

Establishment of a National Hydrographic Committee

It has been proposed that maritime nations should consider establishing an NHC to co-operate in the development and sustainability of marine and hydrographic industries. The members of an NHC are comprised of agencies and education institutions related to these industries. The National Hydrographic Office (NHO) should be appointed as chairman of the NHC, responsible as the representative of the committee to preside the meetings or any other activities. The annual meetings of NHCs can be conducted twice a year. Members of an NHC are encouraged to report their hydrographic activities during the meeting. Such reporting includes the updating of nautical charts and information on new hydrographic survey projects that have been carried out since the last NHC meeting. Any consequential issues in marine and hydrographic matters can be addressed and discussed during the meeting.

NHC members are expected to provide the solution and give their recommendation with regard to the hydrographic and marine issues. Example of such an issue is the data sharing among agencies. Perhaps, a sub-committee can be set up to look at this specific issue and any other related issues such as national datum standardisation. Any findings by the sub-committee will be reported to the NHC who will then decide whether a working group should be set up to further investigate the issue and produce a standard, guideline, circular, report, etc. NHC can play a role in enabling data sharing, exchange of information and consultation between the hydrographic services especially for the development of marine geospatial data infrastructure. In addition, the NHC can serve as the authority to ensure the hydrographic survey fees are standardised to reflect the professional service accomplished.

Collaboration between the NHC and educational institutions can benefit the industry. The co-operation between NHC and education institutions is necessary to ensure the hydrographic education provides comprehensive knowledge in line with hydrographic development and requirements. For instance, NHC can provide the input to the syllabus and training of hydrographic education to meet the criteria and the requirements of the hydrographic industry in order to produce competent hydrographic surveyors and nautical cartographers. Furthermore, the NHC can support and assist the education institutions by providing expertise as an advisor and in the placement of industrial training for the students. In addition to providing education and training, most educational institutions also conduct research and development. The NHC can support and assist the education institutions in providing the facilities and resources available such as survey vessels for research expeditions.

The communication among members of the NHC can establish a strong interconnection and networking for the marine and hydrographic industries that provide positive benefits to the country. Hence, the establishment of a National Hydrographic Committee should be seen as a way of gathering all the related agencies and education institutions in marine and hydrographic industries so as to provide a significant contribution to the country.