

SECOND MEETING OF THE IHO REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE
IRCC2
New Orleans, June 2010

**Report of the
World-Wide Electronic Navigational Chart Database Working Group
(WEND-WG)
June 2010**

Submitted by interim Chairman: Captain Jamie McMichael-Phillips - UK

At IRCC1 (Monaco, June 2009) the WEND-WG was established and the Terms of Reference agreed. Its tasks were defined as:

1. Monitor the development of adequate ENC coverage to meet any carriage requirements for ECDIS;
2. Develop proposals for speeding up ENC production and ensuring uniform ENC quality and consistency, and for making data available worldwide, including SENC distribution, taking advantage of any offers for production assistance, or other ways of mutual assistance and co-operation;
3. Advise MS, where appropriate, on the need, as well as on methods and tools for validating the data, and on any assistance which could be offered by the RENCs;
4. Monitor the implementation of the WEND, in response to Decision 21 of the XVIIth IHC, and advise IRCC of appropriate measures for speeding-up the implementation process;
5. Assist in harmonizing the policies of regional ENC Coordinating Centres (RENC) with respect to matters related to administration, legality, finances, technical processes, et cetera.

This report documents the progress made in advancing these tasks since the 11th WEND Committee meeting and the associated ECDIS stakeholders' workshop in September 2008. It concentrates mainly on the first of these issues- the progress in fulfilling the IHO's commitment to IMO to "achieve adequate coverage, availability, consistency and quality of ENCs by 2010". It also covers issues raised by WG members since IRCC1.

Chairmanship of WEND WG

In December 2009, Vice Chair of IRCC, Abri Kampfer requested RHC Chairs to select representatives for the WG and to indicate if they would be willing to serve as Chair. The only commission to put forward a candidate for Chair was NSHC; they proposed Captain Vaughan Nail (UK). WEND-WG members were notified in March and Captain Nail took over as Chairman from 10th April 2010 on the basis that no objections had been received. He has subsequently been re-appointed within the UK Navy and his relief, Captain Jamie McMichael-Phillips has, as notified to WG members in May, taken over as interim Chair. He would be willing to remain as Chair if this is acceptable to IRCC2.

In order to produce the WEND-WG report to IRCC2 the Chair issued WEND-WG Circular Letter 01-10 to WG Members requesting views from on the adequacy of ENC coverage and on any

particular issues affecting Commission regions. Responses were received from Chairs of MACHC, NHC, SAIHC, SWAtHC, USCHC and from IC-ENC.

Progress on ENC coverage

The ENC coverage figures reported by IHO to IMO NAV54 in 2008 were as follows: 94 % for small scale ENC's (planning), 68 % for medium scale ENC's (coastal approach) and 65 % for large scale ENC's (ports). At that time there were some very significant gaps in coverage especially in the Asian region and there were a significant of areas of overlapping and sometimes conflicting data and importantly, not all ENC's were being updated regularly.

The IHO report to IMO NAV56 on the availability of ENC's shows that there has been considerable progress in enhancing coverage over the past two years. Small scale coverage (Overview and General Usage Bands 1 & 2) are virtually complete (excluding very northern latitudes). Coverage at coastal scales (Usage Band 3) has increased to 84 % and 91 % of the top 800 ports now have coverage at Usage Bands 5 and or 4. The report concludes that "... production reports provided to the IHO secretariat from hydrographic offices show that the world's major trading routes and ports are now almost completely covered" however it acknowledges that "...at the end of 2010 some small gaps will remain in Africa, Arctic routes and the Caribbean."

However individual shipowners and their representative bodies still harbour concerns that their full requirements will not be met in time for the carriage requirement. Existing national paper chart coverage extends to more than 2000 ports. Currently only about 75% of the ports ranked between 800 and 2000 have ENC coverage; the missing coverage particularly affects the cruise lines as they tend to visit less frequented ports and their vessels are amongst the first to be required to fit ECDIS.

Reports received from the Regional Hydrographic Commission Chairs show that a considerable amount of work is in progress in identifying and resolving the remaining gaps and overlap issues through RHC working groups or bilateral discussions. Only a minority of Commissions can claim to have full ENC coverage at this point and therefore a significant amount of work remains to done to fully allay the concerns of shipping companies.

At WEND 11 the issue of overlapping ENC data was discussed. A paper submitted to the WG in May 2010 by France as INT chart co-ordinator for MBSHC highlights this as a continuing problem. The paper has been circulated to WG Members for comment. IC-ENC also reports that overlapping data continues as an unresolved issue for some areas. It appears that, as the number of ENC producers has increased, so has the amount of overlapping ENC data; this being especially, but not exclusively, in Usage Bands 1 & 2.

The following four graphics illustrate the status of current global ENC coverage. Figure 1 shows the considerable progress made with Usage Bands 2 & 3 coverage and indicates where further Band 3 infill may be required. Figures 2 & 3 highlight those ports that are currently without coverage and Figure 4 indicates those areas where overlapping ENC data coverage remains an issue.

Figure 1 - coverage of General Band 2 ENC's and Coastal Band 3 ENC's.

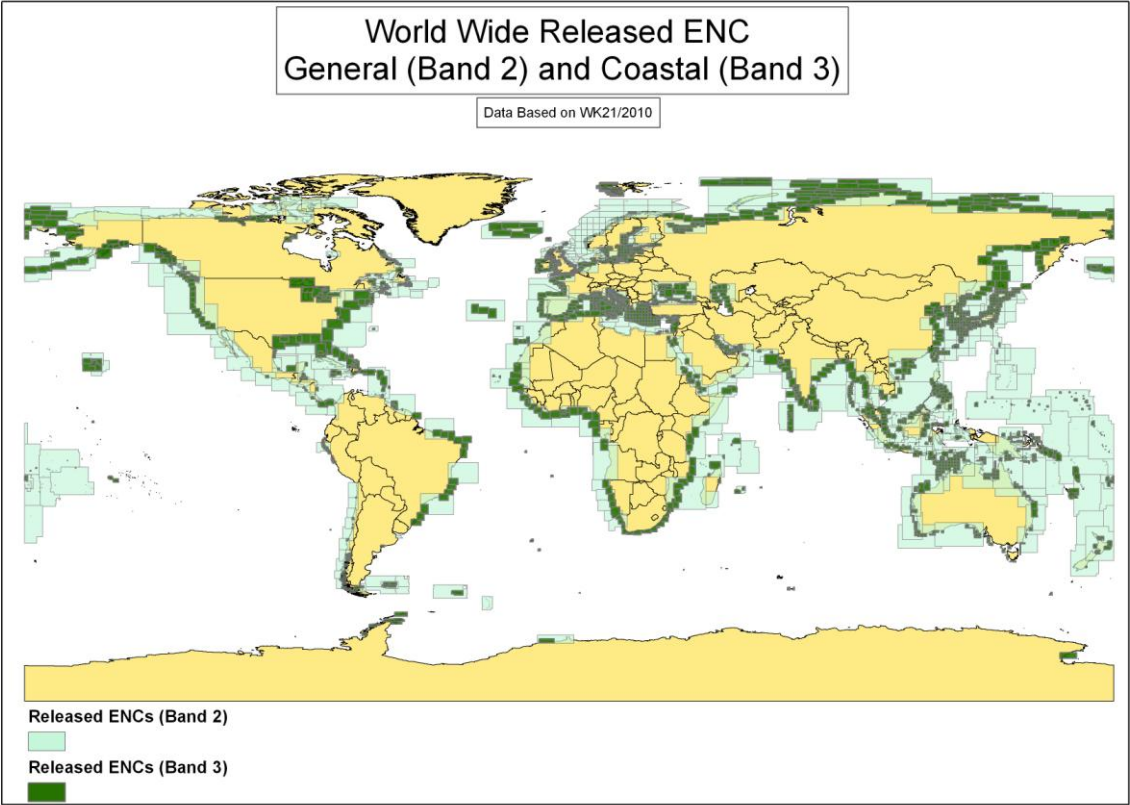


Figure 2 - 'top 800 ports' with no appropriate ENC coverage.

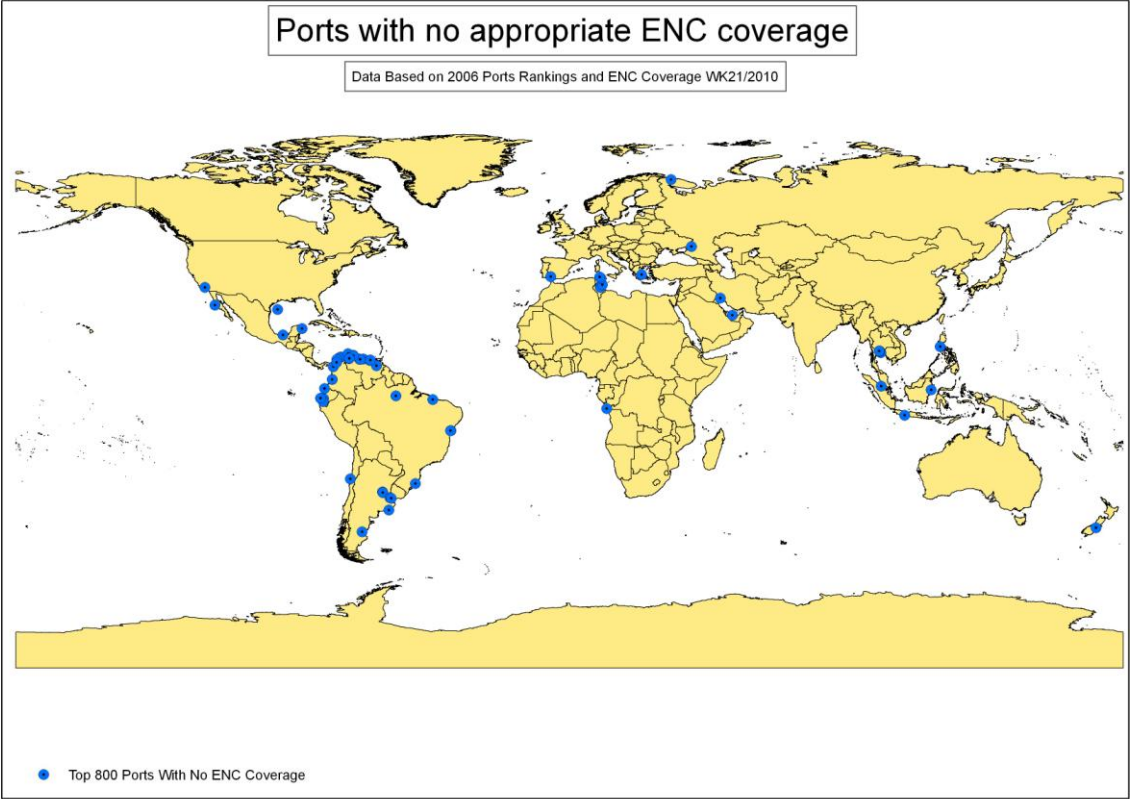


Figure 3 - ‘top 800 to 2000 ports’ with no appropriate ENC coverage.

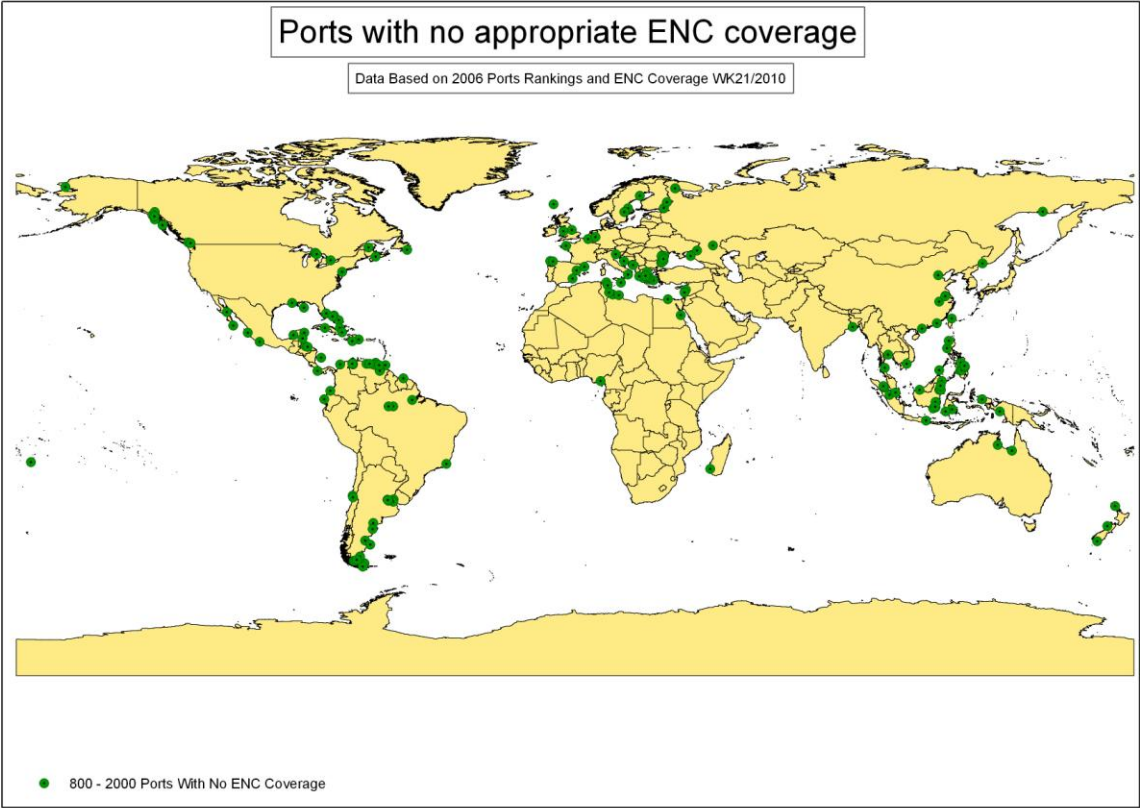
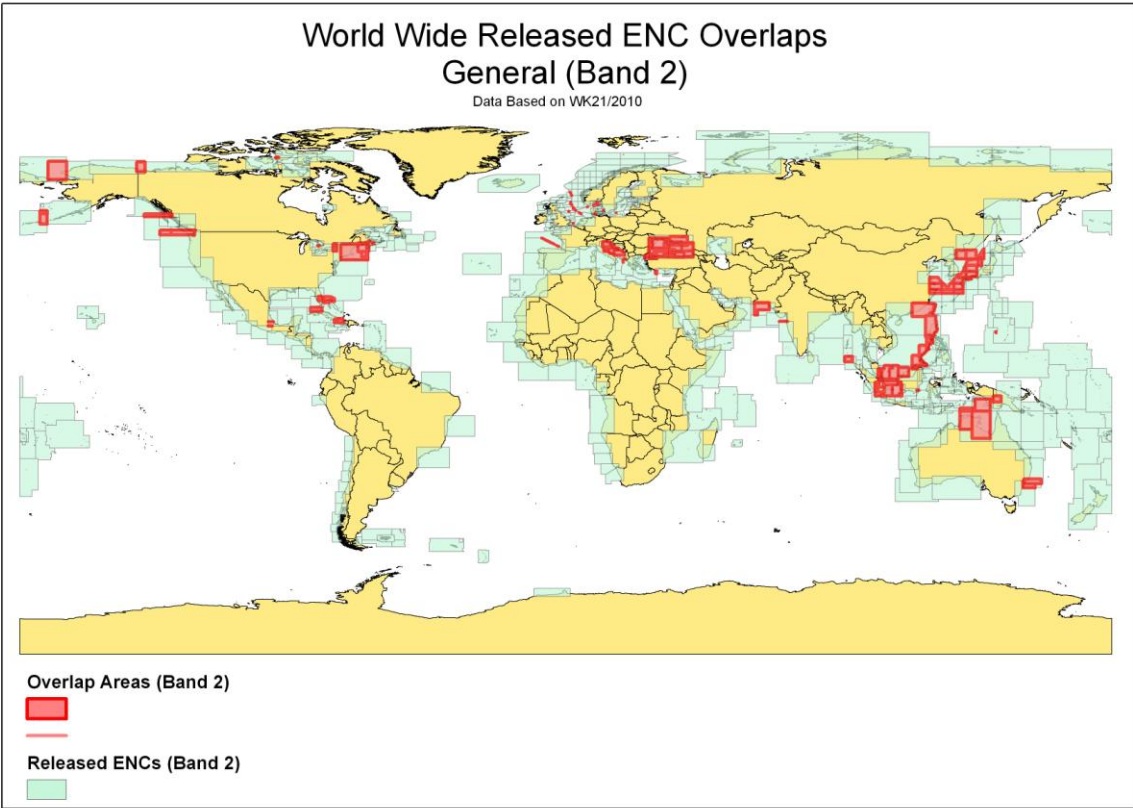


Figure 4 - the extent of the overlaps for General Band 2 ENCs.



Other areas of concern

WEND 11 also highlighted problems related to availability, consistency and quality of ENC's whilst the associated ECDIS stakeholder workshop raised the issues of ENC pricing and licensing. In response to the WEND WG Circular letter 01/10, IC-ENC has stated that it considers these issues deserve attention by the WG to ensure that any customer requirements and concerns are fully understood, their significance identified and potential solutions proposed.

It was clear from the ECDIS stakeholder meeting that the variation in and complexity of ENC licensing was a matter of concern and that increased consistency was considered highly desirable. Whilst it is recognised that the responsibility for these issues lie with individual national Hydrographic Offices it is considered that the WG should investigate the variations in policy between HO's and assess their impact on service providers and the mariner. In this way, all ENC producers can be informed of the significance of this issue and simpler, more common, licensing terms promoted.

IC-ENC reports that RENC to RENC discussions on closer co-operation are progressing and it is hoped that proposals for a 'best practice' model of RENC operation will be delivered to RENC members in the last quarter of this year. Consideration will be given to harmonising the RENC's approach to overlap, updating and licensing issues and IC-ENC has suggested that the WG monitor the outcome of the discussions and make any proposals on these matters available to those ENC producers who do not use RENC services (these account for nearly a third of all ENC's currently available).

Conclusion

It is important for the credibility of IHO that the commitment made to IMO in regard to ENC coverage is fulfilled. As noted at WEND 11, the industry perception of ENC's is affected by the adequacy of the world-wide ENC outfit not on the ENC's of individual nations. It is therefore considered important that as well as monitoring progress on coverage, the WG also identifies and seeks to provide assistance in resolving associated issues of overlap, consistency, updating and licensing. Whilst service providers are trying to find ways to minimise the impact of these to the mariner they are not able to resolve the underlying problems.

It is therefore recommended that in addition to the tasks outlined in the terms of reference the WEND WG is tasked to consider these issues in more detail. It should take into account the work of relevant HSSC working groups and the ongoing RENC to RENC discussions. A draft work plan for the WG is provided below for consideration by IRCC2.

WEND-WG work plan

- To further progress the tasks outlined in the terms of reference and especially
 - In conjunction with RHCs, monitor progress in providing ENC coverage and identify and propose solutions to issues of concern such as gaps and overlaps. This should include consideration of the MBSHC paper to the WEND WG
- Investigate and report on the significance of other areas of concern
 - variation in licensing terms and conditions
 - reports of ENC quality and updating issues
- Keep RHC Chairs informed of ENC issues identified within their regions
- Prepare report for IRCC3
- Provide support to IHB in preparation of reports to IMO NAV sub-Committee

Action requested of IRCC2

IRCC is invited to consider the information contained in this report and take action as appropriate, in particular to:

1. Agree on Chair and Vice Chair of the Working Group
2. Endorse the proposed work plan
3. As appropriate, provide guidance to the WG as to how this work should be taken forward.
4. Consider the way forward for the ECDIS Stakeholders' Forum – in conjunction with HSSC