



**International Research
Ship Operators**

IRSO 2.0: Advancing IRSO's Future


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Context

- Previously the International Ship Operators Meeting (ISOM), IRSO was founded in 1986 and has grown as an informal network built on goodwill and a valuable forum for sharing best practices, knowledge, and finding opportunities for collaboration.
- Evolved to address issues:
 - Insurance, crewing profiles, ISM, UNCLOS, piracy
 - RV design/build, alternative fuels, environmental impact
 - Medical provision, well-being at-sea
 - Crystal ball into the future with AI and machine learning
- Supported pro bono by UNOLS (website & mailing list)

Challenges

- Growing size of participants per meeting (100+ participants)
 - Increasing complexity of topics and expectations
 - Reliance on voluntary support for critical functions
 - Limited ability to progress tangible work between meetings (e.g. Terms of Reference ~13 years old)
 - Members already contributing via Eurofleets, OFEG, UNOLS
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Why IRSO 2.0?

- Need for sustainable workload and consistent support for long-term viability
- Opportunity to evolve beyond an informal exchange forum
- Potential to position IRSO as a recognized international player
- Create the ability to provide capacity and financial support for annual meetings and in-between activities

This transformation is not just about structure, it's about strengthening our collective ability to navigate the changing seas of global ocean research.

Key Questions

1. What is IRSO's vision and purpose?
2. Should IRSO remain an informal network for knowledge-sharing, or evolve into a more influential international organization?
3. What should IRSO deliver in the future to provide the most value to its participants (members)?

The Path Forward

Proposal

Establish an *ad hoc* working group to:

- ✓ Review and update Terms of Reference and management model
- ✓ Assess scenarios for IRSO 2.0 that ensure long-term viability and sustainability
- ✓ Report findings at the 2026 IRSO meeting for discussion