

12th CHRIS MEETING
Valparaiso, Chile, 23-25 October 2000

EXTENSION OF SHARED TO THE CARIBBEAN REGION

(by Douglas Brown, US-NOAA)

An extension of the SHARED Project is proposed for the Caribbean Sea-Gulf of Mexico Region. The SHARED Project is intended to demonstrate the gains in safety and efficiency of navigation by using an integrated suite of ENC's and RNC's issued officially by national hydrographic offices. In addition, the intent is to demonstrate the practical exchange of digital hydrographic data among national hydrographic offices.

The effort to extend SHARED to the Caribbean Sea-Gulf of Mexico is being conducted under the auspices of the IHO's Caribbean Sea-Gulf of Mexico Hydrographic Commission (CGMHC). Given the challenges to widespread production of electronic charts in the region, the CGMHC determined SHARED to be a practical interim step toward adopting WEND. Accordingly, a working group of the Commission has been charged with developing a draft plan for implementing SHARED. The plan will build on the work of a joint Anglo-French study team which toured the region in December 1998 and provided an initial assessment of surveying and charting needs in several coastal states.

The demonstration will cover the main shipping channels, such as the Approaches to the Panama Canal, and the primary ports of call, such as New Orleans and San Juan. However, since the principal issue for the Caribbean Sea-Gulf of Mexico Region is the lack of ENC data, the highest priority will be to consider options for ENC production. This will require close coordination among the nations that presently produce electronic charts, namely Colombia, Cuba, France, U.K. and the U.S., in order to ensure data harmony.

The draft plan will be distributed to CGMHC Member States by December 31, 2000, with a copy to MPA Singapore for information.