

11TH WEND COMMITTEE MEETING
Tokyo, 2-5 September 2008

Paper for Consideration by WEND

UK Comment on WEND11-07A – A Review of the WEND Principles

Submitted by:	UK
Executive Summary:	The UK welcomes the WEND TG paper (WEND11-07A.). This commentary paper is written in support of the TG's analysis and their recommendations; it provides supporting evidence for their proposals based on UK's practical experience found in developing a new integrated ENC service (AVCS).
Related Documents:	WEND11-07A - A Review of the WEND Principles – WEND TG
Related Projects:	Not applicable

Introduction / Background

1. At the Meeting of Member States that followed the X WEND meeting in October 2007 the UK outlined its approach to developing a new integrated ENC service to be known as the Admiralty Vector Chart Service (AVCS). The UK views the AVCS as a means to assist IHO in meeting its commitment to IMO in achieving adequate coverage, availability consistency and quality of ENCs by 2010. The launch of the new service was timed to provide tangible support to the case for mandatory carriage of ECDIS and was linked to the UK submission to IMO NAV54.
2. The experience gained by the UK in developing and launching the AVCS is relevant to the consideration of a revision of the WEND Principles. This paper provides information and commentary on a number of relevant issues that were identified during development of the AVCS and links to the quality and consistency aspects of the WEND aim.
3. The UK, in collaboration with other MS, has done its best to overcome issues of quality, consistency and coverage; however areas of concern remain. The UK observes that the issues brought out in WEND TG paper 11-07A mirrors its own experience and therefore the UK supports the TG's conclusions and their view that amendment of the WEND Principles is needed to accommodate the realities of the current situation.
4. The UK strongly believes that continued and ever closer co-operation between Member/Coastal States is the best way to progress the WEND concept and thereby meet the needs of the mariner and is extremely grateful to all MS and other nations that have been supportive of the UK in its initiatives.

Developing ENC Coverage

5. The AVCS service contains only ENCs. To improve continuity of coverage in the short term, UKHO sought Coastal State approval for the production of interim "infill" ENCs based on its UK paper charts. Approval was sought on the understanding that these ENCs would be withdrawn when the Coastal State was in a position to issue and maintain its own ENCs. A by-product of UK seeking these permissions from nations has been that some of them have subsequently joined a RENC.

6. The UK believes that such “infill” programmes, where States produce ENC’s on behalf of other States are a key element in ensuring the successful uptake of ENC services and notes the acknowledgement of such programmes in the proposed revised WEND Principles.

Concerns Identified

7. The UK has identified several areas of concern with regard to the ability to provide an integrated ENC service and has previously provided details of these to the IHB, the appropriate RENCs and HOs. They include:

Overlapping ENC coverage

8. As the number of ENC producer nations grows there are increasing occurrences of overlapping ENC coverage. Overlapping areas are not restricted to those regions where there are disputes over national boundaries and it is clear that a significant number of nations are not adhering to this fundamental element of WEND. ECDIS systems can operate unpredictably in such areas and as a result this erodes user confidence in ENC’s. For this reason overlaps should not be present in end user services. Service providers therefore need the operational flexibility to remove areas of overlap and if necessary to fill any resultant gaps.

9. In dealing with areas of overlapping ENC’s within the AVCS, the UK has sought to find solutions acceptable to the relevant States and it will continue to do so. However, in irresolvable cases, a practical and safe alternative that will benefit the mariner, and which is impartial to any particular national position, must be found. For this reason, the UK supports the WEND TG proposals on this matter.

ENC Quality and Updating

10. In developing the AVCS, the UK has identified some serious matters related to ENC quality and updating. The UKHO is in an almost unique position to make such observations because of its world paper chart series which is used by many mariners for whom UK feels a particular responsibility. Over many years the UKHO has built up an archive of hydrographic material and cartographic expertise, together with in-depth regional and local knowledge and relationships. This information and knowledge is used, in collaboration with the relevant coastal States, to maintain the quality and content of paper charts around the world.

11. In meeting the needs of the Royal Navy the UK has a programme of work to identify differences between ENC’s and the equivalent UKHO paper charts. At the same time, many vessels fitted with ECDIS and using ENC’s continue to carry paper charts (in some cases Flag States require this). Mariners can and do make comparisons between the electronic and paper charts and unfortunately often find many differences which are noted and are regularly reported. When it becomes aware of such differences the UK investigates and attempts to resolve these differences with the producer nations. However, where the differences are of navigational significance, or are very numerous, they undermine the mariner’s confidence in the chart information and its producing authority. This has an obvious impact on maintaining the safety of navigation.

12. In many cases differences identified can be quickly resolved (either by the UK taking action on its paper charts or by the producer nations amending their ENC’s). Where it proves difficult or impossible to get a timely resolution to queries that impact on safety of navigation Member States have, in the paper chart environment, the flexibility to deal with this by issuing a Notice to Mariners. There is no such remedy available with ENC’s and this can present MS with a considerable dilemma.

13. Whilst there are alternative technical means to alert the mariner to additional or amended navigational significant information (such as promulgating additional textual

information or producing overlays) these will always be, from the mariner's perspective, second rate solutions compared with having a reliable and up to date ENC in the first instance.

HO Capability and Capacity Building

14. The UK is fully committed to the objectives of WEND and supports a number of capacity building initiatives to assist Coastal States wishing to develop an ENC production and maintenance capability. However, a good proportion of the issues identified above are related to nations engaging in ENC production without first having developed sufficient cartographic capability and infrastructure.

15. The IHO Capacity Building Committee has established a phased approach to the development of hydrographic capabilities within Coastal states and the UK fully endorses this logic as it will assist in ensuring a sound basis for the production and maintenance of ENCs. Attempting to develop an ENC production and maintenance capability without the foundation of a basic charting capability and experience risks the introduction of ENCs of questionable quality and / or updatedness into the WEND.

Conclusions

16. There are a number of nations that are not yet ready to take on production and maintenance of ENCs. The UK is of the view that for these nations it would be better to maintain similar arrangements to those employed with paper charts so as to ensure that ENCs are available and fit for purpose. This is as acknowledged by the change of emphasis in the proposed revised Principles (1.2).

17. The UK's experience in developing AVCS indicates that procedures similar to those currently employed in the paper chart environment will be needed in the short to medium term to ensure the quality and updatedness of the WEND. It therefore supports the TG proposals for new Principle (1.8)

18. The perception amongst some mariners that commercially-produced charts are more consistent than ENCs is largely due to the fact that commercial chart providers, not bound by the constraints of the WEND Principles, are free to adjust their data, derived from official charts, to ensure any inconsistency or presentation issues are resolved. While the existing WEND Principle 2.9 appears to provide flexibility for MS who integrate national ENC datasets into a wider service to harmonize ENC data; this principle has not been widely interpreted as giving the levels of freedom actually required to address the issues identified. The UK therefore supports the WEND TG's proposal to include some flexibility within the revised Principles to address the issues raised, so long as this flexibility is used where there is a genuine requirement to do so, and where the outcome is to the benefit of the mariner and the long term aims of WEND.

19. The UK strongly supports the WEND TG proposals; it believes these provide a practical and realistic framework to address both the short and the longer term interests of both the mariner and the IHO.

Action Required of WEND

20. To **note** the contents of this paper and the UK's support of the conclusions and recommendations of the WEND TG as set out in paper WEND11-07A.