

The World Bank

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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October 11, 2007

Captain Vaughan Nail
Chairman
Committee on Hydrographic Requirements for Information Systems
International Hydrographic Organization
United Kingdom Hydrographic Office
Admiralty Way
Taunton
Somerset TA1 2DN
UNITED KINGDOM

Subject: Proposal for the Preparation and Adoption of an S-57 Product Specification for the Exchange and Use of Marine Environmental Protection (MEP) Hydrographic Data

Dear Captain Nail:

On behalf of the World Bank Group I would like to congratulate the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and its Committee on Hydrographic Requirements for Information Systems (CHRIS) for taking on the proposal to develop and promulgate a uniform international product specification for the exchange and use of Marine Environmental Protection Data. I also wish to express our support for this work as it will contribute significantly to our shared goal of supporting navigation safety and marine environmental protection.

The World Bank has a strong commitment to sound natural resource management and environmental protection, recognizing their critical importance for poverty reduction and improving the lives of billions of people through sustainable economic growth. Through multimillion dollar investments in projects like the Global Coral Reef Targeted Research, Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, COREMAP, Argentina Marine Pollution Prevention, and the South East Asia and Western Indian Ocean Marine Electronic Highways (MEH), we have worked with local communities and international partners such as the IHO to protect marine environmental resources and habitats vital for supporting national and regional economic development.

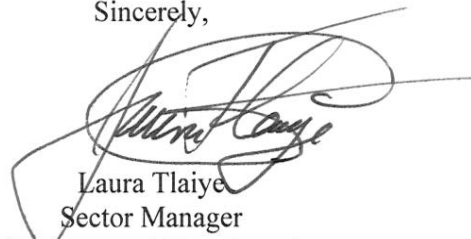
As reflected in our joint MEH work, the Bank also considers the protection of sensitive marine resources inseparable from expanding and improving the safety of global maritime commerce. Failure to comply with environmental regulations in the absence of good information may result in maritime accidents or routine ship operations (e.g., discharge, anchoring, etc) that can harm a range of industries and communities dependent on these resources. The economic cost of such damage can be millions of dollars per incident and the environmental and social cost almost incalculable.

Education and the provision of timely and accurate information are essential tools in avoiding such costs. Yet, the lack of standard terminology and information delivery

mechanisms may make it difficult for mariners to understand and comply with the rapidly growing body of national and international regulations. As part of addressing this obstacle, the South East Asia MEH project has identified the *facilitation of the integration of marine environment systems and data flow and information exchange through the MEH system* as a leading objective.

The Bank sees the MEP proposal that CHRIS is about to consider as an important IHO contribution and a key step toward advancing this objective. As clearly identified in the course of the MEH project preparation, the on-board Electronic Chart Display System and Electronic Nautical Charts (ENC) are the most effective mechanisms for delivering such information to mariners and the IHO is the appropriate international organization to oversee the standards enabling this process. We appreciate having the IHO as a partner in the groundbreaking MEH work and look to the IHO technical leadership.

Sincerely,



Laura Tlaiye
Sector Manager
Environment Department