

SHOM 2007, new statutes, new organisation

1. BACKGROUND

SHOM current organisation and responsibilities are defined by a decree dating back to 1971: the director of SHOM reports to the Naval Chief of Staff for most of the activities (national hydrographic service and provision of environmental support to the Navy); for research & development in HOM (Hydrography, Oceanography and Meteorology), he reports also to the national director of armaments. Various unsuccessful attempts were made in the past to adapt SHOM statutes to the evolving environment.

After a broad consultation and a wide analysis focused on SHOM's role and missions, the Defence Minister has decided to transform SHOM's statutes. On the 1st of January 2007, SHOM is to become a national public establishment placed under the tutelage of the ministry of defence.

2. TRANSFORMATION OBJECTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

Transformational objectives may be summarised as follows:

- to consolidate current missions (national hydrographic service and defence support) and to improve SHOM's support to maritime public policies increasing requirements: SHOM's databases are the foundation for multiple applications. Transformation is a mean to make maritime data and products more easily available to all users when needed to support emerging environmental and society stakes. The new resources identified to achieve this mission, when available, will be implemented to sustain more traditional activities simultaneously.
- to provide a more efficient support to public requirements (military and civilian), with respect to European directives, with the responsibility to make available qualified and high value information depicting the maritime physical environment (coastal and offshore). SHOM will remain the official governmental authority in charge of nautical information (hydrographic data collation, production of charts, promulgation of nautical information, tidal measurements and predictions, etc.).
- to develop state-of-the-art products and to adapt SHOM's production processes to new technologies. SHOM is invited to promote hydrography in Europe and worldwide, in liaison with IHO and partners.
- to make the administrative and financing rules applicable to SHOM more flexible to facilitate the development of broader cooperation, partnerships and joint ventures.

Current SHOM organisation will be modernised to match similar French national public establishment organisation chart and to give more visibility to SHOM's activities:

- a board of governors will define SHOM's contractual resources and objectives (pluri-annual plan 2007-2011) ;
- this board will have representatives not only from the ministry of defence, but also from the ministry of transportation, tourism, and sea, from the ministry of foreign affairs, from the ministry in charge of overseas territories, from the ministry of budget, from the ministry of environment and sustainable development, and from the general secretariat for the sea attached to the Prime minister.
- SHOM will be designated to become the Joint Forces Environmental Fusion Centre which means that its role in military support will be extended beyond Navy's support.
- SHOM will keep a strong role in the French and European network of public services: data and products will be provided through geoportals at almost "no-cost" when these products are funded by tax payers; catalogues of metadata will be made publicly available, and access to digital products will be improved.
- and finally, SHOM will keep its original name to show its strong attachment to the Navy (most of the survey ships will remain operated by the Navy) and because SHOM's logo is very well known among mariners as a trusted source of nautical information providing very high quality products.