



Issues and Actions arising from the 2nd International ECDIS Conference and Exhibition

Background

The UKHO organised the first ECDIS Conference in Singapore in October 1998 in collaboration with MPA Singapore.

Since the first conference took place, it is generally accepted that real progress with ECDIS has been slower than expected, largely owing to lack of ENC coverage and the lack of planning for end-users. This conference therefore provided a timely platform to promote the benefits of using ECDIS, discuss implementation issues, better understand user needs and consider the latest developments.

Conference Overview

Clear messages came from both the commercial and defence sector, highlighting that ECDIS with official data makes a significant contribution to the safety of navigation. There is strong support for the concept of ECDIS but this is tempered with the frustrations users meet when endeavouring to use ECDIS as it is intended.

Issues Arising from the Conference

- Coverage
There is a lack of ENC coverage in key areas and along major shipping routes. Co-operation between national HOs, and between national HOs and private sector companies, may assist in overcoming some of the current problems with the lack of ENC coverage.
- Data Consistency
There are inconsistencies in the way national Hydrographic Offices (HOs) interpret S57 and discrepancies where data crosses cell boundaries.
- Carriage Requirements
There are differences in the way national regulatory authorities interpret the carriage requirements for ECDIS in SOLAS.
- Distribution
There are issues regarding RENC to RENC co-operation and their different policies for data supply. Better coordination and harmonisation by HOs and RENCs is needed to enable data to be offered to the market in a more coherent way and enable end users to buy all available ENC data on a single licence from a single supplier.

- Flexibility
Users expressed concerns about the flexibility of ENC services especially with regard to license periods. A choice of services with flexible and cost efficient licensing systems was called for.
- Catalogue
The lack of a comprehensive, universal, up-to-date and user-friendly catalogue is making it very difficult for end users to identify which ENCs are available and where they can buy them.
- Training
There are concerns over the availability and types of ECDIS training on offer – should training be generic, type-specific or provided by OEMs? It is because of this that few, if any, ECDIS training courses are internationally accredited.
- Choice
There is a requirement for both unofficial vector and official raster based dual fuel services to fill gaps while ENC coverage is growing.
- Value for Money
Pricing concerns are of paramount importance to ship owners and operators. The impact of the costs of data, equipment and training must be compared with the savings made due to improved fuel consumption and reduced insurance premiums.

Actions Arising from the Conference

At the end of the conference it was agreed that the conference organisers should take the following actions.

- Action 1: Communicate the issues raised at the conference to the IHO
- Action 2: Communicate with other relevant authorities
- Action 2: Undertake an urgent audit of all the issues
- Action 4: Identify priorities and timescales for resolving the issues
- Action 5: Be proactive in facilitating the solutions.

Progress to Date

- Action 1: A letter, written jointly by UKHO and MPA, was sent to the IHO on 10 December 2003 (a copy of the letter is at Appendix A). This was a report on the conference and offered support for the IHO in its endeavours to make ECDIS and WEND a success.
- Action 2: The ECDIS conference website (www.mpa.gov.sg/homepage/conferences/IEC2003/IECmain.html) has been reinstated and will be used for future communications.
- Action 3: A brief has been prepared for the consultancy for the audit of issues and return with recommendations (a copy of the Consultancy Brief is at Appendix B).

- Action 4: Priorities and timescales for resolving the issues will be identified following receipt of the consultant's report.
- Action 5: The results of the audit will be made available to the IHO, together with tangible recommendations and proposals for solutions.

APPENDIX A



THE UNITED KINGDOM HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE

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Vice Admiral Alexandros Maratos,
President
International Hydrographic Bureau
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10th December 2003

Dear Vice Admiral Maratos,

We are writing to you in our capacity as joint organizers of the recent ECDIS 2003 Conference in Singapore, to which we were delighted to welcome yourself and other IHO members as delegates.

As you know, our key objectives for the Conference were to inform current and potential users of developments in the delivery of ECDIS since the first Conference we initiated in 1998 and to receive feedback on what is perceived to be the main obstacles to its wider acceptance. We also used the opportunity to obtain the views of a wide range of users on ECDIS's contribution to Safety of Navigation and the protection of the environment.

As organisers of this event, we believe it is our duty to communicate to the IHO and its relevant committees the considerable strength of feeling users have expressed on the current status of ECDIS.

While we can report that users of ECDIS in both defence and commercial sectors unanimously support the concept of ECDIS as a significant contribution to navigational safety, extremely equally strong views were expressed about the frustrations of trying to use it for the purpose it was designed.

Causes for dissatisfaction include the absence of a catalogue showing where ENC's are available, differing interpretation which regulatory authorities place upon the carriage requirements within SOLAS and inconsistent application of the S-57 standards by HOs when creating ENC's. Most significantly, users are disappointed at what they perceive to be the unacceptably slow rate of progress in extending ENC coverage.

The United Kingdom Hydrographic Office and the Maritime Port Authority, Singapore are committed to meeting the needs of the end user and at the close of the conference we resolved to conduct an immediate audit of all issues which users believe are hampering

development of ECDIS. The progress and results of this audit will be published and updated on the ECDIS Conference Website, the address of which will be publicised and communicated to all attendees and associates of the conference. When the audit is concluded we will report the results to the IHO along with our proposals and recommendations.

It is only with unity and co-operation that we, as an industry can move forward to a more satisfactory solution to our users. We will carry out these actions in support of the endeavours of the IHO and its colleagues within IHB and the IHO's WEND in the hope of moving towards some swift solutions together.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dr Wyn Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Dr Wyn Williams
Chief Executive and National Hydrographer
United Kingdom Hydrographic Office
Singapore

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wilson Chua". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Captain Wilson Chua
Chief Hydrographer
Maritime and Port Authority of

APPENDIX B

This page will contain the Consultancy Brief when the contract has been let
