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CIRCULAR LETTER 5/1999
25 January 1999

IHO MANUAL ON HYDROGRAPHY

Reference: IHB CL 48/1998

Dear Sir,

The Bureau is grateful to the 34 Member States who responded to CL 48/1998. These were, in alphabetical order: Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Indonesia, Monaco, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, UK, United States of America (NIMA) and Venezuela. All responses except the one received from Norway were in favour of the project. Ten Member States nominated a representative. A summary of the comments made by Member States can be found at Annex A.

Article VI (6) of the Convention on the IHO specifies that between sessions of the Conference the majority has to be calculated on the basis of the total membership. As 61 Member States were entitled to vote, the majority required is 31. As 33 Member States voted in favour, the required majority has been obtained.

Taking into consideration the concern expressed by Member States about the scope of the project and resources required as well as concerns expressed during the XIVth IHC about the proliferation of committees and working groups, the Bureau will proceed as follows:

- Draft the Terms of Reference for a working group
- Draft a Table of Contents for the Manual
- Draft a Work Programme
- Submit these drafts to Member States for approval

To prepare these drafts, the Bureau will establish a task group consisting of the representatives who have been nominated. This group will work by correspondence only.

On behalf of the Directing Committee,
Yours sincerely,

Rear Admiral Giuseppe ANGRISANO
President

Encl: Annex A - Summary of Comments made by IHO Member States.

COMMENTS BY MEMBER STATES

Argentina

Very pleased with this initiative. Would like to participate in the working group.

Australia

Willing to take a leading role in airborne laser hydrography.

Chile

It is very important for the IHO to have such a manual and keep it up-to-date; contribution for technical assistance and training.

Cyprus

Very much in favour of this project, as Cyprus has not the resources to develop a national handbook.

Ecuador

The development of such a manual is supported. But it should be kept in mind that not all countries have the same level of knowledge and that there are technological and economical differences.

Finland

Detailed work plan should be developed. Contents and requirements should be defined. Procedures for updating required. Existing manuals should be used as much as possible. Inclusion of national methods or specifications should be considered. If development by the IHO is impossible, MS should be encouraged to update their national manuals and make them available via the WEB.

France

Although in favour of the project, SHOM is against creating a working group immediately as this might entail extra cost for the HO's nominating a representative. Before proceeding, the requirements should be analysed, the available resources determined and the methods of carrying out the project studied.

Germany

Although this manual cannot substitute national handbooks, an overview of common methods practised in hydrography seems quite useful. The purpose of the manual should be carefully examined and precisely defined; updating requirements to be considered as well. Work should preferably be done by e-mail. Involvement of professional bodies is supported.

Iceland

Very useful project for many countries which cannot publish and update such a manual.

Indonesia

Due to shortage of resources no representative can be nominated.

Mozambique

The development of this manual will be very useful for all MS and might help to harmonise the methodology for technical hydrographic training.

Netherlands

Presumes that the manual will concentrate on hydrography for nautical charting. If a wider scope is envisaged, industry support is necessary; not in favour of industry involvement. Status of this manual to be clarified.

New Zealand

Supports the items set out in CL 48/1998.

Norway

Does not support the project.

This task is too complicated, time consuming, and expensive; the resources to maintain such a manual have to be considered as well. HOs should be aware of the financial aspects of developing such a manual. S-44 has already defined a hydrographic standard. If MS decide in favour of publishing this manual, other development options should be investigated.

Oman

This manual would be a most useful resource for national hydrographic survey departments.

Peru

Supports the initiative. The manual might help to keep abreast of the development in hydrography and to standardise national procedures.

Poland

Poland has a modern national manual defining principles and standards for hydrographic surveys. Might nominate a representative once the Table of Contents has been drafted.

Portugal

Only hydrographers employed by MS should be involved in the development of this manual as only these persons can ensure that the correct methods are adopted when considering the scientific progress made in the field of hydrography.

South Africa

Due to shortage of resources no representative can be nominated.

Spain

Incorporating new technologies, this manual would be very useful; particularly if published in Spanish.

Sweden

The Terms of Reference should be prepared and then be submitted to the SPWG.

UK

The project is strongly supported. As the work of rewriting the Admiralty Manual of Hydrographic Surveying is well underway, it could easily be incorporated into the proposed IHO Manual. An Editorial Board should be established to develop the overall policy of the IHO Manual. Instead of establishing one working group for each chapter, it might be more efficient to have three or four groups with a broader mandate.

USA

Manual should include descriptions of methods and procedures for the acquisition and processing of a wide range of data required for complete hydrographic surveys. Adequate background material for a thorough understanding of the various systems, calibration techniques, measurements, and data management techniques should be included. Drafting process should be conducted by e-mail to the maximum extent possible; travel to be minimised.

Venezuela

Due to shortage of resources no representative can be nominated. Willing to help reviewing the manual.