



REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
OFFICE OF THE
MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

VANUATU INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING REGISTRY

ADDENDUM TO CIRCULAR NO. 33

Clarification on Replacement of Certificates and Implementation of Electronic Certification

Addendum to Circular No. 33

Date: 24 March 2026

Subject: Clarification on the Replacement of Existing Certificates with Electronic Certificates (QR Code Format)

1. Purpose of this Addendum

Following the issuance of Circular No. 33 dated March 16, 2025, regarding the mandatory migration to electronically signed certificates with QR code verification, the Administration has received a number of queries from stakeholders concerning the implementation process.

This Addendum is issued to provide clarification and ensure a uniform, transparent, and efficient transition across the fleet.

2. Nature of the Replacement Process

The transition to electronic certification under Circular No. 33 is an **administrative replacement process**, not a renewal or revalidation of certificates.

Accordingly:

- Replacement certificates are issued **solely to convert existing documents into the electronic QR-code format**
- The process does **not alter the legal status, validity, or compliance condition of the vessel**

3. Certificates Subject to Replacement

The following certificates are required to be replaced with electronic versions:

- Certificate of Registry (Provisional and Permanent)
- Minimum Safe Manning Certificate (MSMC)
- Ship Radio Station License
- Latest issued Continuous Synopsis Record (CSR) only

Important Clarification on CSR:

Only the **latest CSR document** is to be reissued. Historical CSR records (Forms 2, 3, etc.) do not require reissuance.

4. Validity of Replacement Certificates

All replacement certificates:

- Shall **retain exactly the same expiry date** as the original certificate being replaced
- Shall **not be extended, renewed, or revalidated** through this process

This ensures continuity of compliance while enabling secure digital verification.

5. Certificate Format and Identification

Each replacement certificate will:

- Be issued as a **new document**
- Contain a **new certificate number and serial number**
- Be **electronically signed by the Administration**
- Include a **QR Code for real-time verification**

Additionally, all replacement certificates will include the following statement:

“This certificate is issued as a replacement of a previously issued certificate and retains the original validity period.”

6. Fees and Charges

To facilitate an efficient and cooperative transition:

- **No fees will be charged** for the replacement of certificates under this migration process

This measure is intended to support shipowners and operators in complying with Circular No. 33 without financial burden.

7. Implementation Approach

To ensure an orderly transition:

- Replacement may be carried out **progressively**, aligned with operational schedules or certificate handling requirements
- Shipowners are not required to replace all certificates simultaneously
- Priority should be given to vessels operating in **high PSC exposure regions**

8. Disposal of Superseded Certificates

In accordance with Circular No. 33:

- All replaced certificates must be **removed from onboard files and permanently disposed of**
- Evidence of disposal must be submitted to the Administration

This is essential to prevent dual-documentation and potential misuse.

9. Verification and Port State Control (PSC)

All electronic certificates:

- Are fully valid under international regulations
- May be verified by scanning the QR code
- Should be presented in digital or printed format during inspections

Operators are advised to retain a copy of Circular No. 33 and this Addendum onboard for reference during PSC inspections.

10. Compliance and Responsibility

All shipowners, operators, managers, and agents are required to:

- Ensure timely replacement of certificates
- Maintain accurate and verifiable onboard documentation
- Cooperate fully with the Administration during the transition

Failure to comply with the requirements of Circular No. 33 and this Addendum may result in regulatory action.

11. Final Note

This transition represents a significant step toward enhancing:

- Security
- Transparency
- Efficiency
- Global recognition of Vanuatu-issued certificates

The Administration appreciates the cooperation of all stakeholders in implementing this important reform.

The image shows a blue ink signature of Saade Makhouri on the left. To its right is a circular official seal. The seal features a star in the center and text around the perimeter: 'Maritime Administration and Administration of International Shipping Documents' at the top and 'REPUBLIC OF VANUATU' at the bottom. Inside the seal, it reads 'P.O. Box 9020', 'NY No. 1006', and '108'.

Saade Makhouri
Maritime Administrator
Republic of Vanuatu