

South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC) Report to IRCC4



1. **Chair:** RAdm Nick Lambert (National Hydrographer, United Kingdom) – June
Mr Nicholas Pion (Hydrographer, Papua New Guinea) – Jun 2011- May 2012
- Vice Chair:** Mr Nicholas Pion (Hydrographer, Papua New Guinea) June 2012 -
Commodore Rod Nairn (Hydrographer, Australia) – 2011 - May 2012

2. Membership

Full Members: Australia, France, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States of America

Associate Members: Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Solomon Islands

Observers: Nauru, Samoa, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, South Pacific Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), Secretariat of Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA)

IHB Representative: Captain Robert Ward (Director)

3. Meetings

- 3.1 The 11th SWPHC Meeting held in Brisbane, Australia on 15-16 February 2012 was attended by thirty nine participants - making it the most well attended meeting to date. There were delegates from six Full Members (Australia, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, United Kingdom and United States of America), observers from the IHB, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, SOPAC, as well as industry representatives.
- 3.2 The next meeting of the Commission is planned to be held in Vanuatu in November 2013.

4. Status of IRCC Actions (relevant to SWPHC)

IRCC03/01: Implement actions to accelerate the process of ratification of the Protocol of Amendments to the IHO Convention in order to meet the end of 2011 deadline.

The two MS who have not completed the ratification process have been urged to accelerate the process.

IRCC03/02: Encourage the approval of pending applications for IHO membership.

At the 11th SWPHC Meeting in February 2012 MSs were encouraged to approve the pending applications for IHO membership.

IRCC03/12: Ensure the timely provision of the appropriate documentation that justify expenses associated to CB projects, and to demand refund, if needed, not later than one month after the event has finalized.

The relevant documentation in respect of the two regional CB projects, 'Ports & Shallow Water Bathymetry Technical Workshop' and 'Hydrographic Administration Training Placements with Regional Hydrographic Offices' was forwarded to the IHB in March 2012. These events were achieved within the allocated budget and additional trainees were able to be accommodated by careful host coordination of accommodation and meal arrangements.

IRCC03/13: Report to the WENDWG Chair on the implementation of each item of the WEND Principles and on the validity of coverage and overlap analysis submitted by the WENDWG.

Completed.

IRCC03/15: Provide to the WENDWG Chair and the IRCC Chair comments on the draft report on implementation of WEND Principles.

Completed.

IRCC03/17: Invite GEBCO guiding committee / Bathymetric Regional Project Chairs to attend corresponding RHCs meetings, aiming at strengthening collaboration with a priority on improving high resolution shallow water bathymetry at the regional level.

Not done.

IRCC03/18: Update the report to IRCC Chair on the implementation of the guidance for the preparation and maintenance of International chart schemes (CL23/2010 of 3 March 2010).

Completed - A formal working group has been formed to progress this. (see item 7.1 below)

IRCC03/19: Report to IRCC4 on:

a. their experience in dealing with marine disasters in relation with IHO guidelines (TR 1/2005), - Discussed at the meeting.

b. strategies to involve non-IHO MSs in RHC's activities. – fully involved in CB Programme and increased participation in meetings and workshops has been noted.

IRCC03/23: Provide IRCC Chair with proposals to be included in the 2013-2017 IHO WP and Budget

Completed - Input in respect of SWPHC was provided to CBSC Chair and IRCC Chair.

5. SWPHC Statutes

5.1 At the 11th Meeting, the Commission reviewed the Statutes of the SWPHC and noted that its existing geographic area, which coincided with Region 'L' of the INT Charting Scheme, did not include some Pacific States which have much in common with many island nations of the SWPHC – similar challenges faced re capacity building, geographic and cultural similarities, etc. The Commission considered that this could be addressed by allowing any member state of the South Pacific Community (SPC) to be eligible for SWPHC membership. Accordingly the Commission voted unanimously to amend the Statutes, extending the SWPHC region to allow membership by any SPC member state.

5.2 During April-May 2012 Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue and Solomon Islands signed the Statutes to become Associate Members.

6. Capacity Building

Capacity Building has been identified as the major issue in the SW Pacific Region. The SWPHC faces particular difficulties due to the remoteness of the region and the fact that it comprises mostly isolated island States, with very limited hydrographic capabilities.

6.1 Technical Assessment & Advice Visits

6.1.1 The following technical visits were carried since the last IRCC meeting:

Kiribati and Vanuatu - Technical Assessment & Advice Visits (November 2011)

An IHB Director and a technical advisor from the UKHO visited Kiribati and Vanuatu. They met various government officers, parliamentarians and hydrographic program stakeholders in order to raise the level of awareness of the importance of providing national support for improving the hydrography and nautical charting of the country. An initial charting requirements programme was developed during the visits.

Solomon Islands – Technical visit to facilitate National Hydrographic Requirements (

A technical advisor from the UKHO visited the Solomon Islands in February 2012, following the 11th

SWPHC Meeting. The aim of the visit was to assist in the regenerating of the national hydrographic capability, assess the current status of charting and hydrography in the country and to provide to the government and to stakeholders on a way ahead.

6.2 Training Courses and Workshops

- 6.2.1 The following workshops and training courses have been carried out as part of the IHO Capacity Building Work Programmes for 2011 and 2012 for the countries in the region:

Ports & Shallow Water Bathymetry Technical Workshop (February 2012)

The workshop was held on 13-14 February 2012 in Brisbane, Australia prior to the 11th SWPHC Meeting. There were participants from Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Niue, New Caledonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and SOPAC. Australia, France, New Zealand, United Kingdom and CARIS provided the instructors for the workshop. Participants benefited from an improved understanding of port and shallow water surveying activities throughout the SW Pacific region and where they may obtain assistance, advice and other resources.

Hydrographic Administration Training Placements with Regional Hydrographic Offices – for personnel from Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (February 2012)

The Manager Hydrography, Papua New Guinea and the Chief hydrographic Officer, Solomon Islands underwent a 'Hydrographic Administration Training' attachment at the Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO) on 8-10 February 2012. This training attachment provided on the job exposure to senior managers working in the AHO and trained the two officers in hydrographic administration and liaison with internal and external stakeholders.

- 6.2.2 The following training course and technical visit which were approved as part of the Capacity Building Work Programmes for 2012 are scheduled to be carried out as indicated:

- (i) Hydrographic Administration Training Placements with Regional Hydrographic Office – for personnel from Vanuatu and Timor Leste - (second half 2012)
- (ii) Technical visit to Cook Islands to facilitate National Hydrographic Requirements – (early 2013)

6.3 Future Projects under the IHO Capacity Building Work Programme (CBWP)

- 6.3.1 The 11th SWPHC Meeting identified various applications for CBSC assistance in future years (out to 2017). Requests were essentially related to Phases 1 and 2 of the Capacity Building process as countries in the region are faced with lack of human resources, namely awareness - education, campaign and collection - circulation of information to maintain existing charts and publications.

6.3.2 The following projects were submitted to IHO CBSC10 Meeting as part of the 2013 CBWP:

SWPHC 2013_01 (Technical Assessment & Advice Visit to Tonga)
 SWPHC 2013_02 (Technical Assessment & Advice Visit to Samoa)
 SWPHC 2013_03 (Chart Quality Technical Workshop)
 SWPHC 2013_04 (Module 3 of the recognised UK Category B Course - Electronic Navigational charts (ENC))
 SWPHC 2013_05 (Nautical Cartography & Hydrographic Information Training and Work Experience - Solomon Islands)
 SWPHC 2013_06 (Hydrographic Administration & Technical Training Placement with Regional HO - Cook Islands)
 SWPHC 2013_07 (SWPHC representation at PacMA Meeting 2013)
 SWPHC 2013_08 (Training in Hydrographic Survey, Cartography and MSI)
 SWPHC 2013_09 (Hydrographic Administration & Technical Training Placement with Regional HO - Kiribati)

6.3.3 The proposals for the 2013-2017 IHO WP submitted earlier to the CBSC and IRCC Chairs (Action IRCC03/23) were reviewed and some minor amendments made. The amended CB for 2013-2017 has been submitted to the CBSC Chair and IRCC Chair.

7. Charting – INT Charts and ENCs

7.1 The ongoing monitoring of progress and refinement of the chart coverage for INT Chart Scheme Region 'L' is being carried out. In compliance with IHO CL 23/2010 a formal correspondence working group (SWPHC Region L ICCWG), chaired by Australia, was formed to coordinate the limits and production of INT charts and ENC for the SWPHC region. There is now full ENC coverage of the region for navigational purpose bands 1 and 2.

8. Closing Statement

8.1 The SWPHC continues to face significant challenges, brought about by its isolation, limited marine traffic, the very limited resources available in the many small island States in the region, yet the pressing need for improvements in hydrography and nautical charting because of the huge dependence on limited maritime transport, trade and tourism. As well as continuing with direct capacity building efforts to individual States, greater engagement and collaboration with SPC and in particular, the potential development of SOPAC's current geophysical and environmental surveying capabilities to include hydrographic surveying for charting purposes are seen as important activities for the next five years and beyond.

6. Actions required from IRCC4

The IRCC is invited to note the content of this report.