NSHC 28th Conference **Explanatory Note**
Elsinore, Denmark **Item D 1.2**
April 2008 **France**

Capacity Building

1. Background

In 2003, the IHO established the Capacity Building Committee (CBC). The principal terms of reference for this Committee are (see IHO Technical Resolution K2.36):

i. To assess continuously the hydrographic surveying, nautical charting and nautical information status in nations and regions where hydrography is developing, using an appropriate and agreed methodology. This includes the development and maintenance of IHO publication S-55, "Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Cartography Worldwide".

ii. To cooperate in the establishment and maintenance of close relationships with national agencies and international organizations, which may provide funding or other support to technical assistance projects, and to study the procedures required to access the funds for Technical Assistance available from such organizations.

iii. To cooperate with Regional Hydrographic Commissions in the creation of Study Teams or Action Groups to carry out assessment studies in the areas identified by the IHO in its 5-year "Work Programme" and in the subsequent monitoring of the recommendations resulting from those Study Teams or Action Groups' Reports

iv. To cooperate in the provision of advice to all maritime nations requesting support to develop hydrographic capabilities, following the implementation of SOLAS regulation V/9.

Much of the effort to identify, plan, prepare and monitor capacity building efforts falls on RHC Chairs. In many of the RHCs where the demands for capacity building assistance are high or very high, the Chairs are drawn from small Hydrographic Offices with few staff and the IHB has limited capacity with which to support them.

During its 17th session, the International Hydrographic Conference reviewed proposal 18 submitted by the United Kingdom dealing with the part time allocation of personnel to act as Regional Staff Officers to assist those RHC Chairs who have limited human resources. In decision 17, the Conference agreed to ask the CBC, in consultation with RHCs, to consider this proposal and suggested that the priorities for provision of such support should be EAtHC, MACHC, NIOHC, SAIHC and SWPHC.

On the basis of this decision, the CBC Chair sent a letter dated 23 January 2008 to RHC Chairs, recommending that RHCs establish an internal body to deal with CB matters and designate a focal point to ensure continuity in the CB process. Moreover, he proposed to implement this provision through a specific article under the Administrative Resolution T1.3 "Establishment of Regional Hydrographic Commission (RHC)" with the following text:

2 bis.- RHCs are recommended to establish an internal body to deal with CB matters and to designate a focal point to ensure continuity in the CB process. This part-time allocation to assist RHCs should come primarily and ideally from an HO within the region. If that is not possible then the RHC might agree to request support to a neighbouring RHC that might wish to take that responsibility in the provision of assistance.
These regional contact points, the responsibilities of which should be given directly and in detail by the concerned RHC, shall have the support of the RHCs; shall be nominated having in mind the importance of continuity; shall be in permanent contact with the corresponding RHC Chairman as well as with the CBC Chairman. Ideally should be a CBC member with access to the RHCs meetings.
In the absence of any other viable alternative and despite its limited human resources availability a request of support could be requested to the IHB.

France was consulted as Chair of the South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC). The purpose of this explanatory note is to share with NSHC members the views of France about this proposal and to review the articulation of NSHC with capacity building mechanisms.

2. Comments on the CBC proposal

Bearing in mind the great diversity of situation encountered in RHCs, France favours a flexible approach rather than adopting a resolution applicable to all RHCs, regardless of their situation. More specifically, Decision 17 identifies five out of fourteen RHCs which require sustained capacity building efforts. It does not seem that an efficient approach to their specific situations would adequately fit “more-developed” RHCs such as the Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission, the Nordic Hydrographic Commission, the North Sea Hydrographic Commission or the US-Canada Hydrographic Commission. Therefore, France considers that Decision 17 of the 17th IHC should be implemented on a case by case basis.

If a RHC does not have enough internal resource to coordinate CB activities in its Region, then a request for support from outside the region should be addressed to CBC rather than to a neighbouring RHC.

3. Discussion of NSHC articulation with CBC and CB activities

Capacity building is an item of the NSHC standing agenda (item D1).

IHO Member States in more developed regions such as the NSHC area are expected to play a major role in providing assistance to other regions. The question is whether any specific arrangements should be considered at the NSHC level to coordinate their CB activities.

NSHC has a special position, firstly because its members are active CB contributors, either through CBC initiatives, bilateral or multilateral projects, and because they participate to several less developed RHCs (table 1).

All NSHC members are also affiliated to a RENC (IC-ENC or Primar) through which associations with developing HOs are also considered. Four NSHC members are active CBC members (DE, FR, UK and NO).

Table 1

RHC	NSHC participants (full member, associate member or observer)	CB requirements
EAHC	GB	Medium
EAtHC	FR, GB	Very high
MACHC	FR, GB, NL	High
MBSHC	DE, FR, GB	High
NIOHC	DE, FR, GB	Very high
SAIHC	FR, GB, NO	Very high
SWPHC	FR, GB	High

Six routes can be considered to channel CB efforts from NSHC members:

i. bilateral assistance,

ii. coordinated assistance through RENCs,

iii. coordinated assistance through "CB receiving" RHCs,

iv. coordinated assistance through "CB donating" RHCs,

v. coordinated assistance through CBC,

vi. coordinated assistance through non-IHO organizations (IMO, World Bank, EU, etc.).

When the new IHO Inter Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) is established, it will provide an additional IHO forum to coordinate activities such as Capacity Building that might benefit from reinforced coordination between regions.

Considering the variety of national, bilateral and multilateral assistance mechanisms, different national priorities and policies and the need to avoid duplication through coordination procedures which should be as robust and as simple as possible, the following principles are suggested:

- overall coordination at the IRCC / CBC levels,
- coordination of requests and projects at the level of the "CB receiving" RHC.

Coordination mechanisms at the level of the "CB donating" RHC should be exceptional and limited to a specific project or request.

Additionally, it might be worthwhile to advise IHO MS considering bilateral projects or requests to liaise with the CBC Chair or with the Chair of the RHC competent for the receiving country, in order to identify any related effort and insure proper coordination if appropriate.