

**18th CHRIS Meeting
Cairns, Australia, 25-29 September 2006**

Report on Activities of the Open ECDIS Forum (OEF)

Submitted by:	Lee Alexander, University of New Hampshire and the OEF Board of Advisors
Executive Summary:	This report summarizes the activities of Open ECDIS Forum during the period of September 2005 – August 2006.
Actions to be taken	Note the current activities; encourage greater IHO participation; continue to support the operation of the OEF.
Related Documents:	none
Related Projects:	IHO S-57 → IHO S-100

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 S-57 data producer 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. Operation and Management

a. Hardware/software upgrade - During the past year, the OEF underwent a much needed upgrade/modernization. In addition to installing a dedicated OEF server (hardware), a new OEF content management system called "Joomla" (www.joomla.org) was installed. It is open-source and replaces an earlier content management system (Drupal). In addition having the necessary functionality to ensure required security, it also has a more flexible, robust Discussion Forum system.

b. Discussion Forums

Now in its 9th year of operation, both the number of discussion forums and the level of activity have decreased from past years. Previously used to a large extent by participants in IHO and IEC standards development working groups, the OEF was used to exchange ideas, as well as to prepare for meetings. During the past two years, the highest level of activity has been by the North American – European Inland ENC Harmonization Group (IEHG).

As part of the OEF upgrade/modernization, changes were made in term of how the Discussion Forum operates. Any person can access the OEF and view any information that is contained on the OEF. However, to participate

in a discussion group, a person needs to login (i.e., provide a user name and password). This is being done for security reasons and to keep track of who is participating in the OEF Discussion Groups. Unfortunately, this has become necessary since the number of hackers and malicious internet users continues to grow exponentially.

A key aspect of the OEF Discussion Forums is the Discussion Leader. This person has two main responsibilities:

1) Establish/maintain the Discussion Group - This includes monitoring the discussion to make sure that it stays on topic.

2) Keeps track who is participating - This is not meant to decide or restrict who should (or should not) participate. Instead, it is to know who is participating and respond to questions from Discussion Group members. Also, this is needed if there is inappropriate activity or if it is a "closed" discussion group. Discussion Leaders (moderators) are provided OEF Administrative privileges by the OEF Administrator. On their own, they can:

- establish new topics
- move existing topics to another location
- edit or delete any inappropriate discussion
- close out the topic altogether

Current OEF Discussion Groups and Leaders are:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>e-mail</u>
CSMWG	Mathias Jonas	csmwg@openecdis.org
DPSWG	Robert Sandvik	dpswg@openecdis.org
HGMIO	Lee Alexander	hgmio@openecdis.org
Inland ECDIS	Eric Rottmann	inlandecdis@openecdis.org
SNPWG	Johannes Melles	johannes.melles@bsh.de
TSMAD	Tony Pharaoh	tsmad-owner@openecdis.org

Any person participating in the OEF Discussion Groups has the ability to set up e-mail notifications after a topic is created or each time that response is posted. This can be done either after logging in (click on "subscribe to this topic"), or at any point while viewing the topic.

c. Registration Service

1) S-57 Data Producer Codes

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 (not ENCs). Currently, 66 companies and organizations are registered on the OEF.

2) New Object Classes/Attributes

During the past year, several new object classes and attributes compatible with S-57 were registered on the OEF. They included 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 will soon be some Coral Reef/Marine Protection Area objects and attributes that will be registered as well.

3) OEF Register under IHO Registry

In conjunction with the ongoing work of the TSMAD S-100 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-57 100. The OEF will serve as a "Testbed Register" for Inland ENC and Ice Information as well.

d. Management/Administration at UNH

OEF Manager – Lee Alexander

OEF Administrators - Nathan Paquin and Jason Greenlaw

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

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

3. Funding for OEF Operation/Management

In March 2005, the IHB provided \$10,000US to support the upgrade/operation of the OEF. No additional funding was requested for 2006. Based on current level of operation, approximately \$10,000US will be needed on an annual basis to support the operation/management of the OEF. Based on discussions at the 2006 ECDIS Stakeholders Forum at IHB in Monaco, if this is not provided by IHO, other organizations and companies have expressed an interest to support the continued operation of the OEF.

4. Looking Ahead

Prior to the 10th WEND Meeting and the 2nd ECDIS Stakeholders Forum (ESF2), Chair of CHRIS sent an e-mail to IHB asking: "Does the IHO have a need for the OEF?". At the two meetings, it was noted that the level of use of the OEF by IHO members has declined. However, interest in the OEF by ECDIS Stakeholders remains high.

Based on discussions at both the ESF2 and WEND, it was recommended that the OEF should continue to exist (for the time being), and it continue to be hosted at the University of New Hampshire. However, in addition to maintaining the current operations it was suggested that the OEF could help facilitate future ESF meetings by conducting a survey of ECDIS Stakeholders via the OEF asking in advance of the next ESF what are important ECDIS-related topics for discussion.

Action Required of CHRIS

Note the current activities; encourage greater IHO participation; continue to support the operation of the OEF.
