

8TH WEND COMMITTEE MEETING
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The Role of the RENC

The Term RENC stands in the WEND documents for as “Regional **ENC** Co-ordinating Centre”. This term is composed from a geographical component, an object of its activities, and a function. It is defined in the “Glossary of CDIS-related Terms” (S-52, App. 3) as follows:

In the Worldwide Electronic Navigational Chart Data Base (WEND) the IHO network of Hydrographic Offices, the regional node being responsible, as Issuing Authority, for official ENCs and official updates compiled from national ENC data.

It may first be examined what the significance of being “Regional” is. The notion RENC had been devised in the early days of the WEND Committee when it had been anticipated that the ENC distribution structure was to develop according to the traditional IHO regional structure; this assumption, though, has not quite come true. While the regional character ultimately may or may not evolve from the structures currently visible, it does not constitute an actual necessity to be limited to a region. Indeed, the two currently existing RENCs, Primar-Stavanger and IC-ENC, are mainly composed from the members of a respective region (it appears logical for HOs of neighbouring countries to closely co-operate), but neither does membership follow the structure of Regional IHO Commissions, nor does a regional flavour preclude membership to the RENCs from far distant regions. Thus, a regional character is not required for a RENC, but may be just a feature.

The remaining three letters of “RENC” have far more significance. The EN illustrates that the core business of a RENC is related to “ENCs”; this does not need further explanation.

The “C” is related to “Co-ordination” as the functional element of the term “RENC”. This is indeed describing the core of the responsibilities of a “RENC”. In its widest sense, coordination has the following targets:

- ◆ Data Quality: ensure consistency and uniformity of a high level of data quality across the participants of a RENC, and also across all other RENCs and contributing HOs. ECDIS as a world-wide, official system needs a world-wide consistent quality guarantee.
- ◆ Service: ENCs are only as good, and can only be called official, as they are being kept continually updated. For the management of a vessel engaged on international voyages it would be a nightmare if it would have to collect all ENC data, and updates to it, from all national services individually, particularly in fragmented regions such as Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, or Africa. Thus, co-ordination of data services is a core task for RENCs. This does not necessarily imply that also the services must be supplied by the RENC itself. Indeed, the definition shown above refers to the RENC only as “*Issuing Authority*”. Thus, the actual service to the market can be left to service providers as long as the governmental responsibility for a RENC remains uncompromised, and the service providers operate on a clear contractual framework with respect to the services.

Thus, RENCs are organisational entities where IHO members have established co-operation amongst each other to guarantee world-wide consistent levels of high quality data, and for bringing about co-ordinated services with ENCs and updates to them.