



IHB File N° S3/8151/HSSC

CIRCULAR LETTER 25/2015
17 March 2015

**REORGANIZED STRUCTURE OF
THE HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (HSSC) -
CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED TO ESTABLISH
A HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEYS WORKING GROUP**

References:

- A. IHO CL 07/2015 dated 16 January - *Outcome of the sixth Meeting of the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC)*;
- B. IHO Publication S-44 - 5th Edition, 2008 - *IHO Standards for Hydrographic Surveys*;
- C. IHO CL 13/2005 dated 1 February - *Working Group on S-44 Standards for Hydrographic Surveys*;
- D. IHO CL 22/2008 dated 28 February - *Standards for Hydrographic Surveys – S-44, 5th Edition*;
- E. IHO Resolution 2/2007 as amended - *Principles and Procedures for making changes to IHO Technical Standards and Specifications*;
- F. IHC-18 - Decision No. 18 - *IHO Work Programme 2013-2017*;
- G. EIHC-5 - Decision No. 8 - *PRO4 – For a trusted crowd-sourcing policy and its cook book*;
- H. HSSC6-08INF2 - *Backscatter measurements by seafloor-mapping sonars: Guidelines and Recommendations*.

Dear Hydrographer,

1. Reference A informed Member States of the outcome of the sixth meeting of the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC). In particular, it was indicated that the Directing Committee had been tasked to seek the views of the Member States on the scope, topics and work items, if any, to be addressed through the possible establishment of a Hydrographic Surveys Working Group.
2. During the consideration of the re-organization of the structure of the working groups of the HSSC, Chile expressed its concern that not a single working group in the new structure dealt with hydrographic surveying, although there might be a need to provide advice to Hydrographic Offices and coordinate the use and standardization of new emerging hydrographic surveying technologies.
3. The relevant IHO Standard is IHO Publication S-44 - *IHO Standards for Hydrographic Surveys*. The edition in force is the 5th Edition (Reference B) which was prepared by a dedicated working group established in 2005 (Reference C) and approved by IHO Member States in 2008. The working group was then disbanded (Reference D).
4. In accordance with IHO Resolution 2/2007 as amended (Reference E), S-44 is under the responsibility of the HSSC. The maintenance and extension of S-44 is covered by Task 2.10.2 of the IHO Work Programme 2013-2017 adopted by the XVIIIth International Hydrographic Conference (Reference F). This task has been dormant so far.
5. As indicated in its introduction, S-44 only provides the minimum standards that are to be achieved. The publication does not contain procedures for setting up the necessary equipment, for conducting a survey or for processing the resultant data. It is the responsibility of individual Hydrographic Offices to prepare and adopt specifications based on these standards. Therefore, it is expected that the need to revise S-44 would be driven by the identification of shortcomings or new issues when developing specifications for the use of new systems or new procedures.

6. The discussions at the 5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC-5) on crowd-sourced bathymetry and satellite-derived bathymetry did not raise any specific requirement to revise S-44. Decision No. 8 of EIHC-5 tasked the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) to establish a working group to prepare a new IHO publication on policy for trusted crowd-sourced bathymetry (Reference G).

7. HSSC-6 was informed by France that GeoHab, an international association of scientists focusing on marine geological and biological habitat mapping, had initiated the development of guidelines on the acquisition, processing and interpretation of backscatter data recorded with seafloor mapping sonars (see Reference H). The Committee noted that the consideration of such guidelines could be referred to the Hydrographic Surveys Working Group if and when established.

8. In order to assess the situation and as instructed by the HSSC, the Directing Committee seeks the views of Member States on the adequacy of S-44, on related work items which might be relevant, if any, and on the possible establishment of a dedicated working group.

9. Member States are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire in Annex A and to return it to the IHB, **no later than 31 May 2015**.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Gilles BESSERO
Director

Annex A: Questionnaire on the possible establishment of a Hydrographic Surveys Working Group.

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF
A HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEYS WORKING GROUP**

(to be returned to the IHB **no later than 31 May 2015**
E-mail: info@iho.int - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)

Date:

Member State:

Contact:

E-mail:

1. Does the 5th Edition of S-44 - *IHO Standards for Hydrographic Surveys* meet your current and foreseeable requirements?

YES

NO

If you answer 'NO', please explain what additional requirements should be considered:

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2. Have you identified any additional topics to be addressed by the establishment of a Hydrographic Surveys Working Group?

YES

NO

If you answer 'YES', please describe and provide justification for the additional topics to be considered and their priority (high, medium, low).

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3. If a working group was established, please indicate what would be your contribution to the working group:

- Active member:	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Correspondence member:	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Nomination for office bearers:				
Chair:	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vice-Chair:	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretary:	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Additional comments, if any: