

BY THE HEAD OF THE HYDROGRAPHIC SECTION, TTD, KUWAIT

'As it Is'

Kuwait is situated in the north-east corner of the Arabian peninsula and in the north-west corner of the Persian gulf. Because of this location and the unrivalled skills of its people in wooden shipbuilding, trade, shipping and marine navigation, Kuwait became the main link in the trade chain between east and west since the middle of the 17th century.

From the 1750s till the discovery of oil in the 1930s, Kuwait was a powerful naval nation in the region. Pearl diving, trade, shipping, shipbuilding and fishing were the main professions, and the sea shaped the cultural and civil heritage of the country. After the discovery of oil in 1936 and the start of its export in 1946, the country started to build its first oil terminals and other modern commercial ports and, consequently, the first government department to supervise and manage marine affairs was created. After Kuwait gained its independence in 1961, a ministry for customs and ports was created and due to the huge growth of marine shipping and oil export a separate department was created to handle customs; marine affairs was given to the Transport Sector of the Ministry of Communications; and an independent authority was created in 1977 to handle the management of the commercial ports while the Kuwaiti oil companies managed their own oil terminals.

At present, the Kuwaiti hydrographic services are run by the Transport Technical Department (TTD) of the Transport Sector of the Ministry of Communications. The TTD is the official government department that provides the following services for the country: hydrographic surveys, the operation and maintenance of aids to navigation, channel dredging, nautical chart production, issuing notice to mariners, and supervising governmental marine projects.

The TTD carried out a hydrographic survey project covering most of Kuwait territorial waters (90%) in 1986. The final product of the project was a series of 11 nautical charts in both English and Arabic. In 1998, a complementary hydrographic survey of the northern area was conducted, the scope of which was to update all the data collected in 1986 including wrecks, aids to navigation, coastline changes, offshore structures, and consequently reproduce the Kuwait nautical chart series in fully updated editions.

In 2004, the TTD procured a nautical chart production computer system with CARIS software for updating and producing paper, raster (RNCs) and electronic navigational charts (ENCs).

Currently, Kuwait is a member of the IHO and a bilateral agreement between the Ministry of Communications represented by the TTD and the UKHO will be signed in the near future.

In 2006, the TTD is planning to conduct the largest hydrographic survey ever done in Kuwait that will cover 100% of Kuwait territorial water and will use laser airborne bathymetry for the coastline and shallow waters.

For local hydrographic surveys, the TTD is leasing a survey boat from a local company to carry out simple hydrographic surveys for collecting updated data. The TTD provide hydrographic data on request to other government departments and agencies and also shares its hydrographic services with Kuwait Coast Guards, the Survey and Naval Department of the MoD, Ports Authority, oil companies, the Survey Department of Kuwait Municipality, the Environment Protection Authority and the Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research.