

# Momentum

At some point all things come together: this might be what some call momentum. Over the past years, there have already been discussions, in small conference rooms, between professionals and policy makers about targeting a broader audience for hydrographic data. This would indeed provide for a better business model underlining surveying companies and hydrographic offices, and in the end provide better prospects for the whole industry. FIG Commission 4 and IHO organised a seminar with the title 'The Blue Economy' during the last Ocean Business conference in Southampton, UK. At this one-off event, high-level delegates spoke about the necessity to reach out to other adjacent fields like coastal zone management, fisheries, environmental and sustainability and offshore energy. Many of those attending felt that the time was right to disseminate this message to all levels of the profession.

In the meantime, the industry is exploring its options in its own way, with the search for new markets, sometimes driven by economic reasons, but often by mere entrepreneurship, and with new applications for hydrographic data well on its way. Many surveying companies, working solely for hydrographic offices in the past, are now already in action for principals in offshore energy and wind parks, coastal zone management and fisheries.

An effort, led by the International Hydrographic Organization, but supported by the industry and policymakers, to develop the S-100 as data exchange standard, is now coming along very fast. S-100 will be the interoperability stimulus that makes it easier for other fields to join in, share and benefit from bathymetry data, illustrates Alexis Brooker in his article '[Open Standards for Interoperable Maritime Data Exchange](#)' in this Hydro International. Peter Harris of Geoscience Australia, interviewed for the recent January/February issue of this magazine, puts hydrography in the middle, when he says 'hydrography provides an essential framework for marine science'. Evert Flier, director of the Norwegian Hydrographic Service says in the April issue of Hydro International that '[...]S-100 means a paradigm shift in hydrography. It will enable us to make our data available for other purposes more easily.' And in this issue, Dr. Nikolay Lebedev, president of Transas, says [in an interview](#) that 'Hydrographic Offices should also consider that their data are not only used by SOLAS vessels'. He points to the different users in the private sector and other fields.

As I mentioned earlier, it appears that all parties are beginning to realise that hydrography involves much more than just bathymetry for nautical charts. Needless to say there are many problems to overcome, including business models, funding, restriction on data etc., but the tone has been set. Only the future will tell whether the momentum was maintained and whether 2013 was a turning point in the focus of hydrography.