

## **Activities of the IHO-EU Network Working Group (IENWG)**

The IHO-EU Network Working Group (IENWG) was established by decision of the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) in 2013 to monitor and deal with the activities and processes developed under the aegis of the European Union (EU). In consideration of that decision the NSHC31 decided to disband the former EU2MWG, considering its activities are transferred to IHO-EU Network WG. The Chair of the EU2MWG organized a last meeting for winding up the activities and facilitating the transferring of duties to the IHO-EU Network WG.

Since then the group held its second, third and fourth meeting under the chairmanship of Laurent Kerléguer, France.

During the reporting period, the activities of IENWG have mainly concerned:

### **1. “Coastal Mapping”:**

The European Commission’s Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG Mare) has awarded a contract on coastal mapping call MARE/2014/10 to the consortium formed by initiative of IENWG and led by SHOM.

Three years after the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission (EC) and the IHO, this is the first significant success for a consortium of HOs taking the lead in an important EU project.

The overall aims of the project are to:

- Assess the current availability of digital coastal maps in the EU,
- Disseminate this information by EMODnet,
- Share experience of coastal mapping in the EU,
- Develop standards for best practices,
- Propose how a future Joint European Coastal Mapping Programme (JECMaP) could operate.

The project is progressing according to the plan. The portal located under <http://coastal-mapping.eu/> publicly opened on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015.

The philosophy of the targeted solution is to facilitate the individual upload of suitable data sets covering the transition zone between land and sea by recognized partners themselves.

The principles of the algorithm to support this arrangement were validated by the project team during the Roma (IT) meeting in early March 2016. The first version of this algorithm, the outcomes from the past experience survey and the progress of all the other tasks are announced to be published in the interim report very soon.

The acquisition and the recognition process of data delivering partners is subject to ongoing deliberations within the project taking various economic models, data policies and potential EU funding into account.

## **2. EMODNet:**

The European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) is a long term marine data initiative from the DG MARE underpinning its Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy. The main purpose of EMODnet is to unlock fragmented and hidden marine data resources and to make these available to individuals and organisations (public and private), and to facilitate investment in sustainable coastal and offshore activities through improved access to quality-assured, standardised and harmonized marine data which are interoperable and free of restrictions on use.

Currently EMODnet is in the 2nd phase of development with originally seven sub-portals in operation that provide access to marine data from the following themes: bathymetry, geology, physics, chemistry, biology, seabed habitats and human activities. Several European HOs are already involved in in this 2nd phase – mainly as data provider for the bathymetry theme. The coastal mapping portal explained in the first paragraph of this report is linked to EMODNet Central Portal as an added eighth theme.

The call for the third phase was expected since already mid-2015. In order to be prepared for the anticipated tender, NSHC members among the IENWG members agreed to set up a regional bathymetry portal composed of their high resolution bathymetry data stocks of the North Sea under [www.NSHC.pro](http://www.NSHC.pro) (NSHC32 Item C1 refers).

Coming to some extent by surprise, DG Mare issued a Call for EMODnet High Resolution Seabed Mapping mid of May 2016:

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/tender/8490/high-resolution-seabed-mapping>

The focus of the call is on merging data covering open waters and coastal area as well as going for multi resolution – essentially the merger of the both EMODNET themes bathymetry and coastal mapping under one portal.

First consultations between the affected partners turned out to merge the bathymetry consortium of the second phase of EMODNet with the coastal mapping consortium in place for application of a tender to the call. The deadline for submission is 2 August 2016 and therefore early preparations to form the new consortium have already started by the respective coordinators.

The conference is invited to

- take note of the report,
- confirm support for a joint consortium to apply a tender to the new Call of DG Mare.