

**19th CHRIS Meeting
Rotterdam, Netherlands, 5-9 November 2007**

Report on Activities of the Open ECDIS Forum (OEF)

Submitted by:	Lee Alexander (Univ. of New Hampshire) and the OEF Board of Advisors
Executive Summary:	This report summarizes the activities of Open ECDIS Forum during the period September 2006 – October 2007.
Actions to be taken	Note the current activities; migrate IHO-related functions to an IHO website; re-confirm the need for the OEF to continue to support IHO standards development/implementation.
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 - During the past year, the OEF continued to be operated by the University of New Hampshire using a dedicated OEF server (hardware), and an open-source content management system called "Joomla" (www.joomla.org). "Joomla" provides necessary functionality to ensure required security, and has flexible Discussion Forum system.

b. Discussion Forums

Now in its 10th year of operation, both the number of discussion forums and the level of activity have significantly decreased from past years. Currently, most activity is by the North American – European – Russian Federation Inland ENC Harmonization Group (**IEHG**), and less so by the Harmonization Group on MIOs (HGMIO). Other Discussion Groups still exist, but have been relatively inactive during the past 2-3 years:

<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
IEHG	Eric Rottmann	inlandecdis@openecdis.org
SNPWG	Johannes Melles	johannes.melles@bsh.de

TSMAD Tony Pharaoh tsmad-owner@openecdis.org

However, the Inland ENC Discussion Forum on the OEF has an official status in the European Inland ECDIS Standard, as well as the harmonized IENC Product Specification and Encoding Guide. As such, the OEF is vital to the maintenance of IENC standards.

c. Registration Service

1) S-57 Data Producer Codes

IHO S-62 Edition 2.0 (ENC Producer Codes) is a publication that lists the HOs who produce “maritime” ENCs. In contrast, the OEF is the site for registering both “International Organizations” and “Private Companies” involved in producing other type of S-57 data (e.g., Inland ENCs, MIOs, and AMLs). Currently, 78 agencies, organizations and private companies are registered on the OEF. This includes 12 new agencies/organizations/companies who registered during Oct 2006 – October 2007. Of these 12, six (6) were for producing inland ENCs, four (4) for MIOs, and two (2) for AMLs. For the foreseeable future, it is expected that there will be 10-15 new requests each year.

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). In addition, there are also some S-57-related objects/attributes that were registered for Additional Military Layers (AMLs), and Inland ECDIS. Most likely, there will be some for MIO-related data pertaining to Coral Reef/Marine Protection Area objects, attributes, and attribute values.

3) OEF Register under IHO Registry

In conjunction with the ongoing work of the TSMAD related to S-100, there is some interest in establishing 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-100. However, there has been no specific tasking nor a formal plan-of-action to create an OEF Register.

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	Capt. Robert Ward
Chair, IHO CHRIS	Capt. Vaughn Nail, UKHO
Chair IHO TSMAD	Barrie Greenslade, UKHO
Dr. Lee Alexander	CCOM-JHC, University of New Hampshire, USA
Gert Buttgenbach	SevenCs, Germany
Mizuho Katayama	Marine Counsellor, Japan
Peter Kluytenaar	Serendipity Unltd. (Nautical Consultant), Technical Advisor - European Inland ECDIS Committee, & European Technical Coordinator - IEHG
Technical Advisors:	
Michel Huet, IHB	
Tony Pharaoh, IHB	

3. Funding for OEF Operation/Management

Based on current level of operation, approximately \$5,000US is needed annually to support the operation/management of the OEF. As was decided at IHO CHRIS 18, IHO plans to transfer IHO-related functions to an appropriate IHO website. As such, IHB no longer intends to provide the main funding support for the OEF. However, other organizations and companies have expressed an interest to fund the continued

operation of the OEF at the University of New Hampshire. Currently, there is sufficient funding to accomplish the migration IHO-related functions to an IHO website(s).

4. Migration Plan (OEF → IHO)

There are at least four IHO-related functions that are currently performed by the OEF that can migrate to an appropriate IHO website(s):

1) Discussion Forums for: (CSMWG, DSPWG, SNPWG, and TSMAD). Note: It may be that there is no longer a need for these discussion forums to exist. If so, there is no need to transfer these to IHO.

2) S-57 Data Producer Codes – The entire functionality of this site should be relatively easy to transport to IHO. However, IHO will need to have a person(s) who maintains this site in terms of performing updates to existing codes and responding to requests for new codes.

3) New S-57 objects classes, attributes, and attribute values – Some of these could go into the Hydro Register of the IHO Registry. However, it is not always evident where others belong.

4) OEF Register – Potentially, an OEF Register could be created under the IHO Registry for “orphan” S-57 objects/attributes, as well as new S-57-related product specifications. Further, this Register could also evolve to deal with future S-100 related data.

5. Looking Ahead

At the 10th WEND Meeting and the 2nd ECDIS Stakeholders Forum (ESF2), 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. If/when, there is mandatory carriage of ECDIS, use of the OEF by Stakeholders could increase substantially. Based on outcome of the WEND 10 and ESF2, it was recommended that the OEF should continue to exist in support of IHO standards development/implementation for IHO and the ECDIS Stakeholder community. Most likely, it could do so without IHO funding.

Action Required of CHRIS

- Note the current level of activity of the OEF.
 - Approve the plan to migrate IHO-related functions to IHO website(s).
 - Consider the need to establish an OEF Register.
 - Confirm the need for maintaining the OEF in support IHO standards development/implementation.
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