

TITLE	Reference	Last amendment (CL or IHC/A)	1 st Edition Reference
ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSIONS (RHC)	2/1997 as amended	xx/201x	T1.3

GENERAL

1 The mission of the IHO is to create a global environment in which States provide adequate and timely hydrographic data, products and services and ensure their widest possible use. To accomplish this mission, Member States are to pursue, on an intergovernmental basis, their cooperation on hydrographic activities on a regional basis.

2 IHO Member States have established regional coordination as an essential factor to support enhancements in the exchange of information and foster training and technical assistance between all nations. To effectively implement this, Regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHCs) are recognized by the Assembly as the primary organs to bring together Coastal States within a region to progress the work of the IHO and extract the highest societal value of Member States' effort for the benefit of the nation, region and wider global marine geospatial community.

3 The IHO has established an Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) with the aim to establish, coordinate and enhance cooperation in hydrographic activities amongst States on a regional basis, and between regions, especially on matters associated with Capacity Building; the World-Wide Navigational Warning Service; General Bathymetry and Ocean Mapping; Marine Spatial Data Infrastructures; Education and Training and the implementation of the WEND suitable for the need of international shipping. The IRCC is the IHO Committee tasked to coordinate and engage directly with RHCs on regional activities.

ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSIONS

4 It is resolved that the IHO Secretariat and the relevant IHO Bodies shall encourage Member States having common regional interests in data collecting or nautical charting to form Regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHC) to cooperate in the undertaking of surveys and other projects. Recognized by the Assembly, the RHC shall complement the work of the IHO Secretariat Organization, establish common regional approach's, and balance regional issues with global geospatial needs.

5 RHCs should provide, in pursuance of the resolutions and recommendations of the IHO, regional coordination with regard to nautical information, hydrographic surveys, production of nautical charts and documents, training, technical cooperation, hydrographic capacity building (CB) projects and marine spatial data infrastructure (MSDI) projects, related to the work of the IHO. They (RHCs), led by IHO Member States, should enable the exchange of information and consultation among the hydrographic services of all regional coastal States concerned in the region. Geographically adjacent RHCs should liaise with each other to coordinate the provision of hydrographic services. Cooperation among all RHCs, including among those not adjacent, is encouraged. RHCs should be aware of the technical maturity level and fiscal challenges that may influence state involvement. The processes and management of the RHC meetings should be designed to accommodate the broad participation of nations within the region.

6 RHCs should assess regularly the status of nautical information, navigational warnings, hydrographic surveying, nautical charting, hydrographic capacity and requirements within their region and provide reports to the work of the relevant IHO subordinated bodies and inputs to relevant IHO publications.

7 RHCs should be properly constituted, follow standard processes where possible, and have activities in line with the objectives of the IHO as described in Article II of the Convention on the IHO, and Article 8 of the General Regulations. Regional activities should align with and support the intent and objectives of the approved IHO Work Programme. RHCs should take into account the actions, recommendations and outcomes of the IRCC.

8 Geographical areas of the RHCs will normally coincide with INT chart regions, modified as appropriate to meet regional requirements and special circumstances. There are special provisions for Region M (Antarctica) because of its special status.

9 The working languages used by the RHCs ~~should~~ be agreed upon by their members and designated to ensure the best communication between participants. The reports and IHO documents relating to RHC activities shall be in ~~at least~~ one of the official languages of the IHO. For correspondence with the IHO Secretariat, one of the official languages shall be used.

10 The IHO Secretariat shall be invited to attend ~~the~~ meetings of RHCs as Permanent Observer. (former paragraph 6)

MEMBERSHIP

11 RHC membership may include full ~~Members and Associate Members~~ willing to contribute to the ~~safety of navigation objectives of the IHO~~ in the fields of hydrography, nautical charting, nautical information or navigational warnings, ~~marine spatial data infrastructure (MSDI) and related fields~~ in the region concerned. The roles of full members, associated members and observers ~~should~~ be defined by each RHC, ~~in line with the IHO General Regulations~~. The invitation procedures for membership ~~should~~ be established by each RHC, following approaches that are open, inclusive and supportive of a regional coordination role. (former paragraph 4)

12 Full membership is reserved for IHO Member States within the region who sign the statutes of the RHC. Associate membership is available to other IHO Member States or ~~States of the region~~ other nations who are non-IHO members, ~~with active hydrographic concerns in the region, and being signatories of the statutes of the RHC. Other States and International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Industry and Academia stakeholders, active in the region concerned may be invited by the RHC to participate as Observer or Subject Matter Expert. The invitation procedures should be established by each RHC.~~ (Note: former paragraph 4)

LEADERSHIP

13 Leadership of the RHC should be documented within the Commission Statutes, and establish the position of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary, with associated selection process, and term of duties. Duties of the Commission Leadership are encouraged to be in line with this Resolution and the IRCC document titled *Roles and Responsibilities of Regional Hydrographic Commission Chairs*.

14 The Chair of the RHC will provide the secretariat support for the RHC meetings and the intersessional coordination within the region. The IRCC shall maintain a list of responsibilities of the Chairs to enable the work of the RHCs in the IRCC document titled *Roles and Responsibilities of Regional Hydrographic Commission Chairs*.

PROVISION OF HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES

15 RHCs are recognized by the IHO to coordinate the breadth of regional activities needed to fulfill the provisioning of hydrographic services for international treaty or other regulatory requirements, and general marine geospatial information needs. RHCs will identify and assess INT Charts and ENC coverage within the region, highlighting those areas of significant navigational risk to the producer nations, and work to resolve the issues in a timely manner. As new marine geospatial products and services are developed within the S-100 Universal Hydrographic Data Model, RHCs should engage with data owners, product and service providers, and other stakeholders as appropriate to ensure a coordinated and cohesive regional approach is considered.

CAPACITY BUILDING

16 Where CB is required ~~in a region~~, RHCs are recommended to establish an internal body to deal with CB matters. All RHCs are encouraged to appoint a CB Coordinator to ensure that regional capacity building activities are aligned and coordinated in accordance with the IHO CB Strategy and with CB procedures and practices developed by the Capacity Building Sub Committee (CBSC). Such appointment should be reflected in the RHC Statutes to define the role of the CB Coordinator ~~and to designate a focal point to ensure continuity in the CB process~~. This part-time allocation to assist RHCs should come primarily and ideally from Hydrographic Offices (HO) within the region. If that is not possible then the RHC might agree to request support from another RHC or an HO that might wish to take that responsibility. (note: former paragraph 2 bis)

17 ~~These regional contact points, the responsibilities of which should be given directly and in detail by the RHC concerned, shall have the support of the RHCs; The CB Coordinators should be nominated having in~~

mind the importance of continuity; ~~should~~ be in regular contact with the corresponding RHC Chair~~man~~ as well as with the CBSC Chair~~man~~, the IHO Secretariat and the relevant NAVAREA Coordinators. Ideally CB Coordinator should be a CBSC member with access to RHC meetings. However, RHCs may nominate a CBSC member different from the CB Coordinator. ~~In the absence of any other viable alternative and despite its limited human resources availability a request of support could be requested to the IHB~~ (note: previously paragraph 2 bis)

OTHER RHC ACTIVITIES

18 RHCs are also encouraged to establish other committees and working groups, as appropriate, to pursue regional priorities including those that align with IHO global strategic objectives. These include efforts to establish regional charting schemes, elimination of ENC overlaps and gaps, marine spatial data projects, among others. The procedures for establishing such groups, their leadership and duration should be determined internally as RHCs see fit.

REPORTING

19 Chairs of RHCs shall report to the IHO Assembly on RHC activities, ~~the findings of the assessments made in accordance with paragraph 6 hydrographic capacity and requirements within their region~~, future plans and the agreed key targets that support RHC tasks detailed in the IHO Work Programme. The Chairs of RHCs shall also submit reports to the IRCC meetings and an annual report to the IHO Secretariat indicating progress made against the agreed key targets in the IHO Work Programme ~~for general dissemination~~. Between sessions of the IHO Assembly, reports of studies or other activities, which may be considered of general interest to all IHO Member States, shall be sent by Chairs of RHCs to the IHO Secretariat for general dissemination.

20 The following structure is recommended for National Reports made to ~~these~~ RHCs ~~that wish to receive such reports~~. These reports are intended to streamline information to be considered by the RHC Conferences and to be used by the IHO Secretariat to update the Country Information System (CIS):

Structure for National Reports to Regional Hydrographic Commissions

Executive summary

1. Hydrographic Office / Service:
 - General, including updates for the IHO Yearbook e.g. reorganization.
~~Note: use the available template for updates to the Yearbook or the online system.~~
~~Use separate sections if more than one national HO works within region for a single Member State.~~
2. Surveys:
 - Coverage of new surveys.
New technologies and /or equipment
New ships
~~Problems encountered~~ Crowdsourced and satellite-derived bathymetry - national policy
Challenges and achievements
3. New charts & updates:
 - ENC coverage, gaps and overlaps
ENC distribution method
RNCs
INT charts
National paper charts
Other charts, e.g. for pleasure craft
~~Problems encountered~~ Challenges and achievements
4. New publications & updates:
 - New Publications
Updated publications
Means of delivery, e.g. paper, digital
~~Problems encountered~~ Challenges and achievements

5. MSI:
Existing infrastructure for MSI dissemination
Statistics on work of the National Coordinator
New infrastructure in accordance with GMDSS Master Plan
Problems encounteredChallenges and achievements
Note: use the WWNWS template for this section
6. C-55:
Latest update ([Tables](#))
Note: use the available template to update C-55 or the online system.
7. Capacity Building:
Offer of and/or demand for Capacity Building
Training received, needed, offered
Status of national, bilateral, multilateral or regional development projects with hydrographic component (In progress, planned, under evaluation or study)
Definition of [proposals and requests to the IHO CBSC](#)
8. Oceanographic activities:
General
GEBCO/IBC's activities, [GEBCO Seabed 2030 activities](#)
Tide gauge network
New equipment
Problems encounteredChallenges and achievements
9. Spatial data infrastructures:
Status of MSDI
Relationship with the NSDI
Involvement in regional or global MSDI efforts
National implementation of the Shared Data Principles – including any national data policy and impact on marine data.
MSDI national portal
Best practices and lessons learned
Challenges and achievements
10. Innovation:
Use of new technologies
Risk assessment
Policy matters
11. Other activities:
Participation in IHO meetings
Meteorological data collection
Geospatial studies
Preparation for responses to disasters
Environmental protection
[Astronomical observations](#)Engagement with the Maritime Administration
Aids to Navigation matters
Magnetic and gravity surveys
[MSDI Progress](#)
International engagements
Etc.
12. Conclusions:

21 The IHO Secretariat will keep templates for the National Reports and its presentations to RHC meetings. The templates will be in a format compatible with the IHO databases.

CLEAN VERSION

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 - Challenges and achievements
3. New charts & updates:
 - ENC coverage, gaps and overlaps
 - ENC distribution method
 - RNCs
 - INT charts
 - National paper charts
 - Other charts, e.g. for pleasure craft
 - Challenges and achievements
4. New publications & updates:
 - New Publications
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 - Means of delivery, e.g. paper, digital
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5. MSI:
 - Existing infrastructure for MSI dissemination
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MSDI national portal
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Challenges and achievements
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Use of new technologies
Risk assessment
Policy matters
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