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<p>CIRCULAR LETTER 6/1999 3 February 1999</p>

**HYDROGRAPHIC DICTIONARY
IHO PUBLICATION S-32**

DHYDRO PROJECT

Dear Sir,

The Hydrographic Dictionary (S-32) is known to be extensively referenced and consulted within, as well as outside, the IHO. At the moment, the 5th edition is available in printed form in English, French and Spanish. A Chinese version was printed by China about 3 years ago and both Germany and Japan are preparing versions in their respective languages.

At its 6th meeting in 1996 the IHO Working Group on the Hydrographic Dictionary started to investigate the possibility of facilitating the consultation of the Dictionary by developing a “digital” version of S-32, i.e. a version enabling the Dictionary to be consulted with the help of a computer.

In 1997, the French Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service (SHOM) contracted a French research institute to conduct a feasibility study. The main recommendations resulting from this study were that the existing text making up S-32 (English, French and Spanish versions only) should be converted to a format called XML (eXtended Markup Language), and that tools should be developed to enable updating and consultation of S-32 via the Internet (WEB).

As the costs involved in the conversion and the development work were too high to be met by SHOM and/or the Bureau, the research institute – in cooperation with SHOM and the Bureau – developed a project document which was submitted to the Commission of the European Community (EC) in early 1998. Towards the end of 1998, the EC agreed to finance the project, called DHYDRO, as part of the Multilingual Information Society (MLIS) programme for an amount of approximately 900,000 French francs. The project agreement was signed in November 1998.

The DHYDRO project began in December 1998 and will be completed by mid-2000. Apart from SHOM and the Bureau, several language orientated research institutes in Western Europe are involved in the project. The main deliverables are:

- Conversion of English, French and Spanish text of S-32 into XML format
- Development of tools to consult S-32 via the Internet
- Development of tools to update S-32 via the Internet
- Development of tools for a discussion forum on the Internet

It should be noted that the technical specifications for the project allow additional languages to be integrated at a later date, including languages which do not use the Roman alphabet. The cost of such an integration is not included in the DHYDRO project.

The Bureau will keep Member States informed of the progress of the project. Copies of the project document can be provided upon request; please note that this document only exists in French and that it is not going to be translated by the Bureau in the foreseeable future. The Bureau would be very pleased to receive any comments or suggestions regarding this project.

On behalf of the Directing Committee,
Yours sincerely,

Rear Admiral Giuseppe ANGRISANO
President