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To	All Surveyors/Auditors
Applicable to flag	All Flags
Title	<b>IMO Releases Harmonized Data Structure</b>
Reference	IMO

**IMO Releases Harmonized Data Structure**

The IMO has made its compendium of data structures available as a tool for software developers to create systems for exchanging data electronically.

The aim is to facilitate the streamlining of the many administrative procedures necessary when ships enter or leave port.

The IMO Compendium is a reference manual containing data sets and the structure and relationships between them that will enable IMO Member States to harmonize the information needed to fulfil the mandatory obligation (in place since April 2019 through the Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL) Convention) for the reporting formalities for ships, cargo and people on board international shipping.

In its Annex, the FAL Convention contains standards and recommended practices and rules for simplifying formalities, documentary requirements and procedures on ships' arrival, stay and departure. Since April 2019, the FAL Convention makes it mandatory for ships and ports to exchange FAL data electronically and encourages the use of the single window concept in which all the agencies and authorities involved exchange data via a single point of contact.

Ideally, this helps make cross-border trade simpler and the logistics chain more efficient for the more than 10 billion tons of goods which are traded by sea annually across the globe.

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The IMO is not the only organization dealing with electronic data exchange in maritime transport, but the World Customs Organization, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the International Standards Organization have aligned their own data structures with the IMO Compendium to promote harmonization.

REFERENCES:

- IMO FAL
- ATTACHMENTS: No

Kindest Regards,  
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