

**REDUCING CONTENTIOUS ISSUES OF BASELINES AND MARITIME
LIMITS THROUGH THE USE OF AN INTERNATIONAL DATA
STANDARD FOR THE SUBMISSION OF LAW OF THE SEA DATA**

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This paper highlights new technical developments which can reduce the difficulties coastal States experience in interpreting articles 16, 47.8, 47.9, 75 and 84 of UNCLOS for submission of their territorial sea or archipelagic baseline models and maritime limits. All of these articles relate to the submission of this data in the form of nautical charts or as series of points. The use of nautical charts can introduce variable interpretation in the process, especially in the case of normal baselines, which may lead to contention. A standard digital format to exchange national baselines and maritime limits could help reduce uncertainties, potential disputes as well as improve law of the sea (LOS) data management.

Work on establishing an international standard for exchange of LOS data is under way as an extension first to the existing IHO S-57 standard, and then to its successor, the S-100 standard. This is perceived as a step in the right direction for more clearly defined national baselines and maritime limits. New law of the sea objects with new mandatory legal and technical attributes can become part of extended S-57 catalogues. Existing geospatial database software that can manage electronic chart data using these same IHO standards can then easily provide supporting tools for geodetic calculation and maintenance of LOS data such as territorial sea baseline models, maritime limits and international boundaries.