



IHB File N° S3/1001

CIRCULAR LETTER 59/2006
06 September 2006

**IHO SPECIAL PUBLICATION S-55
STATUS OF HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEYING AND NAUTICAL CHARTING WORLD-WIDE
SUBMISSION AND UPDATE OF DATA**

Reference: CL 86/2004 dated 13 December 2004.

Dear Hydrographer,

The Directing Committee is most grateful to the Regional Hydrographic Commissions and individual Member States for their assistance in maintaining the S-55 database, which is recognised as an effective tool for IHO and IMO efforts to promote the enhancement of SOLAS V hydrographic arrangements worldwide.

The database now covers 90% of coastal states and other sea areas, and, despite some difficulties with the web-site server which should soon be resolved, the continuous update process is firmly in place.

Member States are now asked to continue their efforts to complete the following measures to ensure the validity of the S-55 database:

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

Data has still not been received for some 29 coastal states and other sea areas, whilst gaps exist in the data for around 12 others. These gaps are now attracting comments 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.

b. Update of entries in S-55.

The database content must be updated regularly, at a minimum interval of a year, if it is to remain authoritative. **Currently, only 44% of the entries have been updated.** Chairmen of Regional Hydrographic Commissions, and individual Member States, are asked to give this matter the most urgent attention. Not keeping this database updated would make no sense at all after the great effort the Organization has made to build it up.

c. Data for countries with coasts in more than one RHC.

IHB letter S3/1001 dated 01 Sep 05 explained an editorial error in the compilation of the database, and asked those countries with coasts in more than one RHC area to submit separate entries for each of these sea areas. 13 of the 16 countries affected have still not actioned this request. **They are now asked to do so as swiftly as possible.**

d. Analysis of the Status of Charting.

Percentage coverage is only one aspect of the status of charting. Some countries already use the Comments column in the database to highlight shortcomings in the quality of the charting. **Charting HOs are now asked to use the Comments column to indicate where there is a lack of updating information and consequently the adequacy of the coverage is affected.**

On behalf of the Directing Committee,
Yours sincerely,

Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA
Director