

# Electronic Charting of South American Rivers

Based on the outcome of a recent conference in Uruguay, the way could soon be paved for South American nations to join an international body working to standardise the world-wide production of Inland Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC) data.

From 27th November to 1st December 2006 a conference on Inland Electronic Charting was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay. The week-long event was primarily organised and conducted by Otto Duarte Volker (Cledir S.A., 1). Twenty-four persons attended the conference, including representatives from hydrographic offices, inland-waterway transportation agencies, port authorities, and inland/river shipping companies. Four South American countries were represented: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. There were also participants from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The conference involved a series of seminars aimed at increasing the level of knowledge regarding the challenges and opportunities associated with production, distribution and use of Inland ENCs. This included an overview of Inland ENC production, coverage and use in Europe, North America, the Russian Federation, and several South American countries including Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. Additional seminar topics covered international Inland ENC standards development and implementation. In particular there were discussions relating to the Inland ENC Encoding Guide, Product Specification, Feature Catalogue, use of the Open ECDIS Forum and alignment with future IHO S-100 (IHO Geospatial Standard for Hydrographic Data).

A series of workshops provided additional practical information and gave hands-on experience in the use of of SevenCs ENC Tools required for Inland ENC data production, validation, protection and distribution in accordance with IHO standards.

A key objective of the conference was to encourage South American countries to join the Europe-North America-Russian Federation Inland ENC Harmonisation Group involved in international standards development/implementation for inland electronic charting. Participants were quite receptive to this and it is expected that formal involvement may begin in early 2007. In the interim, a key follow-on action resulting from the conference will be compilation of a list of major river system/waterways in South America to include the extent of Inland ENC coverage. Most Inland ENCs in South America have currently been produced by private company initiatives but in conformance with IHO S-57 standards. Further, this conference has clearly shown that using ENCs/Inland ENCs can significantly increase both the safety and efficiency of marine transportation on South American river systems.

Source: Otto Duarte Volker, Cledir S.A., email: [odv@cledirsa.com](mailto:odv@cledirsa.com).