Secretariat

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Secretary-General's bulletin

To: Members of the staff

From: The Secretary-General

Subject: **Terms of reference of the Communications and Information Technology Steering Committee**

      The Secretary-General, for the purpose of establishing the Communications and Information Technology Steering Committee, promulgates the following:

Terms of Reference of the Communications and Information Technology Steering Committee

I. Role and mandate

1.   The Communications and Information Technology Steering Committee is charged with the responsibility to oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of the Communications and Information Technology (CIT) Strategic Plan of the International Seabed Authority, as well as its projects, policies and procedures aimed at realizing the Authority's strategic goals and objectives related to the provision of and support for information and information technology infrastructure and services. The Committee plays a fundamental role within the CIT governance structure of the secretariat of the Authority. Through its mandate, and within clearly defined responsibilities, the Committee will focus on major CIT activities that have an impact on the Authority in the areas of investment, projects, risk, services, data and communications.

2.   The Committee is independent from the CIT Unit, which retains its own mandate and responsibilities.

3.   The primary role of the Committee is:

    (a)   To validate the CIT Plan in line with the Authority's Strategic Plan and operational objectives and ensure that the management and application of CIT budgeted resources are prioritized in the most cost-effective manner;

    (b)   To monitor, track and evaluate projects against approved deliverables, milestones and budget;

(c)   To promote the transparent, collaborative planning and implementation of projects between the CIT Unit and the other functional units of the Secretariat;

(d)   To provide advice and make recommendations to the Secretary-General.

4.   The Committee is a permanent committee within the Secretariat of the Authority in charge of making recommendations in respect of CIT matters, including the review, prioritization and monitoring of CIT projects from a cross-functional perspective. The Committee operates within the existing approval and governance framework of the Secretariat of the Authority, including the Authority's procurement procedures.

5.   The Committee is mandated to review all proposals for CIT investment that meet any of the following criteria:

(a)   Projected capital costs of more than US$ 10,000;

(b)   Annual licence/operating costs of more than US$ 5,000;

(c)   CIT staff hour commitment requirement greater than two person-months.

6.   Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 5 above, the Secretary-General may refer any matter relating to CIT project development or plans to the Committee, where in his opinion such matter is likely to have a material impact on the business, affairs or credibility of the Authority.

II.   Responsibilities

7.   The Committee is responsible for the following:

(a)   Validating the CIT Plan for the Authority in line with the requirements of the Authority's Strategic Plan and High-level Action Plan and other relevant policies, for approval by the Secretary-General;

(b)   Reviewing the biennial budget for all CIT matters;

(c)   Reviewing and, where necessary, prioritizing CIT projects, in due consultation with relevant budget holders, and resolving any competing demands for resources and budget;

(d)   Ensuring that any CIT project adopts a structured project management methodology and process, encompassing clearly defined roles and responsibilities;

(e)   Ensuring that the delivery of any project is goal-driven, with specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound objectives, where applicable;

(f)   Providing advice, guidance and recommendations to the Secretary-General on the merits of new project proposals, including the impact of any new projects emerging outside the CIT Plan, and assessing the impact of their implementation on other projects, priorities, the budget, etc. and on the CIT Plan;

(g)   Reviewing and making recommendations on CIT policies for the Authority;

(h)   Monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the implementation of CIT projects against approved plans, paying particular attention to quality, risk assessment and management, change management and budgetary control;

(i)   Reviewing all disaster management and recovery plans at the organizational and project levels;

(j)   Reviewing all CIT projects and implementation documentation;

(k)   Reviewing information security policy and procedures and the implementation thereof;

(l)   Ensuring that the Secretary-General is provided with relevant and timely progress reports on the implementation of CIT projects, and reviewing those reports before they are submitted to the Secretary-General;

(m)   Submitting an annual report to the Secretary-General.

8.   The Secretary-General may, by written notice, modify or amend the responsibilities of the Committee in the light of the strategic and operational needs of the Authority.

III.   Membership

9.   The Committee shall consist of five members and a secretary appointed by the Secretary-General from among members of the staff of the Secretariat. Members shall be appointed for a term of two years and may be reappointed.

10.   A representative of the CIT Unit shall serve as an ex officio member of the Committee and is responsible for preparing and presenting submissions to the Committee.

11.   The Secretary-General may request the attendance of or the Committee Chair may invite any member of staff of or consultant engaged by the Secretariat to attend a meeting of the Committee, where their attendance may contribute to a matter under discussion or review by the Committee.

IV.   Meetings

12.   The Committee will meet at least three times per calendar year, or as required by the Secretary-General. The meetings will be scheduled and led by the Committee Chair or his or her designated proxy if the Chair is away from headquarters and matters need to be addressed with urgency. Standing agenda items shall include the following:

(a)   Review of major projects and work in progress: status and issues arising;

(b)   Review of new project proposals;

(c)   Review of any changes in CIT or business capacity and resourcing requirements;

(d)   Review of year-to-date actual versus budgeted expenses;

(e)   Analysis of CIT events, threats and risks;

(f)   Trends in CIT development relevant to the organization's needs;

(g)   Recommendations to the Secretary-General.

13.   In setting agenda items for discussion, priority shall be given to projects that:

(a)   Have demonstrably higher benefit or cost ratios;

(b)   Are required to satisfy compliance with regulations from the various organs of the Authority or the Authority's international commitment (e.g. the International Public Sector Accounting Standards adopted by the Finance Committee) or existing policies and procedures; or

(c)   Are required to support activities identified as critical to the Authority's Strategic Plan and flagship projects (e.g. the Central Data Repository for the data management strategy).

14.   Before being put forward to the Secretary-General, recommendations should be agreed by consensus by the Committee members.

15.   In preparation for meetings, electronic copies of proposals for new projects and progress reports for ongoing projects must be submitted to the Committee Chair by the relevant Office and the CIT Unit at least 10 working days in advance of the Committee meeting. Documentation shall be sent by the Chair to the rest of the Committee members at least five working days before the scheduled meeting, including:

(a)   A proposed agenda for adoption by the Committee;

(b)   The minutes of the previous meeting;

(c)   A progress report for ongoing projects;

(d)   New proposals;

(e)   Other relevant documents and information to be considered at the meeting.

16.   All new proposals must be formally presented in person to the Committee by the relevant Office and/or the CIT Unit, which will act as the sponsor for the proposed project throughout its life cycle. Such proposals must be reviewed for technological merit by the CIT Unit. Budget and fund requirements should be clearly specified, including all acquisition, implementation (including staffing) and ongoing maintenance costs.

17.   The responsibilities of the Committee Chair are:

(a)   To set the agenda for each meeting;

(b)   To ensure that the agenda and supporting materials are delivered to the Committee members in accordance with paragraph 16 above;

(c)   During meetings, to provide any necessary clarifications as well as a summary of the decisions taken under each agenda item;

(d)   To keep the meeting focused on agenda items and to keep discussions within the allotted time;

(e)   To prepare and submit the report of and recommendations from each meeting to the Secretary-General.

18.   The Chair will be assisted by a secretary, who will keep all archives and documentation and write the various minutes, under the Chair's direction.

19.   The responsibilities of each Committee member are:

(a)   To read all background documents provided in advance of a meeting;

(b)   To understand the goals, objectives and desired outcomes of the CIT Plan and individual projects;

(c)   To ensure that a project will make or will continue to make a viable contribution to the needs of the Authority in accordance with the assessment criteria and, where applicable, to identify issues, risks and suggested project changes;

(d)   To ensure that a project is aligned with the organizational strategy as well as policies and directions across the secretariat as a whole;

(e)   To participate actively in meetings through attendance, contributions to the discussions and the formulation of recommendations.

20.   The Secretary-General may, at any time, request a special meeting of the Committee to be held to consider any matter falling under the mandate of the Committee and for which the Secretary-General seeks immediate guidance and recommendations.

V.   Communication and reporting requirements

21.   Two types of reports shall be submitted to the Secretary-General:

(a)   A short report (i.e. no longer than two pages in length, excluding annexes) to be submitted to the Secretary-General no later than five working days after the conclusion of each Committee meeting. Each report shall, as a minimum, contain an updated CIT catalogue, an update on progress made and on the status of projects against their objectives, the outcome of new project proposals and recommendations to the Secretary-General;

(b)   An annual report to be submitted to the Secretary-General by 31 January following the year under review. Each report shall, as a minimum, contain an updated CIT catalogue, an update on progress made against the CIT Plan, a consolidated project progress and status review, a list of approved projects and their prioritization and an overview of the CIT Plan for the forthcoming year, together with any recommendations for modification deemed necessary.

22.   Should the Secretary-General refer any matter to the Committee, the Committee shall prepare such ad hoc reports as necessary in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 21 above.

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