

**Paper for Consideration by WEND-WG**

**[Relevance of information overlay services and their status in the global IHO ENC programme]**

<b>Submitted by:</b>	FRANCE
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	Information overlay services containing information related to the safety of navigation raise the questions of: 1/ the quality of the ENC's of the WEND; 2/ the responsibility of coastal States in the provision of hydrographic information to SOLAS ships in waters under their jurisdiction.
<b>Related Documents:</b>	Documents <a href="#">IRCC6-08B</a> & <a href="#">HSSC6-05.5D Rev1</a> .
<b>Related Projects:</b>	-

**Introduction / Background**

The Admiralty Information Overlay (AIO) service is produced and distributed by the UKHO exclusively through the Admiralty vector chart service (AVCS), as an additional layer (S-57 format) to ENC's, usable only on compatible equipment. The AIO “contains all Admiralty Temporary & Preliminary Notices to Mariners (T&P NMs) and provides additional preliminary information that is specific to ENC's, such as reported navigational hazards that have been incorporated on paper charts but have not yet been included in ENC's” (as explained in AIO user guide on <https://www.ukho.gov.uk/ProductsandServices/ElectronicCharts/Documents/AVCS/Admiralty-Information-Overlay-User-Guide-v1-0.pdf>).

The existence of this service in parallel of the IHO ENC service introduces doubts for the navigator and for maritime authorities on the reliability of official charts included in the WEND.

The subject was presented during its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to the IRCC, which considered that some issues risen, that concerned consistency between national ENC's and information given by AIO, can be addressed on a bilateral basis. It did not clarify the implication on the quality of the ENC's concerned by the AIO and did not investigate whether this quality could be improved, making AIO useless, or whether information overlay could be a useful way for dealing with imperfection of ENC's.

**Analysis/Discussion**

The AIO service offered by the UKHO for AVCS is intended for the interest of the navigators, giving navigationally significant information. Though AIO is delivered by an official HO, it is not recognized by the IHO or IMO as an official product compliant with IHO standards to be used for safety of navigation of SOLAS ships.

In 2014, 53 Member States of the IHO produced ENC's, 41 of them issuing T&P NMs on their paper charts. For the 30 which normally issue ENC revisions to cover their T&P NMs (and 6 more had intended to do it before 2015), it seems to SHOM that information overlays should not be necessary. When they nevertheless exist, the reason should be highlighted, as, if the information is not redundant with the content of the ENC, it could be understood as information detained by the service provider that the ENC producer is not informed, of or does not agree with.

In this regard, it is reminded that in accordance with SOLAS, V/9-3, that “...Contracting Governments undertake to ensure the greatest possible uniformity in charts and nautical publications and to take into account, whenever possible, relevant international resolutions and recommendations”.

Moreover, such AIOs are in contradiction with IHO resolution 7/1919 (§1-d) that stipulates that “Hydrographic Offices should avoid creating products where another Hydrographic Office has charting responsibility for the waters concerned and already offers up-to-date products adequate for customers' requirements”.

According to the AIO user guide “*The Overlay gives seafarers an easy way to view the information they need, in addition to the standard chart, to navigate safely and compliantly. **The Overlay makes passage planning simpler and safer...***”. Distinguishing the AIO as “safer” from the service offered by other providers such as RENCs can be understood as stating that the IHO ENC service in itself is not as safe as it should be and does not consist in “*up-to-date products adequate for customers' requirements*”. Moreover, it does not seem that AIO, when referring to waters under the jurisdiction of a coastal member States, is checked or formally approved by authorized Hydrographic Office or on the authority of the Government, as it is stated in SOLAS V/2.

For these reasons, if it is considered that AIO may offer a real advantage for the safety of navigation that could not be achieved by application of rules or procedures already existing or by improving them, its use should be envisaged by IHO (and therefore it would be necessary to set up a programme of work about its content, representation, delivery, etc., and perhaps acting to make it mandatory). In addition, it should be interoperable with all type-approved ECDIS. Finally, coastal States being responsible of the nautical information delivered to the navigators in the waters under their jurisdiction, they should be informed as soon as possible of this additional information.

On the other hand, if the IHO considers that the assessment shows that risk and confusion exceed the advantages expected in the provision of information overlay services, it seems to SHOM that a minimum set of procedures should be applied and agreed between the HO operating the AVCS service and the IHO ENC Producers, so it is not necessary to add information overlays for the safety of navigation in this service.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The Admiralty Information Overlay service challenges the quality of the official ENC as produced by coastal States, or on their behalf, responsible for the provision of Hydrographic Services. An assessment of the defaults which AIO aims to deal with should be undertaken, and IHO should consider the better ways and means to correct them in order to fulfill its commitment to the mariners. From that analysis, stakeholders (HOs, End-User Service Providers, mariners, ECDIS manufacturers), should be invited to consider at a larger scale whether or not information overlay services should be either improved or generalized to become an IHO standard or at the end abandoned as soon as all T&P NtM are coded in ENCs.

France is in the view that WEND-WG should include in its programme of work an action to propose a position and a way ahead about the provision of information overlay.

### **Justification and Impacts**

The recommendation is justified by the risk that the benefits of information overlay services could sometimes and in some areas be offset by the potential issues they introduce, creating mistrust of navigators about official ENCs.

The impact of the recommendation could go further than AIOs, concerning all HOs and RENCs which might have to establish another set of guidelines or standard or technical resolutions to improve their cooperation in order to propose more coherent ENCs and paper charts.

### **Action Required of WEND-WG**

The WEND Committee is invited to:

- a. endorse this paper
- b. discuss it and take actions in order to remove the risks described above.