

UKHO establishes MoUs with Port of London Authority and Peel Ports Group



The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has signed new Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Port of London Authority (PLA) and Peel Ports Group to enable greater collaboration in the port sector. The new strategic partnerships will help to improve the supply, management and sharing of hydrographic and marine data and support the UKHO's ambitions to work

more closely with the UK ports and harbours community.

The agreements will help to foster improved data exchange between the ports and the UKHO. Taken together, PLA and Peel Ports Group are responsible for handling more than 120 million tons of cargo every year. Data from the port groups' operations will be securely shared with the UKHO for the purposes of improving safety and efficiency at these critical hubs of domestic trade.

The MoUs will also enable closer collaboration on the development and implementation of next-generation navigational services. This will include the testing of new solutions based on the International Hydrographic Organization's new S-100 data standards and joint efforts to find more opportunities to digitalize the port environment.

Riverbed surveying and gridded bathymetry

Speaking on the MoUs, Paul Marks, head of data partnerships at UKHO, said: "Maintaining close relationships between the UKHO and ports has always been hugely important to support both safety of life at sea and the UK's international seaborne trade. Ports sit at a critical point in the supply chain. Their unique role comes with unique data which, in an increasingly digital industry, will be critical to the future of navigation, voyage optimization and decarbonization.

"These MoUs will enable us to more closely collaborate with the Port of London Authority and Peel Ports Group and work together with them to ensure a safer, more efficient and more sustainable maritime sector," he added.

The PLA is responsible for 150 kilometres of the River Thames, including the surveying of almost 650 square kilometres of riverbed to support safe and efficient passage. This MoU signing follows a successful collaboration between the UKHO and PLA to conduct the first real-world sea trial of gridded bathymetry data using the S-102 standard.

By using multibeam survey data collected by PLA and processed by the UKHO, the organizations worked with SEAiq Pilot to carry out a piloted passage on a commercial vessel to evidence how S-102 data can improve situational awareness and navigational safety for mariners.

S-100 suite of data standards

John Dillon-Leetch, port hydrographer at PLA, added: "Having a documented MoU between the PLA and the UKHO in addition to our bilateral port agreement is a significant achievement and commitment by both organizations. We will be focusing our working groups to seek efficiencies and developments in the areas of ENC production including the S-100 suite of data standards, as well as automating processes related to data processing, data management and data services. It is an exciting time for all of us involved in hydrography and this MoU supports the UKHO and PLA principle of 'collect once, use many times', which is key to developing a more sustainable and successful UK maritime industry."

[Peel Ports Group](#) is responsible for seven ports and terminals across the UK – from Clydeport in Scotland to London Medway in the south-east – and the handling of 70 million tons of cargo each year. The new MoU between UKHO and Peel Ports Group will help to formalize existing avenues of collaboration, paving the way for closer data and knowledge exchange.

Gary Doyle, group harbour master at Peel Ports Group, commented: "I am absolutely delighted that we have signed this MoU with the UK Hydrographic Office. It recognizes the investment we as a company have made in hydrographic excellence and our shareholders' willingness to embrace innovation. We are very much looking forward to the continuation of this collaboration and the opportunities it

presents for technological development and the advancement of navigational services.”



The operations of the Port of London Authority encompass 150 kilometres of the River Thames, from Teddington to the North Sea. (Image courtesy: PLA)

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/news/ukho-establishes-mous-with-port-of-london-authority-and-peel-ports-group>
