSA	Life-saving Appliance
MARPOL	Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Oil Pollution) Regulations
MISW	Marine Inspection for Small Workboats
MMSI	Maritime Mobile Service Identity
MOB	Man Overboard
MSA	IIMS Marine Surveying Academy
MSI	Maritime Safety Information
NA	Not Applicable
Navtex	Navigational telex – a system used for the broadcast of localised MSI using radio telex
NS	Not Seen
OWS	Oily Water Separator
P&I	Protection and Indemnity
POB	Personnel Onboard
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PTW	Permit to Work
SART	Search and Rescue Transponder
SECA	Sulphur Emission Control Area
SIMOPS	Simultaneous Operations
SMPEP	Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Response Plan
SMS	Safety Management System
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
SOPEP	Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Response Plan
SQEP	Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel
SSO	Ship Security Officer
STCW	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
SWL	Safe Working Load
TBT	Tributyltin
UMS	Unmanned Machinery Space
VHF	Very High Frequency

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9 Further Information

9.1 User Resources

User guides and other helpful information can be found via the eCMID website at www.ecmid.com.

9.2 Feedback

IMCA actively invites feedback from users and the industry in general on the inspection templates, the online database and inspection application and the overall inspection process, to help ensure that the system meets current industry requirements. Contact details and feedback forms are available on the eCMID website.

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