

SIXTH MEETING OF THE IHO INTER REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC6
Paris, France, 19-20 May 2014

REPORT OF THE NORTH SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (NSHC)

By the Director Evert Flier (NO), Chair NSHC

- 1. Chairmen:** Evert Flier (NO) from June 2012
Vice-chair: Peter Kortenoeven (NL) from June 2012
- 2. Membership:** Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom.
- 3. Meetings:** The Commission met in Ålesund (NO), 18-21 June 2012. The next meeting is planned to take place in Amsterdam (NL), 25-27 June 2014, in accordance with the NSHC statutes.

The NSHC runs several groups that work mainly by correspondence:

- the Region D International Chart Coordination Working Group and the North Sea ENC Harmonization Working Group (UK lead);
- the NSHC Tidal Working Group (FR lead);
- the Dover Strait Survey Strategy Working Group (BE, FR, NL,UK) ;
- the NSHC Re-survey Working Group (DE lead, NL since November 2012) ;
- the European Union Marine and Maritime Policy Working Group (FR lead). This WG will be disbanded when the IRCC WG named "IHO-EU Network" is operational.

4. Agenda Items:

Task numbers refer to IHO WorkPlan for 2013 (see CL 98/2012)

IHO Work Programme 1 - "Corporate Affairs"

Element 1.1 Co-operation with International Organizations and participation in relevant meetings.

Task 1.1.4 European Union Initiatives.

The signing of the MoU between the IHO and the European Commission took place during the XVIIIth IHC in 2012. The European Union Marine and Maritime Policy WG of NSHC has been

quite active during 2013 and met with the EU DG Mare several times. The main activity has been discussion related to possible projects. Coordination and involvement in tasks related to EMODNet has also been highlighted.

A number of HOs are involved in the development of their implementation plan to comply with the EU INSPIRE directive establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community.

The BLAST project (Bringing Sea and Land Together) ended in the autumn 2012. Some of NSHC members participated in this project. The final report is not yet available.

Task1.1.6 International Federation of Hydrographic Societies

Several HOs participated in the conference “Digital Hydrography on the Maritime Web” organized and hosted by The Hydrographic Society UK, in association with the International Federation of Hydrographic Societies (IFHS) and International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). This two-day conference reviewed the progress made, and steps still to be taken, by professional hydrographers to support the move towards a maritime web, commonly known as e-navigation.

Tasks 1.1.12, 2-4 (IMO, committees of MSC, COMSAR and NAV)

A number of the NSHC HOs representatives are involved in IMO meetings, mainly related to MSC with the sub-committees NAV and COMSAR. (Restructuring within IMO in 2013 has changed the naming and composition of Committees).

IHO Work Programme 2 - "Hydrographic Services and Standards"

The Chair of NSHC participated in the HSSC 5 Meeting.

NSHC is heavily involved in the work under the umbrella of HSSC. One or more MS are represented in all active WG. In addition to chairing the HSSC itself, totally 8 WG are chaired by representatives from MS within the NSHC geographical area. The reporting from the WG is done directly to HSSC and will not be referred to in this document, except for MSDIWG and TWLWG below.

Element 2.7 Tides and Water Levels

In 2010 NSHC tasked the NSHC Tidal Working Group with the formulation of recommendations on the ways forward for creating a common and unique vertical reference surface for the whole North Sea area. This work has progressed within the TWG and partly by participation in the Blast Work Package “Land and Sea model”.

In 2013 the IHB and the NSHC Chair submitted the paper “Establishment and maintenance of vertical reference frameworks for high resolution bathymetric surfaces” to the IHO TWLWG,

inviting the WG to liaise with the North Sea Tidal WG in establishing common vertical reference frameworks. The 19th Meeting of NSHC TWG in Stavanger 4-5 June 2013 discussed further action to follow up the request from IHO and NSHC Chair. The main conclusion is that the WG will investigate the possibility to establish a common reference surface based on the existing national surfaces.

Element 2.9 Marine Spatial Data Infrastructures

From a close to dormant existence for some years, 2013 was a very active year for the MSDIWG. The new workplan for the WG, and the participation of member from MSDIWG in meetings with DG Mare (EU), has contributed much to a better understanding of the necessity to work for standardisation and harmonisation among institutions responsible for Spatial Data Infrastructure. Seamless products in the coastal zone, including both sea and land, are currently sought after by decision makers and industry.

IHO Work Programme 3 - " Inter Regional Coordination and Support"

The Chair of NSHC participated in the IRCC5 meeting.

Element 3.1 Co-operation with Member States and attendance at relevant meetings.

Task 3.1.9: The Commission has met once since the XVIIIth IHC and all Member States were represented in the meeting held in Ålesund, Norway, in 2012. No meeting was arranged in 2013 as NSHC normally meets every two years.

Task 3.1.1: There are no unresolved matters with ARHC. All IHO documents related to the introduction of the new INT Chart Region N, which caused changes to Region D, is updated.

Task 3.1.2: The Chair of NSHC was incited to the 18th meeting of BSHC. Unfortunately the meeting coincided with other scheduled activity and the NSHC was not represented.

Element 3.3 Capacity Building Management

Task 3.3.1: There is no real capacity building initiatives currently carried out within the NSHC. However, it is worth noting that a number of NSHC HOs are involved in the IHO capacity building activities (DE who chairs the CBSC, NO, UK, FR). NO currently represents the NSHC as CB Coordinator at the CBSC meetings. NO participated in the CBSC11 in Wollongong (AU).

The CB coordinator has participated in the revision of the CB Strategy. The new version will be considered at the next IRCC meeting.

A draft for Terms of Reference (ToR) for the CB Coordinators has been prepared by a subgroup of the CBSC. The partly revised function of the CB Coordinators is expected to improve the connection to those RHCs who are not in need for CB support, but have expertise, running programs or have potential capacities that might be of interest for the capacity building in other regions.

Element 3.4. Capacity Building Assessment

Task 3.4.1: Some Member States of the NSHC, especially UK and FR, have participated in Technical and Advisory visits to other HC regions during the entire lifecycle of the CBSC.

Element 3.5. Capacity Building Provision

Task 3.5.2. Both UK and FR have offered workshops/short courses.

Element 3.6 Coordination of Global Surveying and Charting

Task 3.6.2: The Chair of WEND (UK) represented NSHC at the WEND meeting in Monaco 13-14 May 2013. Several other MS, include the Chair of NSHC, attended this meeting.

Task 3.6.3: The NSHC has established a WG for the regional maintenance and coordination of ENC schemes

5. Conclusions and achievements

The main conclusions and achievements from the NSHC are as follows:

Member States of NSHC contribute extensively to the work of IHO by the high representation in all Working Groups. Member States are chairing totally 11 WGs related to HSSC and IRCC.

The close contact with EU, through DG Mare, has brought the cooperation with IHO and NSHC to a level that is quite promising with respect to financial support to future projects. The focus on the *Blue economy* both within EU and IHO gives reason to expect further cooperation in the years to come.

The demand for improvements in surveying techniques is increasing due to the high cost related to traditional surveying with echo sounders. The NSHC has decided to follow the development in remote sensing bathymetry (airborne and satellite) more closely. The next NSHC conference in 2014 will pay particular attention to this subject. GE has done extensive testing and comparison between different Lidar systems during last two years. NO has planned to do some test with combined topographic and bathymetric Lidar system in the littoral zone during the first half of 2014.