

17th CHRIS MEETING
5-9 September, 2005, Rostock, Germany

RNC PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION STATUS IN THE U.S.A.
(July 2005)

United States (NOAA)

1. Summary

<i>Executive summary:</i>	The USA (NOAA) is continuing to produce RNCs under a new contract. Distribution will be changed to make the RNCs available for free over the Internet. The “official” status of the RNCs will continue. A GeoTIFF version will be added for GIS users.
<i>Actions to be taken:</i>	None
<i>Related documents:</i>	None

2. Introduction / Scope

The Office of Coast Survey, NOAA and Maptech, Inc. of Amesbury, Massachusetts, collaboratively developed, and jointly produced official raster navigational charts (RNCs) for the USA under a cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA). The RNCs have become an important and successful contributor to safe, efficient, and environmentally sound marine transportation. They have been incorporated into international standards for electronic chart systems including ECDIS, and have been accepted as meeting U.S. federal chart carriage regulations aboard SOLAS vessels.

3. Analysis/Discussion.

The NOAA/Maptech CRADA expired in June 2005. To provide for the continued availability of official RNCs, NOAA competitively awarded a contract for the production of official RNCs and weekly updates. The successful offeror was Maptech, Inc. Under the contract, Maptech will deliver weekly to NOAA all new edition raster charts, electronic update patches of all Notices to Mariners corrections, and all latest edition raster charts with the Notices to Mariners update patches applied. The charts will be in the .BSB format and will meet the same standards as the official RNCs that were produced and distributed under the CRADA. In addition, Maptech will deliver all new editions in GeoTIFF format.

The Office of Coast Survey intends to distribute the resulting raster charts and updates for free over the Internet in the same manner they distribute Electronic Navigational Charts (see <http://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/MCD/enc/index.htm>). In addition, Coast Survey anticipates establishing a program under which commercial, value-added providers may download the raster charts for free, and reformat, encrypt, and/or package them with additional data or services; and may sell that product for whatever price the market will bear. By adhering to a simple set of NOAA-specified practices, these RNCs will retain their official status.

No date has been set by which this distribution of free raster charts will begin, and no date has been set by which the value-added redistributor program will be in place.

The RNCs resulting from this new contract are considered as “official”, and will meet federal chart carriage regulations in the USA as specified in U.S. Coast Guard regulations.

4. Benefits.

The change to “free distribution” will bring NOAA’s RNC distribution policy in-line with its ENC distribution policy, and should increase the use of official electronic charts.

5. Working Groups.

Not Applicable.

6. Other relevant information.

None.

7. Priority.

Not Applicable

8. Target completion date.

Not Established.

9. Action Required.

None.