

PRESS RELEASE

Sternula
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New Collaboration on Satellite-based VDES: Sierra Leone aims for Maritime Digitalization in new VDES Collaboration with Sternula

Sierra Leone positions itself as a first-mover in maritime digitalization by partnering with Sternula, the world's first commercial provider of satellite-based VDES. Sierra Leone, who is controlling one of Africa's busiest territorial waters, wants to improve its capabilities for digital implementation of key IMO instruments for navigation and safety at sea. VDES is an extension of the mandatory AIS technology and has been developed as a means for maritime digitalization as specified in the IMO e-Navigation Strategy Implementation Plan.

On June 14, an online signing ceremony was held where the Sierra Leone Maritime Administration signed a Letter-of-Intent with Sternula for the use of its VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) capacity.

- There is a great potential in implementing this satellite-based e-Navigation technology to boost the entire country's maritime sector. The new relationship will help the country gain a better and more accurate picture of the traffic in our waters, which in these time of maritime insecurity is an urgent necessity, says Acting Executive Director of the Sierra Leone Maritime Administration, Sama Gamanga.

- We are very pleased to start this second collaboration in West Africa in just a few months. At Sternula, we are currently building a satellite network for VDES, which is going to be a shared infrastructure for all nations in the World who wants to be part of it. In parallel, we are working closely with the first-movers, like Sierra Leone, to implement our systems and capacity to best meet your needs, and I am looking much forward to meet you soon in Sierra Leone to discuss these needs in more detail, says CEO at Sternula, Lars Moltsen.

Increased Collaboration and Harmonization

A significant portion of the ships in the waters of Sierra Leone are sailing under Danish flag. Denmark has always been a strong maritime nation and is working for increased global collaboration on the maritime sector.

- At the Danish Embassy in West Africa, we are very pleased with this new collaboration between a local maritime administration and a Danish tech company, and we congratulate both sides. We would like to invite the Sierra Leone government to collaborate with Denmark on a zero-emission strategy for the maritime sector, which is a top priority for the Danish government, says Tom Nørring, the Danish Ambassador to Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Conakry, and Togo, who took part in the signing ceremony.

The development of the VDES technology into an ITU and IMO standard has been ongoing in IALA for the past 10 years.

Omar Frits Eriksson, Deputy Secretary General at IALA says: *IALA is working with the goals of international harmonization of marine Aids-to-Navigation and supporting systems and capacity building. We congratulate the Sierra Leone Maritime Administration and Sternula with this collaboration which is great step towards harmonization and capacity building on top of the new VDES standard.*

The Result of Years of Research and Development

The VDES technology is an extension to the popular AIS system which is today installed in more than 200,000 vessels worldwide. VDES adds more than 30 times extra data capacity than AIS, much better security, and two-way communication via satellite.

- At Aalborg University, we have been working on space technology and AIS for the past 25 years. It is very exciting for me to be part of this development towards VDES, which is the future standard for maritime digital communication, in particular as a cost-effective tool for the maritime authorities globally, says Jens Dalsgaard Nielsen, Associate Professor at Aalborg University

- in Sternula, we know that we stand on the shoulders of those who have built the existing standards and communication systems. We are proud to take a leading role in working towards new and better standards that enables maritime administration to implement effective systems for a higher level of safety at sea, Lars Moltsen concludes.

Sternula will be offering its VDE-SAT infrastructure enabling VDES on a global scale from 2023.

About Sternula

Sternula is Denmark's first commercial satellite operator. At Sternula, we offer global VDE-SAT connectivity for maritime authorities and industries using our own fleet of advanced micro satellites in Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) which will be operational from 2022. At Sternula, we are proud to enable safety at sea and to help shipping companies save costs and reduce pollution. We take an active role together with global maritime stakeholders to standardize VDES under IALA, IMO, and ITU.

[Find further information about Sternula](#)

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