

Minutes of RENC Harmonisation Sub-Group Meeting 1 - London 22 Sep 12

Reference: RHSG_1 Agenda and Outcomes (attached)

1. Meeting opened 1415
2. Apologies: Annika Kindeberg (Co-Chair and PAC Chair)
3. **Attendees:**

Chair - Commodore Rod Nairn - (Chair IC-ENC SC)

Mr NG Kwok Chu – Hong Kong - EAHC

Mr Paul Canhan – UK – ICENC Operator

Mr Evert Flier – NHS Primar Operator

Mr Kjell Olsen- Manager PRIMAR

Mr James Harper – Manager IC-ENC

Mr Nick Ligacs – Manager AusRENC

Ms Julia Powell – USA NOAA – USCHC Representative

Mr Mike Prince – Australia (Observer – IC-ENC Member)

Ing Gen Yves Guillam – France (Observer – PRIMAR Member)

VADM SriVarsan – Saudi Arabia (Observer)

RADM Mustafa Iptes - IHB Director (Observer)

Capt Carlos Alberbeque - Brazil (Observer – IC-ENC & PRIMAR Member)

4. **Agenda.** The agenda was confirmed as follows:
 1. Review genesis of RHSG, confirm membership, chairmanship and method of working
 2. Confirm purpose and scope of RHSG
 3. Review of Cooperation Activities (presentation given during WEND Agenda 10)
 4. Brainstorm what needs to be done to make RENCs attractive to non-members?
 5. Set Goals, actions and work-plan for RHSG

Agenda 1

5. The Chair summarised the origin of the RHSG as follows:
 - a. As a result of feedback from ECDIS Stakeholders forum (2008) and EIHC 2009 an ICENC/Primar Cooperation Committee was commenced to:
 - Promote closer co-operation between the RENCs
 - Harmonise RENC policies – to assist EUSPs and Mariners
 - Remove inconsistencies and barriers to membership and de-mystify the RENCs to encourage further members to deliver the WEND vision.

b. At WEND Working Group Meeting 1 (Wollongong 2011) it was agreed that the work of this group should be formally brought under the supervision of the IHO and Action 13 required: “with immediate effect, and following IHB endorsement, form the RENC Harmonisation Sub Group (RHSG). To be co-chaired by Sweden and Australia (PAC and IC-ENC SC Chairs), and supported by the IC-ENC, PRIMAR and AusRENC, with representatives from EAHC (China), USCHC(USA) and the operators. (Additional members would be very welcome – especially non-RENC). The Chair expressed his opinion that the membership of the RHSG needed to be broadened further.

6. CDRE Nairn advised that he would be standing down as Chair of IC-ENC SC the following Saturday (29 Sep) and leaving his position with the Australian Hydrographic Service in January 2013, thus the new IC-ENC SC Chair would assume the role of Co-Chair of the RHSG. Kjell Olsen confirmed that the current PAC Chair would continue in the role for at least a further 12 months, so Annika Kindeberg would remain the co-chair, providing some continuity.

7. The Chair expressed his opinion that the membership of the RHSG needed to be broadened as much as possible. The members confirmed their preference for the work of the RHSG to be conducted by correspondence and noted that because the membership spanned all time zones, if a telephone conference was required then the most suitable time would be European early morning, American early evening and Asian late evening. The Chair noted that quite a bit of progress had been made in RENC cooperation as a result of bi-lateral efforts between PRIMAR and IC-ENC since the Wollongong meeting.

Agenda 2

8. The members discussed the purpose and scope of the RHSG considerations. It was considered that the specified scope of the group “To monitor and promote the RENC harmonisation issues and be a successor to the IPCC” was too limited, that such work had largely already been done by the RENCs and that it needed to be broadened and take a wider view of RENC modification and improvement for the benefit of the IHO and with the aim of achieving the WEND vision.

9. Julia Powell agreed that the scope of the sub-group needed to be expanded. She noted that the most important work that the group could do was the third point “to develop the most effective RENC structure for the IHO to achieve the WEND vision”. She noted that while the IHO endorses RENC and RENC distribution there is very little documentation that defines the roles and responsibilities of a RENC. The WEND Principles and S-65 both specify RENC distribution but neither specifies what a RENC must do as a minimum. The two existing RENCs do the same things at the core, ensuring quality, consistency and ensuring that the ENCs run in an ECDIS but there is no definition in the IHO documents. This lack of detail could be contributing to some States not distributing through RENCs.. This was agreed to be a major shortfall in the IHO documentation. Discussions suggested that the RENC framework documents and transparency documents would form a good basis for defining the minimum level of services that a RENC must provide and an action was recorded to define this.

Action RHSG1_1: Julia Powell to draft a definition of the minimum level services required to be provided by a RENC and circulate by correspondence to gain group agreement before submission through the WEND by correspondence to the IRCC for endorsement in June 2013 and potential publication by CL or inclusion in S-32.

10. Questions were raised about the origins of the WENC concept and whether the requirements or the WENC was defined. Mr NG Kwok Chu noted that it was impossible to find the records of the first 3 WEND Committee meetings on the IHO website. This was confirmed by Julia Powell. Yves Guillam read from his own copies of the historical WEND records that “the goal of the RENC is to enable the establishment of a joint encrypted ENC database”.

11. After some minor adjustments to wording, the members agreed that the scope should be amended to:

“To develop the most appropriate RENC structure for the IHO to achieve the WEND vision.”

Action RHSG1_2: Chairs to submit proposed scope amendment of the RHSG through the WEND by correspondence to the IRCC for endorsement in June 2013.

12. The Chair emphasised that if this scope was endorsed by the higher level committees then it is even more important that the membership is broadened and it may be necessary the RHSG work is addressed by the full membership of the WEND Sub-Committee.

Agenda 3

13. The Chairman summarised the progress of RENC cooperation under the previous IPCC and subsequent to the Wollongong WEND meeting as previously presented at Agenda Item 10 or WEND SC 3. The key elements are as follows:

- Framework Agreement on RENC- to- RENC cooperation (March 2010), establishes terms and the intent to co-operate
- RENC Concept Model (July 2010) and RENC-RENC workshop in Amsterdam (Sep 2010), proposals developed
- Series of meetings between Operators and Managers to progress with the co-operation. A phased approach is in place.
- 4 face-to-face meetings have been held between UKHO and NHS, plus series of telephone conferences Letter to IHO after each meeting, each set of RENC members have been kept informed by Circular Letters and at Committee Meetings
- The RENCs have produced high level description documents, looking at the the operation, governance and finances of each organisation.

- These documents were circulated to all IHB member states under **IHB CL 2012/5** are also available on the RENC websites: **www.ic-enc.org & www.primar.no**
- Minimum quality assurance level agreed (HO must correct errors)
- Agreed procedure to jointly test new validation software
- Process to establish exchange procedure for errors information
- Technical exchange visits in December 2011 & February 2012
- Joint Technical Experts Working Group held in March 2012
- Joint IHC Plenary Presentation and Trade Stand
- Reciprocal RENC access to ENC data for consistency checking
- The RENCs agreed to harmonize licensing. Component Price Model has been agreed - roadmap with phased implementation commencing Jan 2013
- Harmonized 'pay as you sail' (PAYS) licensing terms are in place
- A Joint Commercial Working Group has been formed to ensure future commercial policies remain consistent.

14. The Chair noted that the two RENCs have, over time, evolved two different operating models with some different levels of services. He stated that continuing to attempt to implement the entire Concept Model agreed in 2010 may not be the best way to achieve the ultimate aim of delivering the WEND vision improving ENC services to mariners. This point was agreed by the members and this logically led to further discussions under agenda item 4.

Agenda 4a.

15. **Brain Storming of Non-member reasons for not using RENCs.** The Chair introduced this question emphasizing that this was a critical item to be understood to ensure the success of RENC concept. Evert Flier suggested that it may be more useful to turn it around and ask "what would the RENCs need to do in order for non-members to be convinced that they should join a RENC?"

16. Julia Powell noted that even in a key note address by Dr Eylers questioned whether a RENC needed to be a regional scheme. She described the USA requirement for ENC checking and specific national legislation that impacts on distribution. Specifically, she stated that the turn around times of IC-ENC for verifying cell updates and new cells did not meet USA requirements. USA requires 24 hours for an update and 48 hours for a new edition and requires these services to be available every day of the year.

17. The USA had found a need to apply external load testing, verification and consistency checking of their data and were actually paying a contractor to conduct these checks on their behalf. The group agreed that the USA were effectively conducting the functions of a RENC and bearing all the costs themselves. The question was asked how USA coordinated their ENC with neighbours such as Canada and Caribbean States. The USA has data sharing arrangements with Canada to enable harmonization in the Caribbean they coordinate through the MACH.

18. JP explained that the US legislation required that ENC must be made available free of charge on their web and that only USA certified distributors were permitted to distribute USA ENC. This was not seen as precluding RENC use as there could be arrangements to limit to the distribution of USA data to their approved distributors.

19. VADM Sri Varsan provided background on the development of the RENCs in the IHO, noting that in 1997 when the World Wide RENC concept was developed many Member States wanted the IHO to take on the management of the RENCs, however the financial liability of such was beyond the means of the IHO and the Directing Committee would not take on the technological risks. So the IHO was happy that the UKHO and Norway took on these responsibilities. However much has since changed, and now potentially the IHO could act as an umbrella authority to bring together the RENCs and come up with policies and programs that will give the RENCs official sanction and support further IMO regulation in this regard.

20. The Chair noted that at the recent East Asian Hydrographic Commission Meeting there was some discussion about the establishment of a Regional Coordination Centre with aim of better coordination of ENC production, but it was not really clear what the difference was between an RCC and a RENC.

21. Mr NG Kwok Chu commented that they have been discussion of the RCC for a few years and the majority of member thought that they would prefer to manage the commercial distribution components themselves but they see the value in coordination of production. There will be further regional discussion on a voluntary system of regional coordination in January 2013. The aim is to concentrate on overlaps and consistency from a technical perspective. Some of the EAHC members are not yet ready to distribute their ENCs so this may be a reason that they do not join a RENC. Also there has been some concern with the WEND Principles, Asian countries did not want an external country to produce an INT chart of the South China Sea, so they came up with a local co-operative scheme to produce ENCs of this area. Some members will never allow an outside party to touch their ENCs. Many countries in the region have had their data stolen and more recently there is an incidence of an agreement being signed with an ECS distributor but the sales figures being reported being impossibly low and the sales money is not being returned to the State. The EAHC is now looking at whether they will start to charge for the South China Sea ENCs and utilise the revenue for local capacity building.

22. Further discussion concentrated on a number of concerns with commercial data distributors and ECS producers.

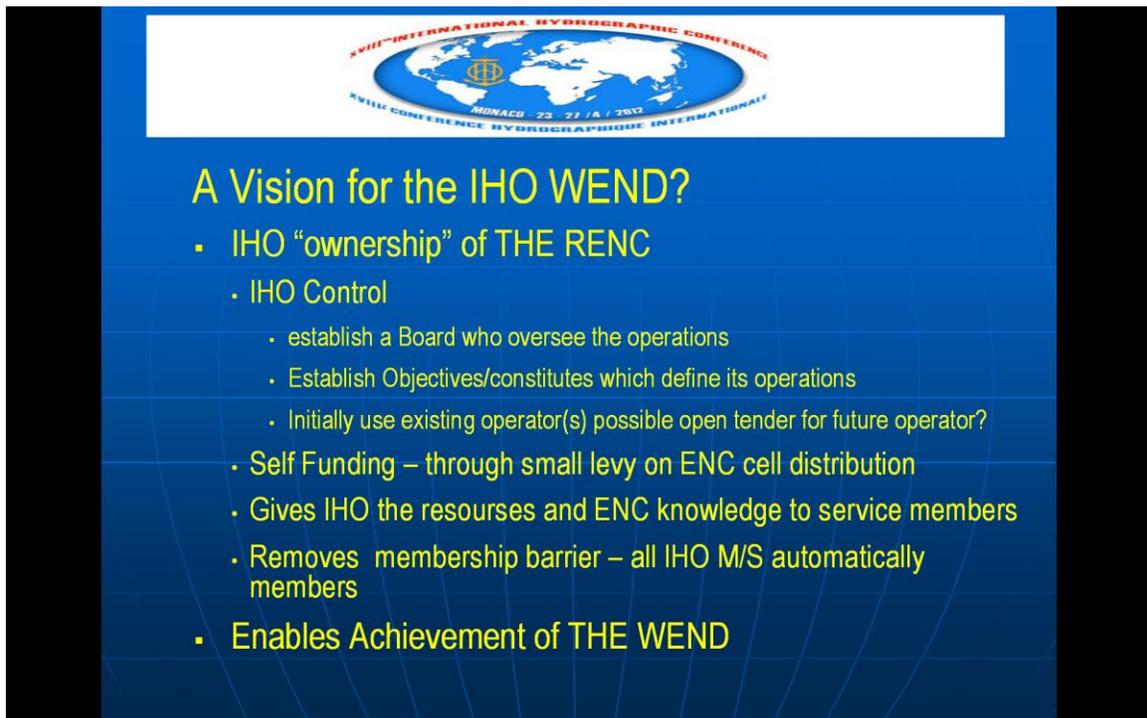
23. VADM Sri Varsan also noted that many State hydrographic departments do not have the authority to sign agreements with other entities, such as RENC so this may be the reason that they cannot join. If the RENC was part of the IHO then it may overcome this significant problem.

24. The chair summarised current concerns with RENC services:

- a. Not meeting nationally required turn around times for data verification
- b. Not providing full services 365 days per year
- c. Perceived loss of ability to control who the ENC data is distributed to
- d. Perceived loss of control over the limits/extent and coverage of National ENC
- e. Fear of data Piracy or under-reporting of ENC sales to the producer nation
- f. National concern that a RENC may withdraw data if not considered up to date
- g. National HO not having the authority to sign an agreement with a RENC.

Agenda 4.b.

25. The Chair introduced a possible vision for an IHO Controlled RENC (IHO WEND?) that could help to overcome some of the concerns expressed above. He stated that the current ICENC fund surplus had proved that IHO taking on the control of RENC operations would not be a financial burden on the IHO and, if operated carefully, could even result in a surplus of funds that could be re-directed into Capacity Building or other IHO priority areas. His vision was summarised on slide 16 as repeated below:



26. Julia Powell raised the concern that this looked like a business activity and not something that the IHO should be doing. The Chair responded (Slide 17) that the IMO with its development of INMARSAT had already provided the precedent that Inter-Governmental Organisations could operate a business like venture when it was a cost effective way of providing essential global services.

IHO RENC Scenario

27. The Chair outlines a possible scenario of IHO ownership/control of a global “IHO RENC”. Such RENC would be operated as a high level IHO committee but with additional governance requirements including objects and functions could be specified under the rules of the committee. In order to be able to make business like decisions in a responsive timeframe it could be controlled by a governing Board which is made up of 2 or 3 of the IHO Directors or Assistant Directors appointed by the IHB, as well as a number of other Board members elected from the Member States that contribute their data to the IHO RENC. The Board would be responsible for the strategic direction and they would employ a manager and staff (or contracted services) to conduct the day to day operations of the IHO RENC. A full meeting of Member States who contribute their data (akin to shareholders) would receive the annual reports and participate in the election of board members.

28. This arrangement could overcome many of the concerns raised above (paragraph 24). The levels of service and turn around times could be determined in order to meet the requirement of Member States(a, b & c); the movement of the WEND committee towards focusing on ensuring consistency in overlapping data areas (rather than on removing overlaps) will reduce concerns with changing data limits (d); good communications and update procedures would reduce the risk of data withdrawal (f); and there would be no barriers to entry, any Member State who submits their data becomes a full member of the committee and submitting their data they agree to comply with the rules of the IHO RENC without having to sign any agreements (g). Another key factor is that this type of operation is now commercially viable and could even produce a surplus so would not be a financial drain on the IHO.

29. Kjell Olsen and Yves Guillam noted that many Member States require the RENC services to be provided by a government authority rather than a commercial entity. The Chair made the point that the key here is that the entire operation would be controlled by the IHO, the rules and procedures would be in accordance with IHO Governance Documents. Paul Canhan raised a question as to the level of service being provided by this RENC, and the arrangements by which States that require a higher level of service could get these through organizations such as PRIMAR? The Chair responded that his vision was that the IHO RENC would limit its operations to the basic essential RENC functions and keep costs to a minimum, States could then negotiate additional levels services from other service providers such as PRIMAR.

30. The Chair emphasized that this is not intended to be an exclusive distribution arrangement and Member States may still chose to distribute their data through their own channels in addition to the IHO RENC distribution. There was some discussion as to whether it should be compulsory to submit data through the IHO RENC in order to get the IHO “Official ENC” Stamp and whether this might not be regulated by the IMO, but generally the meeting did not see the feasibility of making submission of ENC data compulsory.

31. If this was successful and most Member States submit their ENC's through the IHO RENC, there is potential that the "cost per cell distributed" charge could be reduced to an insignificant level around \$0.50 per cell, or alternatively a higher per cell charge could result in a surplus that could be used to provide capacity building funds to the IHO or to subsidise the IHO Membership fees of contributing Member States.

Agenda 5 – Set Goals, Actions and Workplan

32. The Chair sought feedback on this concept from all present and particularly non-members of the current RENCs. Kjell Olsen made the point that some Member States will insist on maintain the level of services that they currently receive. This concept was seen a broadening up the base for provision of those higher level services (such as those provided by PRIMAR). He noted the PRIMAR technologies are now mature and cost should reduce whilst income is increasing.

33. Further discussion agreed that there were a number of critical success factors for and IHO RENC summarised as follows:

1. A high level of IHO Member State participation in the IHO RENC
2. It needs to encourage those States who do not distribute through a RENC to decide to submit their data through the IHO RENC.
3. Clear documentation for the committee structure, functions and operating procedures
4. Financially self sufficient.
5. Controlled/Supervised by the IHO
6. Allows for / facilitates the continuing provision of existing higher level services to be provided to Member States

34. Julia Powell suggested that before the IHO could be asked whether they are willing to take this on the operation of a RENC that a framework needs to be developed that defines the detailed scope and operating concept of the proposed IHO RENC. Yves Guillam emphasised that it was important as a first step to ensure that there is a willingness of all IHO members to support this concept. This was agreed.

35. VADM Varsan noted that he though the term "control" might not be well received and that he would prefer to see the work "supervised" or similar. He considered that in the implementation phase nothing should change on the ground, the current services should continue, the IHO should focus on developing the rules and procedures. He also suggested that as part of the IMO audit scheme the IHO could have a set of certified auditors who could provide an audit service for member states. He did not consider the validation charge to be very cost sensitive as it was such a small component of the total cost of an ENC.

<p>Action RHSG1_3: ICENC (Rod Nairn) and PRIMAR develop a concept document to define this entity by 31 Dec 2012.</p>

36. Nick Ligacs reminded that a necessary precursor to developing the IHO WENC Concept is to gain agreement to the concept from the current RENC Committees – ICENC Steering Committee and PRIMAR Advisory Committee - to ensure that the existing RENC members are willing to support a the proposed concept and shift in control to the IHO.

Action RHSG1_5: ICENC SC Chair / ICENC Operator and PRIMAR Advisory Committee Chair / PRIMAR Operator seek in-principle agreement from their committees to the formation of an IHO RENC - by end 2012.

Action RHSG1_6: RHSG ongoing work - to develop a proposal on the IHO RENC Concept to Member States for endorsement at the next Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference in 2014.

37. The summary of goals milestones and actions was capture on slide 20 of the reference as follows:



37. Director Iptes expressed his satisfaction with the progress of the meeting and noted that he considered it a good intention to present a proposal on the IHO RENC concept to Member States for endorsement at the next Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference in 2014.

38. All members of the meeting agreed to be available to work by correspondence and VIDCON/TELECON if required (though global coverage would lead to some

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inconvenient times for some) with the next face to face meeting, if required to be held immediately before the next WEND Meeting. The first RENC Harmonisation Sub-Group Meeting was closed at 1652. The Chair suggested that in future it would be useful to have a secretary!

Commodore Rod NAIRN, AM, RAN
Joint Chair, RENC Harmonisation Sub Group

8 Jan 2013