

IALA GUIDELINE G1168



Many national authorities, State and local governments and other Marine Aids to Navigation (AtoN) operators use third-party contractors to maintain or repair their AtoN services.

The most typically used formula for this relationship is the **“maintenance contract”**, where a private company will be responsible for maintaining and controlling the network of aids to navigation, according to certain criteria established by the AtoN operator.

Contracting to third-party contractors can range from the complete AtoN service, a portion of the AtoN service, to specialized one off projects. Regardless of the scope of the outsourcing, contracting authorities must continue to meet their obligations under:



■ **SOLAS [1] Chapter V regulation 13 - Establishment and operation of Aids to Navigation:** This regulation requires contracting governments to provide aids to navigation as necessary, based on the volume of traffic and degree of risk.

■ **SOLAS Chapter V regulation 4 – Navigational Warnings:** This regulation requires contracting governments to take all steps necessary to ensure that, when intelligence of any dangers is received from whatever reliable source, it shall be promptly brought to the knowledge of those concerned.

■ **National and local legislation**

■ **Standards and Codes:** These include the IALA Standards, Recommendations and Guidelines, including the IALA Maritime Buoyage System and others.

Contracting services to third-party contractors may deliver greater efficiencies and allow access to specialized skills and services in the Aids to Navigation field. Especially if an Aids to Navigation manufacturer/provider is selected for this contract, as **AtoN specialized personnel and engineer teams** will have the best abilities and know-how to carry out these projects.



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AtoN maintenance services cover a broad range of activities that may include:

- Supply, installation, and commissioning of AtoN equipment and systems.
- Maintenance of AtoN equipment and systems.
- Major repairs and maintenance of supporting AtoN infrastructure, buildings, and towers.
- Deployment and retrieval of floating AtoN.
- Construction of AtoN infrastructure.
- Provision of other related services.



Prior to selecting a third-party contractor, the contracting authority should consider whether the third-party contractor can deliver the services to the required standard of the contracting authority. **The following should be considered when assessing suitability to undertake the required work:**

- Capability of carrying out the desired work in the established time frame.
- Experience in the Aids to Navigation field, and specifically with the equipment included in the project.
- Capacity to carry out the works, including personnel and technical means.
- Qualifications of staff (as IALA certifications on the engineering team, experience and supply history on the company, and certified experience of the technicians).
- ISO Certification/Quality control.
- Financial undertaking and viability.
- Insurance.
- Safety at work.

Finally, once the contractor is selected, controlling the performance and quality of maintenance and construction activities performed by a third-party contractor can be achieved by clearly defining the expectations and requirements that the contracting authority has of the contractor.

A clear and accurate SOW that has been agreed upon between the contracting parties can play a significant role in the avoidance of confusion and disagreement between the parties.

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The SOW should detail the requirements and standards for the works that are required to be undertaken by the third-party contractor.

The SOW should specify clearly which activities are included under the scope of the contract, and also reference any documents, deliverables, or other information that form an expectation or requirement of the contract (either to be provided by the contracting authority or required from the third-party contractor).

The extent and detail of the SOW and documentation depend heavily on the requirements of the contract and the ability of the contracting authority to oversee the third-party contractor.

Also, and especially if the contractor's performance has been proven on prior occasions, other models based on key performance indicators (KPIs) or availability targets only, without prescriptive requirements, should be considered.

More information about this typology of the contract will be provided in the following MSM Academy articles.

