

# 3rd ECDIS Stakeholders Forum

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) hosted its 3rd ECDIS Stakeholders' Forum in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, on 7 and 8 November 2007. The forum was held during the annual meeting of the IHO Committee on Hydrographic Requirements for Information Systems (CHRIS). Representatives from 23 IHO member states and 34 stakeholders met to discuss ongoing developments in the IHO.

The forum provided stakeholders with insights into the International Hydrographic Organization's (IHO's) technical work programme, impacts, and how the work programme might be adjusted to help stakeholders, especially in relation to the new standards. The agenda touched on the following topics: IHO structure and its decision-making process, e-navigation, IHO Geospatial Information Infrastructure, S-100 and S-101, and the S-52 Presentation Library. The IHO welcomed the stakeholders to the forum and indicated that their input was needed for the IHO technical work programme to progress.

## IHO Structure and Decision-making Process

The IHO Committee on Hydrographic Requirements for Information Systems (CHRIS) reported to the stakeholders that the IHO will transition to a two-committee structure in 2009. The two new committees are the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (which will oversee all technical programmes and working groups) and the Inter-Regional Co-ordination Committee (which will oversee all inter-regional and capacity-building programmes). These committees and their working groups will provide proposals to all member states. The acceptance of proposals, such as new standards, will need to involve all member states via IHO circular letters.

## E-navigation

The CHRIS reported that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has established a correspondence group on e-navigation. The official definition of e-navigation is 'the harmonised collection, integration, exchange, presentation and analysis of maritime information onboard and ashore by electronic means to enhance berth-to-berth navigation and related services, for safety and security at sea, and protection of the marine environment'. The IHO believes that electronic chart display and information system (ECDIS) and electronic navigational chart (ENC) coverage will be a fundamental part of e-navigation.

The stakeholders generally supported e-navigation, but felt that it should be driven by user needs. E-navigation needs to define what is valuable and useful versus what is possible to do. The other concern was that, as e-navigation and associated standards develop, the hydrographic offices need to meet their responsibilities promptly. In the case of ENCs, hydrographic offices were slow to produce data while industry adopted the standards at a quicker pace. The stakeholders also hoped that hydrographic offices would not wait until the standards were ready and available before they started supplying and issuing data.

## S-100 and S-101

The IHO is in the process of developing an IHO Geospatial Information Infrastructure. The core component of this will be the S-100 Geospatial Standard for Hydrographic Data and its associated information registry. S-100 will be the base standard for new product specifications that can cover a wide range of hydrographic data applications. The main feature of S-100 is the information registry. The registry is a series of registers that contain information regarding real-world entities. It includes information on hydrographic data, portrayal and metadata.

S-101 is intended to be the next-generation ENC product specification. It will be based on S-100. The reason for moving to S-101 is to have a more flexible standard so that the IHO can react quickly to changes. However, the IHO stated during the ECDIS Stakeholders' Forum that S-101 ENC will not affect S-57-based ECDIS for the next 10 to 15 years, and that stakeholders should participate in the development of S-101 to ensure a seamless transition from S-57 to S-101.

The stakeholders welcomed this information and indicated a willingness to participate in the development of S-101.

## S-52 ECDIS Symbolology

The CHRIS reported that a new version of the S-52 Portrayal Library 3.4 will be effective on 1st January 2008, but will not be enforced until 1st January 2009. This new version aligns S-52 with the revised IMO performance standards and with the adoption schedule of that revised performance standard.

The other topic of discussion was how portrayal would be handled in S-101. The answer is that portrayal will not be totally different, but one key change is that the library will be in a machine-readable format.

## Open Discussion

The stakeholders attending this year's forum did not raise as many concerns as in previous years. Attendees seemed to accept that hydrographic offices were making progress in providing ENCs and that stakeholder's opinions were being valued.

In response to stakeholder discussion about the production of ENC's, one CHRIS member explained that when standards were first developed there was not a customer-driven demand. Consequently, the standards were developed for the ideal product such as high-resolution data and additional safety contours, but hydrographic offices had to reassess and look at the user requirements regarding a producible product versus the perfect product.

One concern from the stakeholders was that the IMO had approved IMO Safety of Navigation (SN) Circular 266 – Maintenance of ECDIS Software. This circular stated that manufacturers needed to make sure the ECDIS equipment is kept current to IHO standards. The manufactures feel the IHO needs to indicate the data of the latest standard revision in order for the manufacturers to comply with this SN circular.

Another issue raised was the type approval of system ENC (SENC) delivery. The manufacturers indicated that the standards did not provide an indication of what such type approval would entail and that the IHO technical resolution was not clear on this matter. The IHO response was not definitive and further discussion is needed on this matter.

With regard to e-navigation and marine information objects (MIO), one stakeholder explained that mariners would like to have MIOs, but worry about how reliable the information is and who takes the liability for it if an accident happens. A CHRIS member responded that the IHO needs to decide how to control the appropriate use of information and a fitness for purpose has to be shown.

?The goal of the Stakeholder's Forum was to provide information to industry regarding the IHO decision-making process and the development of technical standards. A primary message was that standards need to change, but only with the involvement of industry, and that S-57 will remain in effect for some time to come.?

The IHO was pleased by the participation of industry and intends to continue working with industry to move the standards forward.

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