



# ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

cicad

**MODEL SYSTEM OR VESSEL REGISTRY TO  
MONITOR PLEASURE CRAFT, TRADITIONAL FISHING VESSELS,  
AND SPEEDBOATS, IN SUPPORT OF MARITIME  
DOMAIN AWARENESS AND INVESTIGATIONS**

## **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR INTER-AMERICAN COOPERATION IN THE REGISTRY OF VESSELS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A registry of all vessels with the competent authorities is a key part of security of life at sea and the maritime transport system of a country, and of international competitiveness. It should contribute to general programs to fight crime, and especially to combat terrorism and other threats, such as the illicit trafficking of drugs, arms, and persons, and other forms of organized crime, as well as other illicit acts that adversely affect the security of cargo and maritime traffic (for instance, theft, stowaways, and smuggling), and that threaten to use ports for illicit purposes.

The Inter-American Drug Control Commission (CICAD) plays an important role in the effort to assist countries to improve vessel registry systems for pleasure craft, traditional fishing vessels, and high speed boats.

An effective vessel registry system requires a network of interdependence among associated countries and ports, as well as adherence to an international standard of security that protects the movements of cargo for export, import, and transshipment, and the transport of passengers.

Consequently, a strategic frame of reference could guide OAS member states in developing their institutions and acquiring the necessary technical capacity to introduce the improvements needed to protect ports.

The highest international standards for registry of pleasure boats or speedboats already established or to be established require the promotion of closer cooperation among the countries of the Hemisphere through international organizations like CICAD, which are specialized on these issues, so that the higher costs entailed in improving the physical and administrative infrastructure and equipment, and in training and improving capacities, etc., can be absorbed by all the countries as a way of guaranteeing the coordinated application of a new set of standards for port protection.

In considering the appropriate mechanisms and procedures for strengthening hemispheric cooperation in designing a strategic framework for regional port protection, countries should examine the bilateral and multilateral initiatives in place that have compatible objectives and structures, and consider how they could be used to promote this process. The text and objectives of this frame of reference are based on an amalgamation and synthesis of the successes already achieved by the OAS and international plans, strategies, and initiatives in the area of protection.

## PRESENTATION

This main purpose of this document is to make recommendations to the member states of the Organization of American States regarding implementation, improvement and/or putting into operation of a system for registry of pleasure craft, traditional fishing vessels, and speedboats for the purpose of deterring, thwarting, and dismantling terrorist organizations and criminal organizations that are using the sea to transport narcotics, arms, and inputs for processing drugs. To accomplish this, it is critical to adopt a strategic and systemic approach for the purposes of planning and preparing policies for mobilization, coordination, and consciousness-raising of the means and resources. This approach should include certain basic factors that would make it possible to synchronize common instruments and interactive technology. The document is basically designed to be a working instrument for consultation, to serve as a general frame of reference for personnel working in maritime activities, to develop specific functions that will make it possible to continuously modernize and update the tasks involved to meet current needs.

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions will be used for the vessel registry system:

1. **Illicit activity:** Any activity related to illicit trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances and related offenses, terrorism, transnational crime, illicit trafficking in arms, ammunition, and explosives, smuggling of chemical precursors, and kidnapping and extortion, among other crimes committed on the oceans and waterways.
2. **Competent authority:** Public officials authorized to make decisions or perform acts in compliance with the functions recognized by the laws and regulations of their country.
3. **Maritime authority:** Authority in charge of exercising control of navigation on the seas and/or waterways of each of the countries.
4. **Minimum safety crew:** Personnel needed to operate a boat safely, depending on the type of service it renders.
5. **Vessel:** Any type of principal or independent structure suitable for navigation and built for that purpose, whatever its propulsion system may be.

6. **Surveillance and control functions:** Powers conferred on parties to combat illicit activities on the seas and rivers.
7. **Immobilization:** Detention or retention of a vessel, its crew, passengers and cargo by uniformed personnel of any of the countries, when there is evidence that they are involved in illicit activities, to be handed over to the competent authorities of the country in which the vessel is registered or the country of origin of the crew and/or passengers, in accordance with the domestic legislation of each country, conventions and international agreements.
8. **Inspection:** The search of a vessel by the competent authority of the parties for the purpose of checking the material, equipment, crew, personnel, and cargo, and verifying that they are not being used for illicit activities in accordance with the domestic legislation of each country, conventions and international agreements.
9. **Visit:** Activity conducted by the competent authority of the parties for the purpose of checking the documents and condition of the vessel and the personnel or crew on board under the terms established by Article 110 of the Law of the Sea UN Convention.
10. **Certificate of safety:** Certificate issued by the National Maritime Authority which describes all of the navigation, safety, and emergency equipment and materials that make a vessel safe to navigate, depending on the area of navigation.
11. **Sporting craft:** Boats devoted exclusively to nautical sports, sports fishing, or recreation.
12. **Special vessels:** These are boats that are under a special system as regards inspections and their periodicity. Large capacity yachts are considered special vessels.
13. **Owner:** The natural or legal person in whose name the vessel is registered.
14. **Yacht:** A craft used for sports and/or recreational purposes, propelled by a sail and/or motor, which is closed in and has the capacity to be inhabited. This category is subdivided into:
  - a) *Large-capacity yacht:* A yacht that is at least 24 meters long and/or with a gross tonnage of 50, which requires special provisions, especially with regard to inspections and their degree of exigency.
  - b) *Medium-capacity yacht:* A yacht that is less than 24 meters and equal to or greater than 6 meters in length.

- c) *Small-capacity yacht*: A yacht that is less than 6 meters in length.

## SCOPE OF APPLICATION

### 2. Classification of Vessels: Sporting craft can be subdivided as follows::

- 1) According to areas of navigation:
  - (a) Navigation on the open seas
  - (b) Navigation on internal waterways
- 2) According to propulsion systems:
  - a) With propulsion: A propulsion system with a central motor, outboard motor, sails, or oars.
  - b) Without propulsion: When the vessel has no means of propulsion and is towed or pushed by another one with a propulsion system.

## TYPES OF NAVIGATION

### 1. Areas of navigation: For the purposes of the crew, safety and life-saving equipment and licenses, the following areas of navigation are established:

- a) **Open seas**: Navigation in unprotected waters, and for the purposes of this decree, will be subdivided into:
  - (i) **Coastal navigation**: Within the visibility of the coastline and up to a distance of twelve (12) miles;
  - (ii) **Ocean navigation**: On the open seas without geographical limits.
- b) **Interior**: Navigation in protected waters, which, for the purposes of this document, is subdivided into:
  - (a) **Area 1**: Protected areas where normally there are neither waves of significant height nor adverse wind, current, or tide conditions that would impair navigation;
  - (b) **Area 2**: Partially protected areas, where there could be waves of a significant height and/or adverse wind, current, or tide conditions or a combination of these adverse elements that would impair navigation.

**PARAGRAPH 1: When a vessel operates in two areas, it must comply with the requirements of the stricter area.**

PARAGRAPH 2: The different interior navigation areas will be determined by the Port Authority, on the basis of a study of the local characteristics.

### **TYPES OF VESSELS**

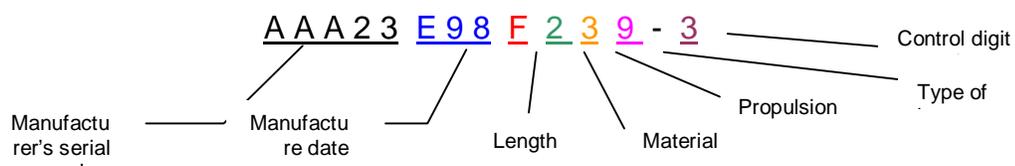
- a) Canoe: A craft made of a single piece built from the trunk of a tree and propelled by an oar.
- b) Kayak: A fiberglass craft used for recreation or nautical sports.
- c) Motorboat: A motorized vessel made of fiberglass and propelled with a motor, used for recreation or nautical sports.
- d) Boat: Vessels that are equal to or less than five (5) meters in length, either open or covered, but without a habitable cabin and with a fixed means of propulsion; if they use an outboard motor, it cannot exceed thirty (30) HP. (A habitable cabin is considered as one that has the conditions to be inhabited.).
- e) A floating artifact for nautical sports: An artifact equal to or less than five (5) meters long, without propulsion, used for sporting purposes and designed to be towed.
- f) Launch: A vessel made of wood and fiberglass with a cabin, propelled by an outboard motor.
- g) Sailboat
- h) Yacht: A vessel for sporting or recreational purposes, propelled by a sail and/or a motor, which is covered and has habitable quarters.

This system is applicable for the registration of pleasure boats, traditional fishing boats, and high-speed launches in each of the member countries, and thus is meant to guarantee free navigation and to control illicit activities on the seas.

### **SYSTEM FOR IDENTIFICATION OF HULLS OF SMALLER CRAFT IN FACTORY**

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish in this resolution a system for identification of hulls of smaller craft in factory to be used as a model for those States that would like to consider it.

2. **COMPULSORY HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.** All smaller ocean-going or river vessels manufactured in the country and all smaller imported vessels are required to have a hull identification number (NIC), which must be placed at the location established by the Maritime Authorities of each country, according to mandatory reference guides and the procedures established for that purpose.
  
3. **RESPONSIBILITY:** Legally established national shipyards that build smaller vessels and have a commercial operating license issued by the Maritime Department of each country, importers of hulls and vessels, and natural or legal persons who build artisan vessels must, prior to beginning fabrication of the hull, request the National Maritime Authority to assign the hull identification number; the request must include the main specifications of the hull to be manufactured.
  
4. **ASSIGNMENT OF THE HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (NIC).** For purposes of identification and control by the National Maritime Authority, a hull identification number will be assigned to each smaller vessel, and it must be affixed in accordance with the regulations of each country.
  
5. **COMPOSITION OF THE HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (NIC).** The hull identification number will consist of thirteen (13) basic alphanumeric characters. The first five (5) characters will be determined by the manufacturer or the importer on the basis of the serial number. The next three (3) will be determined by the date of manufacture, and the following four (4) are established on the basis of the vessel's characteristics, such as length, hull material, primary propulsion, or type of boat, and the final one (1) is a control digit determined by the Maritime Authority and separated with a hyphen. The use of these characters is compulsory to facilitate the search by authorities of vessels with new identification numbers, or vessels that have been stolen or compromised by their use for other purposes.



6. **NIC REQUIREMENTS:** The following requirements pertain to the hull identification number (NIC):

**Characters:** Each hull identification number (NIC) must be composed of thirteen (13) consecutive alphanumeric characters, or of thirteen (13) letters in the Spanish alphabet or Arabic numbers.

The first five (5) characters are the manufacturer's serial numbers assigned by the Maritime Authority, and of these five, the first three are letters, with the exception of the letters D, I, O, and Q, and the last two characters must be numbers.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth characters identify the month and year of manufacture, with the character for the month to be taken from the following table.

The date selected cannot be prior to the initial date of manufacture.

The sixth character indicates the month, beginning with "A" for January.

<i>MONTH</i>	<i>CHARACTER</i>	<i>MONTH</i>	<i>CHARACT.</i>
JANUARY	A	JULY	H
FEBRUARY	B	AUGUST	J
MARCH	C	SEPTEMBER	K
APRIL	E	OCTOBER	L
MAY	F	NOVEMBER	M
JUNE	G	DECEMBER	N

The seventh and eighth characters indicate the year of manufacture and use the last digits of the year, i.e., "02" for 2002, for instance.

The ninth character indicates the length of the boat, which must be taken from the following table by selecting the length closest to the actual figure (for example, 15 feet, 10 inches is closest to 15 feet).

<b>SYMBOL</b>	<b>LENGTH (ft.)</b>	<b>SYMBOL</b>	<b>LENGTH (ft)</b>
A	less than 6	N	21
B	6 to 10	P	22
C	11	R	23
D	12	S	24
E	13	T	25
F	14	U	26
G	15	V	27
H	16	W	28
J	17	X	29
K	18	Y	30
L	19	Z	31 or more
M	20		

The tenth (10) character indicates the hull material. The number must be taken from the following table:

<b>Number</b>	<b>Type of material</b>
1	Aluminum
2	Reinforced concrete
3	Fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP)
4	Flexible fabrication
5	Foam
6	Plastic
7	Steel
8	Wood

Reinforced concrete includes all types of concrete and Portland cement.

Flexible fabrication can be identified by plastic sheets or the present of any type of reinforcement material.

Plastic includes flexible plastic sheets, rigid thermal-formed sheets, and plastic processed by rotational mold.

The eleventh (11) character indicates the primary propulsion of the boat. The character must correspond to those in the following table:

<b>Number</b>	<b>Type of propulsion</b>
1	Air jet
2	Outboard motor mounted on a support
3	Inside
4	Inside air jet
5	Inside/ Outside
6	Not propelled
7	Outboard
8	Sail
9	Sail outside/auxiliary inside

Not propelled includes pedals, poles and oars, but not sailboats. Sailing craft includes sailboats that can have a small motor for auxiliary propulsion.

The twelfth (12) character indicates the type of boat. The number must be selected from the following list:

<b>Number</b>	<b>Type of boat</b>
1	Air cushion boat
2	Canoe, kayak, sail boat, surfboard
3	Inflatable
4	Single hull / configuration of the cabin
5	Single hull / closed cabin
6	Single hull / open cabin
7	Multiple hull / closed cabin
8	Multiple hull / open cabin
9	Personal launch

The configuration of the cabin includes complete cabin, room, houseboat, and in general any place that offers protection and that has a berth or another type of accommodation for persons.

The closed bow is the most common form of identification of a small boat, and includes any type of cover toward the bow which is not adequate to provide shelter to the crew.

The open or uncovered bow refers to public service boats with an uncovered deck and a central console.

The multiple hull includes more than one hull interconnected by a common hull, such as tri-hulls, catamarans, and pontoon boats.

Personal launches include a broad variety of vessels that are designed to be piloted over the V's of the hull. They usually have the capacity to hold one or two persons.

The thirteenth (13) character is a control digit assigned by the Maritime Authority.

***Size of the characters.*** The height of each character used in the hull identification number may not be less than six (6) millimeters.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

1. Application for registration addressed to the maritime authority of each country by the owner of the vessel.
2. Certificates of navigability and safety for the vessel, issued by a ship expert.
3. Copy of the purchase contract of the vessel.
4. License issued by the competent agency in each country.
5. Certificate indicating that the vessel has not been involved in narcotrafficking, issued by the responsible agency in each country.
6. Three 3x4 color photographs of the vessel, showing the side view.
7. Receipt showing payment of registration fees.
8. Three 15 x 16 photographs, one of the stern, one of the bow, and one of the sides.

## **PROCEDURES**

Once the documentation has been submitted to the nearest Port Authority, it will proceed to check the documents received.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE REGISTRATION**

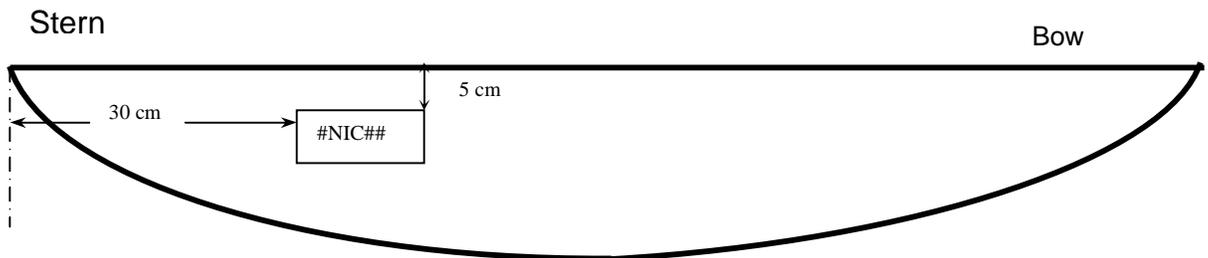
1. **LOCATION AND EXHIBITION OF THE HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (NIC).** Smaller craft must affix and exhibit their principal hull identification number and the duplicate hull identification number in accordance with the following requirements established for placement:

*Principal hull identification number (NIC):* The principal hull identification number must be located in a visible place, as specified below:

On boats with a mirror, it must be placed on the starboard side of the mirror five centimeters from the highest part of the mirror.

On boats without a mirror or with a mirror on which it would be impractical to place a hull identification number, it must be placed on the starboard side of the hull 30 centimeters from the helm in the stern and five centimeters from the upper part of the hull, on the side, or on the hull where it joins the deck, whichever is lower.

On catamarans and pontoon boats, if their hulls can be easily removed, each one will be marked as indicated in the following figure:



If there are handrails, pipes, or other accessories that block the location of the hull identification number, it must be placed as close as possible to the required location, and in a visible place.

*Duplicate hull identification number:* It must be placed in an area where it will not be exposed to the weather, inside the boat, on a fixed material that has not been installed as an accessory.

- 2. REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTALLATION:** The hull identification number must be installed in accordance with the following requirements:

**Permanence:** Each hull identification number must be made, engraved, cast, stamped, etched, or molded permanently on the boat so that any alteration, removal, or substitution would be obvious and easily verified.

**Separate plaque:** If a separate plaque is used to exhibit the hull identification number, the plaque must be affixed to the boat in such a way that it cannot be removed.

**Separate parts of the boat:** The hull identification number may not be

affixed to removable parts of the boat.

- Registration: The only official instrument to identify vessels is the registration number.
- This registration consists of an individual number assigned to each vessel, composed by eleven digits.

### Composition of the Registration Number

