

# BY THE HEAD OF THE ARGENTINE NAVAL HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICE

## 'As it Is'

Hydrography, as the science committed to safety of navigation, was centralised in our country 125 years ago by means of the creation of the SERVICIO DE HIDROGRAFÍA NAVAL (SHN); its responsibility being exercised along more than 7,600km of maritime and fluvial coast in the South Atlantic and Antarctica.

Our Hydrographic Office is part of the Argentine Navy and its responsibility as supplier of the Public Service of Safety of Navigation is exercised at national level. There are task-groups dedicated to hydrography and the sciences related to the sea and the atmosphere, which include Oceanography, Cartography, Meteorology, Astronomy, etc. In practice, SHN operates its own hydrographic and oceanographic ships, a Naval Observatory for determining and keeping the Official Time, an environmental support service for Navy operations, a tidal alert service for the community and the system of continental and Antarctic lighthouses and buoys. It also maintains a wide oceanographic research programme in association with national and international universities, and an academic unit that grants degree titles in cartography.

Just like other Hydrographic Offices we have also been faced with the transformation of our nautical cartography, migrating to digital production and, especially the last two years, to production of the necessary ENC to satisfy mariner demands in our main navigable channels. This transformation has also included Raster Charts (RNC) and paper production gradually shifting to 'just in time' mode.

As a Hydrographic Office we hold technical responsibility within the National Commission for the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf (COPLA) within the framework of the UNCLOS. We are taking part in an interesting project concerning pollution prevention and protection of the marine biodiversity of Patagonia and its coastal area, producing an ecological sensitivity atlas. We are also running multiple research programmes in Hydrography, Oceanography and Meteorology in Antarctica; all this in addition to the traditional support for public and private enterprises in our ports and coasts.

In recent years we have faced the challenges of adaptation to new technologies and developments. These have included, besides the production of our own ENC, providing one of our hydrographic ships before the end of the year with a multi-beam echosounder, updating aerophotogrametric processes, oceanographic data collection by means of coastal and offshore buoys, the modernisation and inter-calibration of our oceanographic laboratories, and so on.

As a founding member of the IHO and geographically distant from areas of more dynamic development and consumption, our need for and interest in international co-operation translates into a continual search for opportunities to exchange knowledge and experience. We are also national members of IALA/AISM and the IOC, and responsible for the administration and operation of the National Oceanographic Data Centre (Centro Argentino de Datos Oceanográficos - CEADO).

Our first 125 years have been for us an era of frank expansion. The fast evolution and modernisation of the sciences involved in Safety of Navigation and the marine environment both forces and commits us to continuous evaluation and adjustment of our plans. In this we strive to increase our capacities and be in a permanent state of readiness to adapt to the changes imposed upon us by activity within the context of our own 'As it Is'.