



THIS CIRCULAR LETTER REQUIRES YOU TO VOTE

IHB File No. S3/8151/HSSC S-100

CIRCULAR LETTER 3/2012  
6 January 2012

**PROPOSAL TO EXEMPT CERTAIN CHANGES TO S-100 FROM THE REQUIREMENT  
FOR FORMAL APPROVAL BY MEMBER STATES**

References: a) HSSC Paper HSSC3-05.1C - *Maintenance of S-100*  
b) IHO Resolution 2/2007, as amended - *Principles and Procedures for Making Changes to IHO Technical Standards*

Dear Hydrographer,

1 At the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) held in November 2011 at the IHB, the Chairman of the Transfer Maintenance and Applications Development Working Group (TSMAD) presented a proposal to amend the approval procedures for changes to the IHO S-100 standard.

2 The TSMAD proposal (see Reference a. – (available at: [http://www.iho.int/mtg\\_docs/com\\_wg/HSSC/HSSC3/HSSC3-05.1C\\_S-100\\_Maintenance.pdf](http://www.iho.int/mtg_docs/com_wg/HSSC/HSSC3/HSSC3-05.1C_S-100_Maintenance.pdf))) contends that as S-100 has been designed to be flexible and easily extended, then it should be considered as a special case that should not be constrained by the formal process of requiring the approval of substantive changes by all Member States as described in IHO Resolution 2/2007. To that end, the proposal seeks to empower the TSMAD to approve *revisions* to S-100 without a requirement to seek formal Member State approval in advance and also to approve *new editions* to S-100 where these are deemed by TSMAD not to affect IHO users.

3. Resolution 2/2007 (see Reference b.) defines *revisions*, *new editions* and *clarifications* as follows: (significant text is underlined)

5.1 New Editions, Revisions and Clarifications

**New Edition** *New Editions* of standards introduce significant changes. *New Editions* enable new concepts, such as the ability to support new functions or applications, or the introduction of new constructs or data types, to be introduced. *New Editions* are likely to have a significant impact on either existing users or future users of the revised standard. It follows that a full consultative process that provides an opportunity for input from as many stakeholders as possible is required. Proposed changes to a standard should be evaluated and tested wherever practicable. The approval of Member States is required before any *New Edition* of a standard can enter into force. All cumulative *clarifications* and *revisions* must be included with the release of an approved *New Edition* of a standard.

**Revision** *Revisions* are defined as substantive semantic changes to a standard. Typically, revisions change existing specifications to correct factual errors; introduce necessary changes that have become evident as a result of practical experience or changing circumstances; or add new specifications within an existing section. A *revision* shall not be classified as a clarification. *Revisions* could have an impact on either existing users or future users of a revised standard. It follows that a full consultative process that provides an opportunity for input from as many stakeholders as possible is required. Proposed changes to a standard should be evaluated and tested wherever practicable. The approval of Member States is required before any *revisions* to a

standard can enter into force. All cumulative *clarifications* must be included with the release of approved corrections revisions.

A *revision* shall not be classified as a *clarification* in order to by-pass the appropriate consultation processes.

**Clarification** Clarifications are non-substantive changes to a standard. Typically, clarifications: remove ambiguity; correct grammatical and spelling errors; amend or update cross references; insert improved graphics in spelling, punctuation and grammar. A clarification must not cause any substantive semantic change to a standard. *Clarifications* are the responsibility of the relevant expert WG and may be delegated to the responsible editor.

4. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the HSSC, the Directing Committee pointed out to delegates that the proposal to allow an IHO Working Group to approve substantive changes to an IHO standard was a very significant departure from the long established and successful approval procedures of the IHO and not in line with normal practice of approval processes used by intergovernmental and international organisations. Very careful consideration should be given in terms of the precedent being set by empowering a Working Group, that by definition, is not a permanent organ of the Organization and which makes decisions based on a majority of participating members rather than seeking a majority of all Member States.

5. Based on their experience representing the IHO at senior levels at intergovernmental and international organisations such as the IMO and IALA, both of which have indicated that they intend to use S-100, the Directing Committee have further concerns. If the rules governing the approval of changes to S-100, upon which these organisations wish to depend, were relaxed or modified, then this is likely to reduce confidence in the IHO as a standards setting organisation.

6. The Directing Committee recalls that the terms of Resolution 2/2007 were originally developed and subsequently revised with input and feedback from IHO industry stakeholders and from representatives of international organisations, including those that now intend to use S-100. None of these stakeholder groups have expressed any concerns or difficulty over the fact that S-100 is at present subject to the formal Member State approval processes as set out in Resolution 2/2007.

7. The Directing Committee informed the HSSC delegates that the approval processes for changes to IHO standards were, in fact, remarkably speedy and efficient compared to all other comparable international standards setting bodies such as ISO, IALA and IMO, and far exceeds those of the ISO, upon whose standards S-100 is based and is intended to be inter-operable.

8. After lengthy discussion, of the 23 Member States represented at HSSC3, 14 endorsed the changes proposed by TSMAD. The remaining nine Member State representatives preferred either to defer the decision or did not express an opinion.

9. The proposal that has been endorsed by a majority at HSSC3 is forwarded for your consideration.

10. Member States are requested to indicate their decision **by 16 March 2012** using the Voting Paper, provided at Annex A. A simple majority of all Member States is required to achieve an approval. This majority is currently 40 Member States.

On behalf of the Directing Committee  
Yours sincerely,



Robert WARD  
Director

Annex A: Voting Form

IHB File No. S3/8151/HSSC S-100

**VOTING FORM**

(to be returned to the IHB by **16 March 2012**)

E-mail: info@ihb.mc - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)

Member State:	
Contact name:	
Contact E-mail:	

**TITLE**

1. Do you agree that the change approval process for S-100 should be considered as a special case that is not subject to the usual requirement for formal approval of any substantive changes by a majority of Member States, and therefore TSMAD will be empowered to approve *revisions* and certain *new editions* of S-100?

**YES / NO**

Comments (if any)


Name/Signature: .....

Date: .....