

**17<sup>th</sup> CHRIS Meeting**  
Rostock, Germany, 5-9 September 2004

**Report on Activities of the Open ECDIS Forum (OEF)**

<b>Submitted by:</b>	Lee Alexander, University of New Hampshire and the Board of Advisors, Open ECDIS Forum
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	This report summarizes the activities of Open ECDIS Forum during the period of June 2004 – August 2005.
<b>Actions to be taken</b>	CHRIS is invited to take note of the activities of the OEF.
<b>Related Documents:</b>	none
<b>Related Projects:</b>	n/a

## 1. Background

The Open ECDIS Forum (OEF) was established in 1997 to facilitate the international development and implementation of ECDIS. The objectives of the OEF are to:

- encourage and support the development of ECDIS and its extensions
- provide lines of communication between IMO, IHO, & IEC standards developers and users
- promote the S-57 data model in the marine environment, and monitor its use
- examine new development proposals, and advise on their validity
- promote world-wide ENC production

Specific OEF activities include:

- establish discussion forums on issues related to ECDIS
- review and register "user - defined" S-57 objects
- register private producer organization codes
- distribute ECDIS -related freeware/shareware software and S-57 datasets
- organize workshops on ECDIS-related matters
- provide a link with the IHO website, and to other organizations involved in ECDIS

## 2. Year in Review

### a. Discussion Forums

Now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year of operation, the OEF is widely known and used by IHO members, industry and other ECDIS Stakeholders. Both the number of discussion forums and the level of activity have remained steady for the past year. For many participants in IHO and IEC standards development working groups, e-mail discussions are being widely used as means to exchange ideas, as well as to prepare for meetings. Some of the highest level of activity has been by the North American – European Inland ENC Harmonization Group (IEHG).

### b. Registration Service

#### 1) S-57 Data Producer Codes

A number of geospatial data producing agencies/companies are involved in S-57 data production, both for hydrographic and non-hydrographic purposes. The S-57 format requires that file headers include a two-character producer code. Since 1997, the OEF has served as the site for registering these codes. Currently, 63 companies and organizations are registered on the OEF.

In December 2004, IHO issued IHO S-62 Edition 2.0 "ENC Producer Codes." In order to avoid any confusion, the former section contained in S-62 Edition 1.3 on "International Organizations" was moved to the

OEF. S -62 Edition 2.0 was also re-named to: "ENC Producer Codes". As such, the OEF is now the site for registering both "International Organizations" and "Private Companies" involved in producing S-57 data.

#### 2) New Object Classes/Attributes

During the past year, several new object classes and attributes compatible with S -57 have been registered on the OEF. These primarily involve additional objects and attributes that are part of the S -57 Object Catalogue of the European Inland ECDIS Standard that was produced for the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR). To date, there are also objects and attributes that have been registered for:

- Additional Military Layers (AMLs)
- Ice Information
- Inland ECDIS
- Weather

In addition, there are also some proposed Coral Reef/Marine Protection Area objects and attributes that may soon be registered as well.

#### 3) OEF Register under IHO Registry

In support of the ongoing work of the TSMAD S -57 Edition 4 Sub-WG, plans are being made to establish an OEF Register as part of the overall IHO Registry. In the near term, these would pertain to S -57 objects/attributes that are not contained in the S -57 3.1 Object Catalogue, and any new Product Specifications or Applications Profiles that may become part of S -57 Edition 4. The OEF will likely serve as a "Testbed Register" for Inland ENC and Ice Information as well.

### **3. Funding for OEF Operation/Management**

In March 2005, the IHB provided \$10,000US to support the operation of the OEF. It is hoped that this level of support will be provided on an annual basis. In the near future, other organizations and companies interested in ensuring the continued operation of the OEF may be asked to provide a modest level of support as well.

### **4. Other Activities**

1) Operation/Management - The server that hosts the OEF website and e-mail discussion forums is maintained at the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping – Joint Hydrographic Center, University of New Hampshire (CCOM-JHC). However, the management of the OEF has been primarily performed by SevenCs. During the next few months, the OEF will undergo major upgrade/modernization. In addition, some changes in the operation/management will also take place.

2) Upgrade/modernization – A new, dedicated OEF Server hardware has been installed at CCOM -JHC, and "security system" upgrade was performed. Three main tasks are planned:

- a. Migrate old/outdated operating software to a PMP/MySQL-based solution.
- b. Establish a web-based forum (i.e., message board) for discussion groups that replaces the current e-mail lists.
- c. Implement necessary format and content changes related to the operation of a register(s) for S -57 data producer codes, new S -57 objects/attributes, and new product specs or application profiles associated with S -57 Edition 4.

To perform these tasks, an independent services contract has been established with James Ward of Pymble, NSW, Australia. He has extensive development experience with PHP/MySQL, is aware the limitations of the current discussion group operations, and can implement needed OEF format/content changes as they become known.

3) The OEF Board of Advisors (BOA) - Previously called Board of Patrons, the BOA oversees and advises on OEF activities. The following persons currently serve in the Board:

Director, IHB	RAdm Ken Barbor
Chair, IHO CHRIS	Capt. Robert Ward, Deputy Hydrographer - Australia
Chair IHO TSMAD	Mike Brown, NOAA - USA
Dr. Lee Alexander	CCOM-JHC, University of New Hampshire, USA
Gert Buttgenbach	SevenCs, Germany (and Founder of OEF)
Mizuho Katayama	Marine Counsellor, Japan
Peter Kluytenaar	Serendipity Unltd. (Nautical Consultant) and Technical Advisor - European Inland ECDIS Committee

Technical Advisors:  
Michel Huet, IHB  
Tony Pharaoh, IHB

## 5. Looking Ahead

The OEF continues to evolve. More than being primarily a discussion and information site, it has become a means for consensus building and facilitating a range of topics related to ECDIS development and implementation. OEF has also become a site to register and list such ECDIS -related matters as ENC Producer Codes and new S-57 Objects/attributes. Further enhancements to the OEF may include more powerful search functions to browse discussion archives, topics of broader scope/content to attract new talents to the field, and a web mapping portal<sup>1</sup> that provides an interactive interface to world-wide ENC coverage and availability.

For further information, please visit the OEF website: [www.openecdiss.org](http://www.openecdiss.org)

### Action Required of CHRIS

CHRIS is invited to take note of the activities of the Open ECDIS Forum.

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<sup>1</sup>Access to this service would be via the IHO website, with OEF server resources being possibly used.