



KINGDOM OF TONGA

**National Report for the
13th SOUTH WEST PACIFIC HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION MEETING
RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS
25th – 27th February 2015**

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KINDOM OF TONGA REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Government reformed and transfer of Hydrography from His Majesty's Armed Force (Navy) to the Ministry of Infrastructure in 2014. The focus was more on the upgrading of hydrographic information and upgrading of navigational charts even into electronic. Currently, Tonga as Full Member State of IHO and SWPHC, has no Legislation nor Bilateral Agreement in place for Hydrography. The National Hydrography Committee had been re-established to assist with the Hydrography obligations of Tonga.

2. HYDROGRAPHIC ARRANGEMENT

Ministry of Infrastructure will be responsible for:

- Hydrographic Governance – est. National Hydro Committee under Cabinet
- Issuing National Hydrographic Policy
- Drafting Hydrographic Legislation
- Establishing MSI Coordinator
- Collecting nautical information

His Majesty's Armed Force (Navy) will be responsible for

- Re-establish capacity to conduct systematic hydrography surveys, data gathering and processing

3. MARITIME SAFETY INFORMATION

The Ministry is currently the Hydrographer for Tonga and had been responsible for the Maritime Safety Information (MSI) of the Kingdom of Tonga. Continuous and further trainings for MSI personnel (Maritime Administration) are needed.

4. NATIONAL CAPABILITY

i. HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY UNIT

His Majesty's Armed Force Navy Unit had established a Hydrography Unit within the Navy in 1990 to conduct the Hydrography survey for Tongan waters. The Navy has a survey vessel equipped with Single Beam facility for the survey. The Hydrography Unit had developed in building capacity of the existing staff in terms of capable to conduct the hydrography survey for the Kingdom.

ii. SURVEY EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE

Due to the fact that the obsolete equipment on the vessel was a result of limited budget and lack of sustainability, the hydrography Unit had remains non-operational since 2003. There is a need to upgrade such equipment and hopefully to a Multi Beam Echo Sounder facility for better survey data quality. The survey vessel namely VOEA Savea, is currently an asset of the Navy and the upgrading of survey

equipment onboard the survey vessel will assist Tonga for future needs of hydrography survey and navigational charts updated.

iii. PERSONNEL

Currently there are two (2) Cat B Hydrography Surveyors and two (2) Senior Assistant Surveyors in the Navy who are capable of conducting the survey. Previously, a Category A Hydrography Surveyor had been with the Unit and had left within the past two years. There's a need for existing Staff further training not only to be a Cat A Hydrography Surveyor, and Cat B Surveyors, but also to be able to operate the survey facilities.

iv. CHARTING/ PUBLICATIONS

Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) had been the charting Authority for Tonga Hydrography Surveys previously done. Currently LINZ is still the Charting Authority for Tonga hydrography, although Tonga has not yet signed a Bilateral Agreement for charting. Tonga does not have the capability to provide for the charting service both capacity wise and financially.

5. PROGRESS

It is obvious that Tonga needs capacity building more of continuous trainings for MSI and Surveyors. The sustainability of the qualified surveyors needs to be considered. SPC together with LINZ had conducted some of the MSI trainings in the past two years and Tonga attended.

Tonga had been successful in 2014 with the assistance of New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT) in conducting the Hydrography Risk Assessment in Tonga and the final Report released by end of the year. The Report will assist the next step forward for Tonga in Hydrography technically and policy wise.

6. NATIONAL HYDROGRAPHY COMMITTEE

The National Hydrography Committee approved by Cabinet in 2015 to be re-established, consists of:

- Tonga Police Force
- His Majesty's Armed Force (Navy)
- Ministry of Infrastructure (Marine and Ports Division)
- Ministry of Environment, Energy, Climate Change, National Emergency, Information and Communication, Meteorology and Coastal Radio
- Ministry of Finance and National Planning
- Crown Law/ Solicitor General
- Fisheries Department (MAFFF)

7. OUTLOOK

Tonga will meet Phase I obligation by 2016 and Phase II by 2018 regarding SOLAS requirements. Phase 3 obligations will be subjected to bilateral partnership and assistance. The short term requirement (12-18 months) from Tonga to SWPHC is for SWPHC to provide assistance in drafting Hydrography legislation

for Tonga. The longer term requirement is seeking through SWPHC a possible partner for chart publishing while Tonga will provide survey data.

HMAF is aiming to provide in-country survey capability up and running by 2018. Outlook is to send one Cat B officer to complete the Cat A course either in U.K or India. Recruit 4 candidates to attend Cat B course in Australia or U.S.A. Eight new members to attend assistant surveyor courses offered in Australia and NZ Navies. A total of 5 Hydrographic Survey officers (at least one certified Cat A) and 10 assistant surveyors by 2018. HMAF will meet equipment upgrade (multi-beam echo sounder, accurate positioning system and automated processing system) by 2017.

8. CONCLUSION

The past two years had been the reviving period of Tonga Hydrography. The transferring of the Hydrographer from Navy to the Ministry in 2013 had strengthen the co-operation of the MSI (Ministry of Infrastructure) and His Majesty's Armed Force (Navy) in prioritization of hydrography to provide for the maritime safety requirements in updating navigational charts and survey data gathering. Although progress has made, there's still barriers and assistance needed through SWPHC.