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ENGINEERING CIRCULAR NO. 07 OF 2017

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Sub : Issuance of Statutory Certificates by Recognized Organizations in Electronic format.

1. Background:

- a) Various Recognized Organizations have requested the Directorate General of Shipping to permit issuance of statutory certificates to Indian Flag vessels in electronic format. INSA (Indian National Ship Owners' Association) have also requested the Directorate to permit issuance of e-statutory certificates by Recognized Organizations citing its advantages over the paper certificates.
- b) Realizing the advantages of electronic certificates such as faster delivery on board, ease to manage, reduced risk of loss and damage.
- c) Realizing further that the electronic certificates also prevents falsification of certificates as opposed to signed paper certificates, as e-certificates allows for on-line verification of their authenticity and it also helps companies demonstrate their societal commitment by helping reduce their carbon footprint.
- d) Realizing also that to facilitate use and acceptance of e-certificates, IMO issued "Guidelines for the use of Electronic Certificates" vide FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 dated 20th April 2016. The said circular details the security features to be incorporated in the electronic certificates and the procedure for the verification of the authenticity of electronic certificates.
- e) Therefore, in accordance with Government of India policy of "Ease of doing business" and "Digital India" and to enhance the service delivery of GOI/RO and further to prevent falsification of statutory certificates, the Competent authority has decided to permit issuance of electronic statutory certificates to Indian Flag Cargo vessels by the Recognized Organizations under certain conditions detailed in this circular.

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2. Applicability:

- a) This circular is applicable only to Statutory Certificates issued by Recognized Organizations to Cargo vessels on behalf of the Indian Administration.
- b) This Circular is applicable to the categories of Statutory certificates detailed in IMO "List of Certificates and Documents required to be carried on board ships 2017" issued vide FAL.2/Circ.131MEPC.1/Circ.873MSC.1/Circ.1586 LEG.2/Circ.3 dated 17 July 2017, as amended.
- c) The Recognized organizations are thus permitted to issue only those Statutory E-Certificates (detailed in Paragraph 2 a) &b) above) for which they are respectively authorized for, as per the authorization granted by Indian Administration via valid RO agreement and DGS Orders/circulars/notices issued from time to time.

3. Requirements:

- a) The electronic certificate shall include following required security features detailed in IMO "Guidelines for the use of Electronic Certificates" (FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 dated 20th April 2016):
 - i) validity and consistency with the format and content required by the relevant international convention or instrument, as applicable.
 - ii) protected from edits, modifications or revisions other than those authorized by the issuer or the Administration.
 - iii) a unique tracking number used for verification. Unique tracking number means a string of numbers, letters or symbols used as an identifier to distinguish an electronic certificate issued by a Recognized Organization from any other electronic certificate issued by the same Recognized Organization.
 - iv) a printable and visible symbol that confirms the source of issuance.
- b) Recognized Organizations that use websites for online viewing or verifying electronic certificates shall ensure that these sites are constructed and managed in accordance with established information security standards for access control, fraud prevention, resistance to cyberattacks and resilience to man-made and natural disasters.
- c) Electronic signatures applied to electronic certificates shall meet authentication standards equivalent to Indian Information Technology Act, 2000 as amended.
- d) Recognized Organizations issuing electronic certificates and Owner or Manager of

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