

IHO SPECIAL PUBLICATION N° 55 (S-55)
STATUS OF HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEYING AND NAUTICAL CHARTING WORLD-WIDE
SUBMISSION AND UPDATE OF DATA

Reference: CL 35/2004 dated 18 June 2004.

On Monday 6 December, during the 79th meeting of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), the IHB presented a brief on the new on-line version of S-55. This brief will be followed up by a submission to the MSC80 in May 2005, in view of issuing a MSC Circular. The IHB is most grateful to all those Member States who have so far provided input and thus increased the impact and utility of S-55.

The IHB would like to inform you that the S-55 database now covers 80% of coastal states and other sea areas, and that the database is subject to continuous update to ensure that the IHO's advice to the UN, IMO and other agencies is based on the most current information. The IHB will include a gap analysis based on S-55 in its annual reports to the UN and IMO.

Member States are asked to seek support from their national delegations for these initiatives at the UN and IMO, and also to take the following steps to ensure the validity of the S-55 data-base:

a. Submission of data in response to the S-55 Questionnaire.

Data has still not been received for some 40 coastal states and other sea areas, whilst gaps exist in the data for around 20 others. These gaps now have a very high profile within the interested international organisations and agencies. **Those Member States which have not yet supplied their data are requested to do so with the utmost urgency.** Chairmen of Regional Hydrographic Commissions are also asked to give the highest priority to the resolution of gaps in their area during the standing S-55 Agenda Item at their commission meetings. The questionnaire is available in English, French and Spanish on the web-site as CL 41/2003.

b. Update of entries in S-55.

Those **Member States** which have submitted their entries to S-55 **are requested to conduct a review of the data and to provide any update using the electronic form at the bottom left of the on-line S-55 page (English version only).** Following a helpful suggestion from the SWPHC, the database will be modified to indicate the date on which each line has been updated.

c. Further layers of the IHO Database.

Work continues on the production of the prototype regional layer of the IHO database covering Antarctica. It is hoped that this prototype will be available on-line by the first quarter 2005. Meanwhile, **RHCs are encouraged to make full use of the tables in S-55** and to continue their efforts to build up a more detailed picture of the status of hydrographic services in their region, recalling the particular importance of this information for the IHO capacity building work programme.

On behalf of the Directing Committee,
Yours sincerely,

Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA
Director