

EBIS transition to OCIMF – FAQ

This FAQ document has been developed to try and address the questions and concerns you may have regarding the transition of EBIS towards the administrative support of OCIMF.

We are in the transition process and this FAQ reflects current expectations. The FAQ document will be updated as the process progresses.

If you have any questions, please contact the Chairman of the EBIS Board of Directors Mr. Robert Brook Robert.Brook@Chevron.Com and OCIMF's Barge Advisor Mr. Matthew Graham Matthew.Graham@OCIMF.Org.

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FAQ applicable to Submitting Companies, Programme Recipients, Inspectors and Vessel Operators

Why does EBIS need to change?

- EBIS has been a member driven organisation without a secretariat for 20 years.
- EBIS thrived because of the support of its members and its industry partners.
- Recent industry events and changes in the circumstances of some members have significantly impacted the future viability of EBIS as it exists.
- EBIS is no longer sustainable under its current structure as a result of these events.

Why OCIMF?

The EBIS Board of Directors explored several options:

- Additional member support to maintain EBIS as is.
- Partnering with an independent organisation to run EBIS.
- Transitioning EBIS into an existing industry body.

The third option was evaluated as the best way forward. The candidate choice was put to a vote of the EBIS membership. OCIMF was selected as the preferred partner for EBIS.

Will this change to EBIS lead to competing barge inspection protocols becoming an issue in mainland Europe?

The vote for OCIMF was not unanimous but a clear majority chose OCIMF. The EBIS board believe that the transition of EBIS to OCIMF will fulfil the desire that a single barge inspection scheme within the inland European region will be achieved. To facilitate this further, an EBIS transition Task Force was established in August 2020 to ensure that the interest of all EBIS users and inspectors are adequately considered during the transition.

How will the EBIS committees and the European inland barge inspection protocol be accommodated in the OCIMF structure?

The European Inland and Coastal Barge Focus Group (EICBFG) in OCIMF is responsible for setting training and accreditation requirements of European inland and coastal barge inspectors, the European question sets, and reviewing safety and environmental aspects related to inland and coastal barging in the region for ADN and non-ADN vessels. The EBIS members who join OCIMF as full members will be eligible to have company representatives at the EICBFG. To support the focus group's responsibilities, there is a dedicated secretary assigned from the OCIMF secretariat.

Will the inspection protocol / template change as a result of this transition?

The current EBIS inspection protocol / template structure will be maintained during the transition and for a period of time afterwards.

The EBIS questionnaire sub-committee is currently reviewing the current EBIS inspection protocol (EBIS 8), and the revised protocol (EBIS 9) will be transitioned into OCIMF.

OCIMF's intention is to develop a new questionnaire variant in the SIRE programme based on the latest EBIS templates.

Currently EBIS engages with industry bodies (e.g. EBU, ESO) and involves industry Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in their questionnaire sub-committee. Will this positive relationship be continued?

The European Inland and Coastal Barge Focus Group (EICBFG), can invite non-members to its meetings as observers and contributors at any time. The only restriction is that if a vote on any aspect is required then non-members are not entitled to vote.

If a work group is formed to review and revise a question set, the group will seek input from industry SMEs.

As the OCIMF headquarters are in London will meetings be held in London?

The European Inland and Coastal Barge Focus Group can choose any location to hold a meeting. Locations are chosen by the focus group members taking into account ease of travel and business needs.

How will my company pay for inspections they arrange?

Appointing, contracting and reimbursing of OCIMF accredited barge inspectors and / or their inspection company is a matter for each individual Submitting Company of an OCIMF inspection. OCIMF has no involvement with the commercial contracts between Inspectors / inspection companies and submitting members.

How will OCIMF ensure that all European Inland barges are inspected annually?

OCIMF does not ensure all vessels are inspected. When a vessel requires inspection the vessel operator can request an inspection from an OCIMF Submitting Company (a process to allow recipient members to request an inspection has been developed).

The Submitting Company will determine individually if they have an interest in inspecting the vessel.

How does OCIMF ensure that the quality of the inspection reports is maintained?

Quality assurance of inspections is managed by and is a responsibility of the commissioning OCIMF 'Submitting Company'. The 'Submitting Company' who commissions the report also checks / validates the report before it is shared with vessel operator for their comments and subsequent publishing in the OCIMF SIRE database.

OCIMF has a strict compliance regime for its inspection programmes that is supported by dedicated resources, and an OCIMF Quality Assurance team.

Feedback on an inspection can be provided by all Programme Recipients using the SIRE programme portal, and this will be reviewed by the OCIMF Quality Assurance team.

Will EBIS inspections continue to be hosted on the database supported by Pharox?

EBIS 8 reports only will be available through the EBIS database, with the commissioning of new EBIS 8 inspections being closed on 31 December 2020. After this date, 1 January 2021, the SIRE website will be used to commission new inspections using the BIQ-EBIS9 questionnaire.

Does OCIMF have enough accredited inspectors to conduct the number of inspections required?

OCIMF currently has 16 Category 3 Inspectors dedicated to inspecting inland barges in Europe, this can be supplemented by specially trained ship (Category 1) Inspectors with Category 3 inland familiarisation.

All current OCIMF Cat 3 inspectors in Europe are also EBIS accredited inspectors.

OCIMF is in the process of providing training for current EBIS Inspectors to inspect under the SIRE programme. This is in the form of a Grandfathering course with an examination for existing EBIS inspectors who wish to take up the option. The course is free to the inspector.

How does OCIMF ensure the quality of their inspectors?

The quality of inspectors is ensured and maintained through a robust selection and training programme, which includes minimum eligibility criteria, successful completion of new inspector training, periodic refresher courses and a periodic audit by an accredited auditing inspector.

Inspectors are also required to maintain a minimum number of inspections per year.

In addition, the performance of inspectors, including feedback received on their reports, is closely monitored by OCIMF.

I understand that OCIMF has Cat 1 and Cat 3 inspectors, can you please explain what is a Cat 1 and Cat 3 inspector?

OCIMF Cat 1 inspectors are accredited to inspect internationally trading tonnage; i.e. deep sea and coastal ships.

OCIMF Cat 3 inspectors are accredited to inspect local, regional trading tonnage; i.e. inland and coastal barges.

Following on from above question, can a Cat 1 inspector inspect a European inland barge?

Due to the different types of vessels and operations OCIMF recognise the limitations of a Cat 1 inspector being engaged to inspect an inland European barge. OCIMF are investigating the enhancement of training / accreditation and subsequent annotation for a Cat 1 inspector before they can inspect an inland and coastal barge.

Does OCIMF have any ADN expertise within their secretariat?

Currently OCIMF does not have A.D.N expertise within the secretariat but is aware of this knowledge gap. Following the transition on 1 January 2021, the organisation will review the alignment of resources needed to effectively deliver support the newly established BIQ-EBIS9.

Similar to the contribution of EBIS members to EBIS hosted meetings, OCIMF member representatives with A.D.N expertise contribute to the management and work of the European Inland and Coastal Barge Focus Group who will become responsible for BIQ-EBIS9. Invited observers to these meetings would also contribute their A.D.N knowledge.

Are all inland European barges registered in the OCIMF database?

Some European inland barges are registered in the OCIMF database.

A process to populate all European Inland barges into the OCIMF database will be progressed as part of the transition so that vessel data is available on 1 January 2021. This will require the engagement of barges owners / operators to allow the information to be transferred under GDPR rules.

Are there any other benefits of EBIS transitioning to OCIMF?

Additional advantages of a transition to OCIMF are:

Within Europe there will be one system to follow for inland and coastal vessel inspections, enhancing consistency and efficiency.

As an OCIMF Member, there is the opportunity to be involved in the management of OCIMF publications, programmes and activities globally. Participation in the committee structure allows contribution and expertise on safety and environmental protection to be shared;

- Through the application of global and regional best practices,
- lessons learnt from all marine incident types,
- and develop focussed improvement within the inland and coastal barge industry.

For organisations who become Programme Recipients there is the greater advantage of access to the programme output, be that TMSA submissions with the vessel operator's permission, access to purchase inspection reports of all vessel types in the SIRE database, and technical information (vessel particulars) of vessels in the database.

The wider inland and coastal barge industry benefit with their specialist knowledge and expertise involvement in best practice publications and programmes, and partners in advocating safety and environmental protection improvements.

What happens to EBIS during 2020?

The EBIS questionnaire committee will continue to develop EBIS 9 – this question set will be the one transitioned across to the OCIMF programmes.

EBIS inspector refresher training will continue as scheduled and as promulgated in light of COVID 19 travel restrictions.

EBIS new inspector training will not be conducted. Inspectors that recently passed the new inspector course will continue with their audited inspections in order to become fully accredited.

The EBIS Board, Management committee and sub-committees will continue to oversee the smooth running of EBIS and will engage with OCIMF to ensure a smooth transition.

The EBIS Board of Directors / Management committee will provide the EBIS membership and industry partners with updates as work towards the transition is progressed.

What is the timeline for completing the transition to OCIMF?

The timeline for the planned completion is 1 January 2021. This date was chosen as EBIS would normally release a new version of their questionnaire and technical information templates, in this case EBIS 9. Both organisations have taken the development opportunity to work together and produce the BIQ-EBIS9 questionnaire in the SIRE programme.

What is the earliest date a Submitting Company can book / commission a BIQ-EBIS9 inspection and gain access to the BPQ-Europe data?

Currently the earliest booking / commissioning of a BIQ-EBIS9 inspection in the SIRE programme will be on 1st January 2021 when the inspection variant is launched onto the production servers. This would also be earliest point in time that an inspection booking code could be directly generated and shared with an Inspector for the BIQ-EBIS9 inspection variant.

Should a SIRE Submitting Company wish to book a BIQ-EBIS9 inspection earlier than 1st January 2021 in the SIRE programme, this would be possible by booking a BIQ-Europe inspection and then having it reallocated manually to a BIQ-EBIS9 when it has been introduced. If a Submitting Company wishes to follow this process, they would need to contact sire@ocimf.org and supply; the name of the Submitting Company, the vessel name (including unique identifier; ENI, IMO, or VIN) and the date the booking was made.

Similarly, on 1st January 2021, the BPQ-Europe data would also become available in the SIRE programme.

Are there any EBIS members who have not taken the opportunity to become an OCIMF Programme Recipient?

The OCIMF Secretariat is aware of some EBIS members who do not have any current association with OCIMF. Each has been contacted by the OCIMF Secretariat and the EBIS Board of Directors to explain if they wish to maintain seamless continuity of their European inland barge information feed, the EBIS member would need to become a SIRE Submitting Company or a SIRE Programme Recipient at the earliest opportunity.

OCIMF would continue to welcome any former EBIS member at any time, either now or in the future, to become a SIRE Submitting Company or a SIRE Programme Recipient.

Recognising that a current EBIS inspection has a generally accepted validity period of 12 months can the period that an OCIMF EBIS inspection is visible on the OCIMF database be extended to say 13 months before being archived? Could this be considered as a minimum at least for the transition period?

Currently all SIRE inspection reports (tankers and barges) are available to purchase for an 18-month period after the inspection as part of OCIMF's COVID-19 response. There are no current plans to reduce this back to the previous 12-month period. If there were any changes, all stakeholders would be notified in advance of the change.

Clarification on any restrictions on consecutive inspections by the same inspector on the same barge and how this is managed within the OCIMF EBIS inspection database.

OCIMF does not currently have any restrictions on consecutive inspections by an Inspector on the same vessel. However, the OCIMF members have requested a mechanism of flagging this in the OCIMF booking tool. Any restriction would be at the discretion of the individual SIRE Submitting Company.

Crew matrix and BPQ data after 01 Jan 2021 only being updated on OCIMF site. Logic, the vessels operators would only have to update one system and not the EBIS and OCIMF systems.

The understanding between OCIMF and EBIS, for 1st January 2021, is all vessel information (crew matrix and BPQ-Europe) would be hosted from the SIRE database. The intention is for a seamless change over for all stakeholders. The aim is to minimise the amount of time that a Vessel Operator needs to maintain two databases with the same information.

Clarify that Cat 1 / Cat 3 inspectors require ADN certification for applicable variant in order to conduct an OCIMF EBIS inspection (N, C or G)

The OCIMF-EBIS Transition Task Force have agreed an Inspector would need to have a suitable A.D.N qualification to undertake a BIQ-EBIS9 Inspection. It would not be a requirement for the existing BIQ-Europe questionnaire.

Existing EBIS / BIRE inspectors are asking about EBIS v9. They would like clarity regarding the process, will the process be the same as BIRE or the same as EBIS.

The EBIS9 templates are being incorporated into the SIRE Programme. The processing of a completed BIQ-EBIS9 questionnaire through to a final published inspection report will follow the current SIRE/BIRE process. The key steps are briefly outlined:

- Inspector nomination and booking code shared.
- Inspection takes place.
- Completed questionnaire sent to Submitting Company.
- Submitting Company reviews and completes quality check.
- Submitting Company releases report to Vessel Operator for initial comments.
- Vessel Operator completes comments.
- Inspection report is published*.

**Please note: If no Vessel Operator comments are entered into the inspection report, it will be published after 14 days.*

Where can I find the crew matrix? This is an integrated and important part of the EBIS question set.

The EBIS crew matrix will be available to Vessel Operators through their access in the SIRE Programme; where it can be updated by the shore office and vessel. Similarly, Programme Recipients will be able to view the submitted matrix through their SIRE portal or through the automatic download if they choose this option. It will not form part of the BIQ-EBIS9 template or the BPQ-Europe template.

Why is the technical information layout completely different?

A gap analysis between the existing BPQ-Europe and EBIS9-TI identified a number of new questions. These have been included in the new edition of the BPQ-Europe template issued as part of the integration. All traditional EBIS information remains available but may not be in exactly the same order as previously seen.

Why are 10 random questions to be questioned by the inspector integrated in the question set?

The 10 random questions identified in the BIQ-EBIS9 questionnaire are related to minimum number of equipment items an Inspector should test during an inspection. This practice was newly introduced by EBIS in 2019 and will continue when the BIQ-EBIS9 is introduced. It should be noted the remainder of the SIRE Programme does not have this requirement. Also, all questions are required to be answered during the inspection by the Inspector for all SIRE variants.

There have been a number of questions related to the updating the crew matrix. Will there be a defined set of rules for updating the crew matrix during the transition year?

OCIMF does not and cannot (for legal reasons) set any rules for the updating of a crew matrix. Any requirements for the refreshing / updating of the crew matrix is the decision of the individual SIRE Programme Recipient.

The technical information lay out is not only different, but it seems to contain elements that are not relevant to the EU inland barges.

The BPQ template is used for the 2 inspection questionnaires in the European region, hence there may be some extra questions not seen in the originally developed EBIS 9 template. As a guide the European based questionnaire focus are:

- BIQ-Europe: the entire European region, inland and coastal.
- BIQ-EBIS9: the European region, inland only.

FAQ applicable to Submitting Companies, Programme Recipients and Inspectors

Clarification that EBIS inspectors receiving Cat3 training as part of the transition are eligible or not to conduct an OCIMF BIQ (i.e. non OCIMF EBIS inspections).

When an accredited EBIS Inspector becomes SIRE accredited, the individual will be a Category 3 Inspector for the European region. It means the Inspector will have the option to conduct inspections using either the BIQ-Europe or BIQ-EBIS9 questionnaires.

Auditing inspectors for European Cat 3 inspectors, will OCIMF use the existing EBIS auditing inspectors to carry out audited inspections?

As OCIMF's newly focussed committee structure takes up its work, it will be part of the programme alignment project to develop an Inspector auditing process for the European region. OCIMF already has Auditing Inspectors for other Cat 3 regions and for the tankers (Cat 1).

If a Cat 3 inspector wants to become an auditing inspector what is the path to follow?

As the Inspector auditing process is developed for the European region, it is anticipated an invitation would be sent to all accredited European Cat 3 Inspectors to declare their interest to the OCIMF Secretariat. A process would then be followed to credit and familiarise the candidates with their responsibilities.

New Inspector training, what is the criteria, how often will training courses be held?

New Inspector courses / training is determined by the OCIMF membership through the committee structure. If the Submitting Companies propose new candidates, a course can be organised. Some courses are regular calendar fixtures (tankers and offshore) whereas others, such as barges, maybe annual or every 2 years depending upon demand as determined by the Submitting Companies.

FAQ applicable to Submitting Companies, Programme Recipients and Vessel Operators

How will my company arrange inspections in the future?

Currently only approved OCIMF Submitting Companies can arrange programme inspections.

At this time a SIRE Programme Recipient can only purchase Inspection Reports. (i.e. cannot commission inspections or appoint Inspectors.)

OCIMF recognise that a Programme Recipient transitioning from EBIS, not being able to commission / arrange inspections creates a situation where the recipient is unable to arrange an inspection on vessels, they have term chartered. OCIMF has developed a 'request for inspection' process whereby 'Submitting Companies' can commission inspections on behalf of a Programme Recipient. (A similar system exists in the OCIMF Offshore Vessel Inspection Database programme for offshore vessels.)

What happens to the existing reports on the Pharox database?

Access to old reports (EBIS 8) will be maintained on the EBIS database supported by Pharox for a period of one year after the transition date of 1 January 2021. This will allow Submitting Companies, Programme Recipients and Vessel Operators to access previous reports.

FAQ applicable to Submitting Companies and Programme Recipients only

My company is not currently an OCIMF member, how will I get access to barge inspection reports in the future?

Any company that can establish a valid need may request access to the SIRE Programme output from the OCIMF website as a Programme Recipient. The SIRE Programme output consists of;

- Tanker Management and Self-Assessment reports when given permission by the submitting organisation.
- Inspection Reports.
- Vessel Particular Questionnaires / Technical Information.
- Crew Matrix document (currently tankers only).

As a registered Programme Recipient, a company can download these documents from the SIRE and TMSA database for their own use. (Note: access to TMSA's are controlled by the vessel operator only.) The SIRE Programme also contains links to a Vessel Incident Database and PSC Inspection Repository as additional resources. While there is no cost to gain Programme Recipient status there is a cost to purchase Inspection Reports.

Companies that meet the criteria for OCIMF Membership may apply by contacting the secretariat using enquires@ocimf.org. As an OCIMF Member, a company will be able to participate in all forum activities. These activities include participation in committees and work groups that develop industry best practice. The cost of OCIMF Membership is \$20,000 per year but has been capped at \$10,000 per year for the last 10 years.

Will my company have to arrange a certain number of inspections when the inspection protocol transitions to OCIMF?

No, the cooperative type of arrangement that was employed under EBIS will be discontinued after the transition i.e. there will no longer be a requirement for a company to conduct a certain number of inspections annually.

Will my company be able to purchase all the barge inspections I need from OCIMF?

Yes, Programme Recipients can download purchased reports to their account either automatically or on an individual basis through the website.

How much will an inspection report from OCIMF cost my company?

The current cost per barge report is 20 (twenty) GBP.

My company's IT systems are set up to accommodate downloading reports from PharoX, how will this change impact my current IT systems?

OCIMF will provide the necessary support to the current EBIS members if the database host changes require a change to their report downloading processes. This will start by registering the member's interest as a programme Recipient on the OCIMF website at https://register.ocimf-sire.org/Default_Sire.aspx. Alternatively, if a member wishes to apply for fully OCIMF membership, this can be done by contacting OCIMF through enquires@ocimf.org.

EBIS Members will be required to ensure that their inspection downloading and importing processes are ready in time for the transition to OCIMF on 1 January 2021 if they are to avoid interruption to their vessel data flows.

I currently use a third-party service provider to evaluate my barge inspection reports. Will I be able to continue to use a third-party service provider after the transition to OCIMF?

Yes, OCIMF have similar arrangements to EBIS for allowing third party vetting contractors to evaluate inspection reports on behalf of a member.

As in a similar question, members will be required to ensure that their third-party service providers are aware of the change and will be ready. The new BIQ-EBIS9 report format will be available from OCIMF's SIRE Programme on 1 January 2021 and new EBIS 8 inspections will not be possible.

Why questions are to be answered with yes/no/not seen? (It was agreed this would be Yes/No/Not applicable.)

OCIMF has used their standard questionnaire templates to integrate EBIS9 into the SIRE programme. The hard coding for all SIRE questionnaire template answers includes 'Yes' / 'No' / 'Not Seen'. However, the decision by the OCIMF-EBIS Task Force was not to introduce the 'Not Seen' option for the BIQ-EBIS9 template to maintain consistency with EBIS8. Therefore, the Inspector will not be presented with the 'Not Seen' option; it will be hidden in the background.

The beneficial advantage to this approach is the 'Not Seen' can be switched on at a later date without having to release a new template, and another 90-day notice period.

FAQ applicable to Inspectors only

I am an accredited EBIS inspector and I am familiar with the inspection protocol that is being transferred to OCIMF, why do I need an OCIMF course?

OCIMF and EBIS run separate accreditation programmes for their respective Inspector pools. Each achieve similar accreditation aims but use different approaches. For an EBIS accredited Inspector to be fully functional and familiar with OCIMF's systems and processes it is required to attend the training course and pass an examination. The induction course was identified in 2016 as the "Grandfathering course".

Are all OCIMF inspector training courses free to inspectors?

No. The initial training course to gain OCIMF accreditation will be free and open to all accredited EBIS Inspectors. Subsequent refresher training costs will be paid to OCIMF by the individual inspector. The accreditation period is currently for three years and the fees are set for all Regional Inspectors at the same level.

FAQ applicable to Vessel Operators only

Clarification of the functionality available to vessel operators in the OCIMF database e.g. setting up own fleet, email alerts etc.

Vessel Operator will have the ability to manage their fleets within the SIRE database once they have access. This will include adding / removing vessels from their fleet, updating BPQ data, updating the crew matrix and other aspects. (OCIMF has a free online self-help portal to assist with some of the functionality, <https://www.ocimf.org/sire/self-help-portal.aspx>.)