

36TH MEETING OF THE NORTH SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (NSHC36)

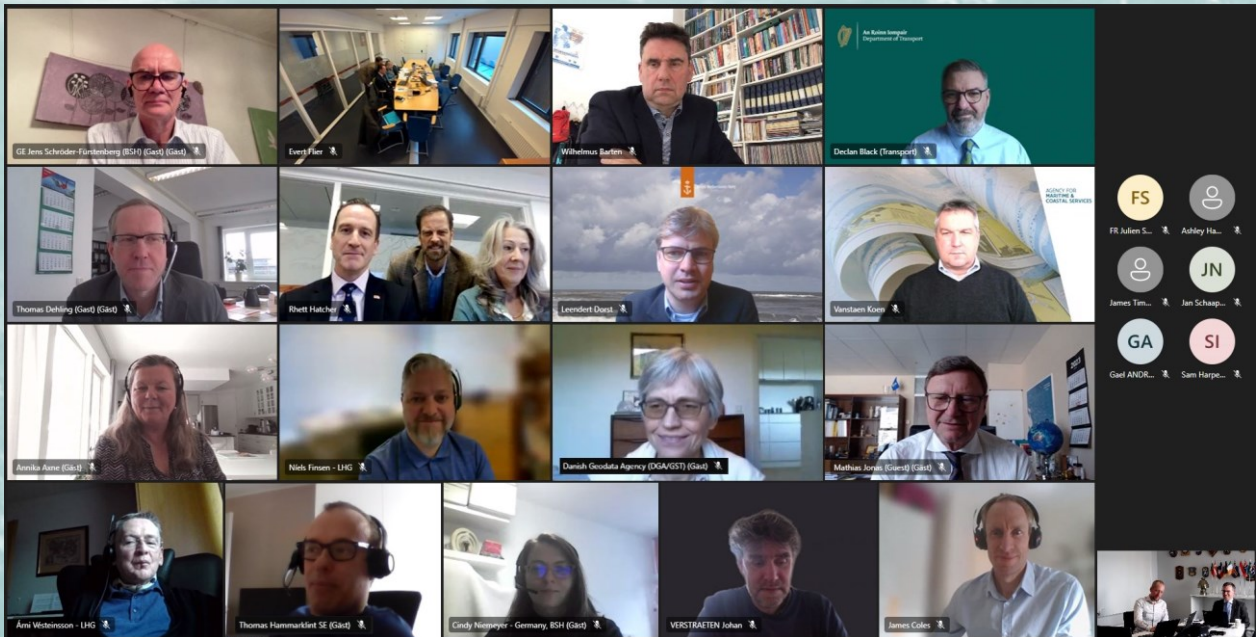
VTC, 29 & 30 March 2023

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2023

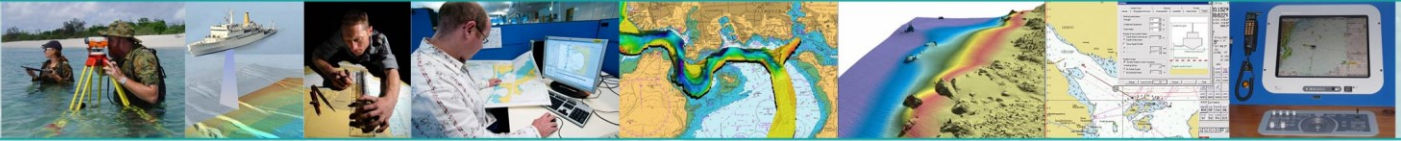
Task 3.2.1	Prepare for and report meetings of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions: NSHC – North Sea Hydrographic Commission
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The 36th Meeting of the North Sea Hydrographic Commission (NSHC36), was held from 29 to 30 March 2023 as VTC. The virtual format was in application of the decision made at NSHC34 to oscillate between virtual and in person meetings.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Magnus Wallhagen, National Hydrographer of Sweden. Thirty delegates from ten Member States (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherland, Norway, Sweden, and United Kingdom) participated in the meeting. The IHO Secretariat was represented by Secretary-General Dr Mathias Jonas.



Some the participants at the NSHC36 Meeting



The meeting commenced with welcome words by Mr Magnus Wallhagen, National Hydrographer of Sweden and NSHC Chair. He pointed out that since last year's Conference, in particular work around S-100 had progressed at the IHO and at the national Hydrographic Offices. This provided the NSHC with a good starting point for implementing the new products in the North Sea area. Regional coordination of S-100 implementation is therefore an important agenda item for the Commission. Another important action was to revise the NSHC statutes in order to incorporate adjustments necessary due to the applying IHO Resolution. The meeting proceeded with the approval of the agenda which has been ordered according to the IHO work programme structure and the matters arising from the previous NSHC35 Meeting and the respective list of actions.

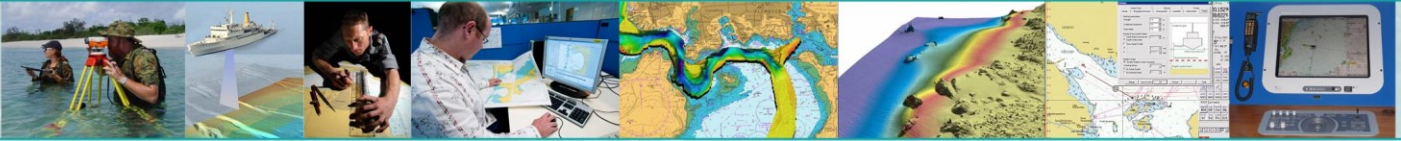
Secretary-General Mathias Jonas reported on the general arrangements of the IHO and the preparations of the forthcoming 3rd IHO Assembly affecting the work of the Commission. He reminded on the main goals of the IHO Strategic Plan and S-100 Roadmap, the task to the Member States to proceed with their implementation and the coordinating role of the respective Regional Hydrographic Commission.

The HSSC Chair, *Mr Magnus Wallhagen* (SE), presented the progress in the HSSC working groups, also as an introduction to the next agenda item, which dealt with S-100 implementation within the NSHC. Related to S-100, the HSSC Chair stressed the importance of IHO's implementation commitment towards IMO, leading to the HSSC and Council recommendation that S-100 implementation should be assigned the highest priority in the 2023–2026 Work Programme. This requires Member States to achieve substantial coverage with S-101 ENC's by 2026.

Mr Koen Vanstaen (BE), presented the results of the S-100 questionnaire survey, as well as recommendations for S-100 implementation coordination within the NSHC. *Mr Vanstaen* pointed out that especially the second recommendation, on timing, needed further discussion.

The Commission's Member States shared the common opinion that a coordinated implementation of S-100 would yield the highest added value for the end users, and thereby will strongly contribute to market adoption of S-100 within the shipping industry. The Secretary General pointed out that even if there will be few S-100 compatible ECDIS installed in 2026, stimulating the industry to invest into S-100 equipment needs to be "fuelled" by data with good coverage and added value.

The Commission by-and-large acknowledged the concrete recommendations from Belgium as how to distribute the responsibility for S-100 implementation coordination among the existing NSHC working groups. However, coordination of S-128 was not considered to be as relevant and will mostly be carried out by the RENCs. The Commission also identified the potential problem in several countries that Navigational Warnings are not under the responsibility of the national Hydrographic Office, which may complicate S-124 implementation coordination.



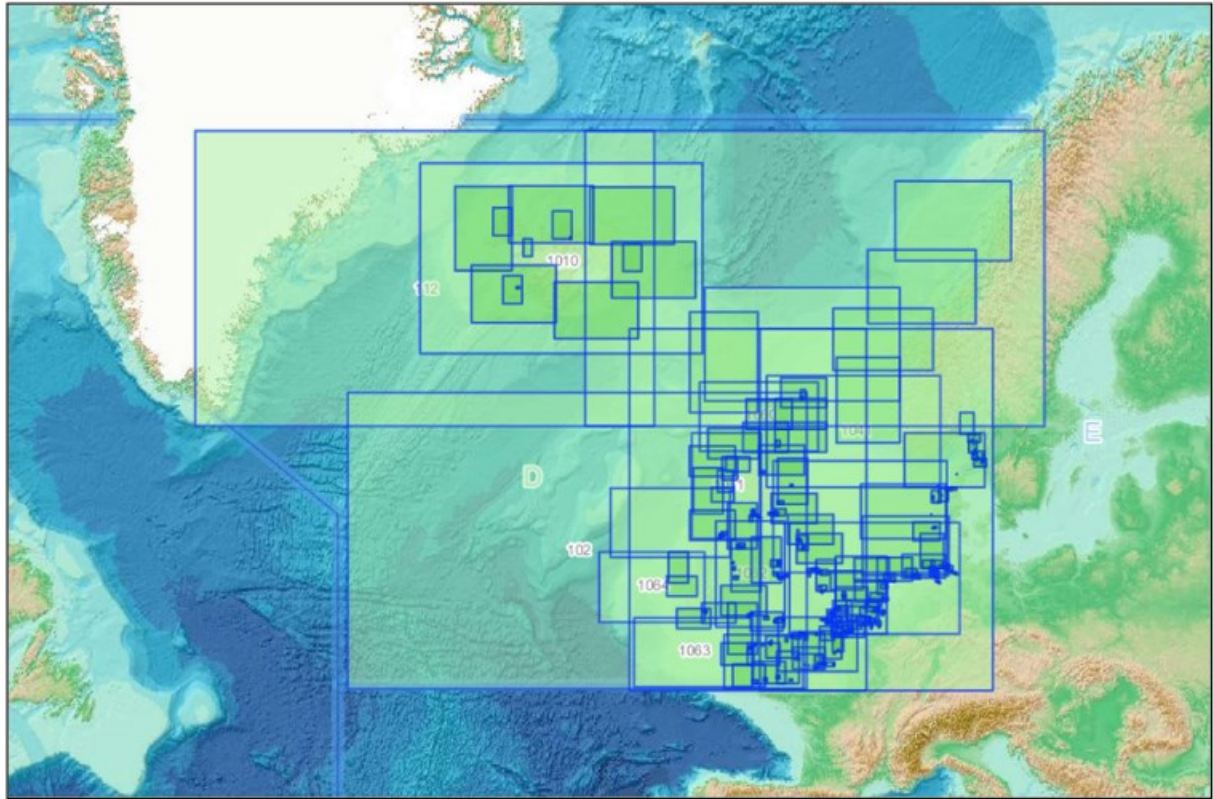
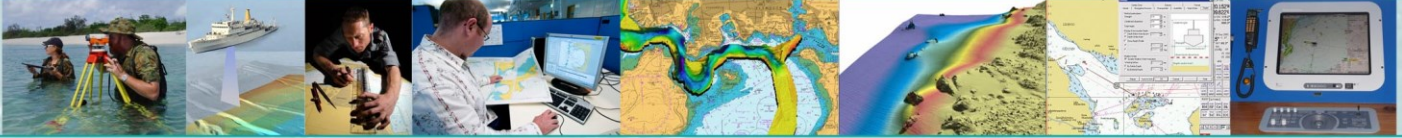
With regard to the timeline of S-100 implementation, as well as planned product coverage, the Commission concluded that both aspects should be dealt with so that added value for the end users is maximised as early as possible, e.g. by focusing on the most important geographic coverage in terms of vessel navigation and a synchronized launch of different products in the same region as a complete S-100 stack of interoperable services.

The Commission also acknowledged that S-100 coordination is a new task and may require different skills and competence from the Member State representatives in the involved working groups. Based on these discussions, the Commission agreed to task the NSICCWG with overall S-100 implementation coordination in general, including the critical standards framework as applicable, as well as S-101 and S-102 implementation coordination specifically.

The Commission received reports on recent activities of the relevant NSHC subordinate bodies such as the Resurvey Working Group, Tidal Working Group, the North Sea MSI Working Group, North Sea INT Chart Coordination Working Group and the Baltic Sea North Sea Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group. For the latter one conclusion, expressed by several Member States, was that the relevance of MSDI for Hydrographic Offices has diminished significantly since the group was established many years ago. At that time, many Hydrographic Offices did not naturally consider spatial data, MSDI and data use beyond navigation – such as for Marine Spatial Planning, but this has been changed with the S-100 paradigm shift. Furthermore, structures for dealing with these questions nationally and internationally have been established, for example with the implementation of the EU INSPIRE Directive. That paradigm shift was partly enabled by the MSDI working groups. Now, regional S-100 coordination can fill much of the remaining regional aspects of these groups' previous role and the limited resources should be focused on where they produce the greatest benefits.

On the other side, the concern was raised that while the IHO-EU Networking Working Group (IENWG) can address policy questions related to MSDI, a forum for exchanging operative views on e.g. INSPIRE and EMODnet is also needed. Consequently, maybe the BS-NSMSDIWG could be developed into a truly European MSDI working group.

The Chair concluded that this discussion could not have been prepared before the meeting and suggested to make the BS-NSMSDIWG dormant during the coming year, in order to take a final decision on either starting up again or finally close the group at the next Conference.

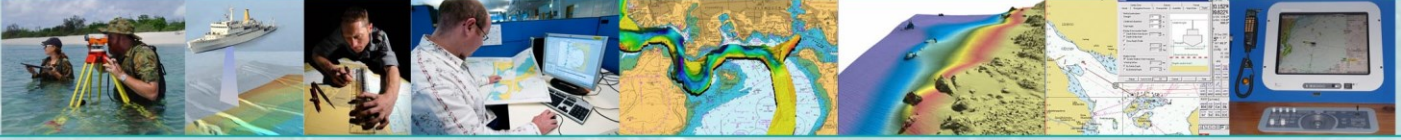


REGION D INT CHART PANELS BY USAGE

Overview	17	General	12
Coastal	63 (including plans)	Approach	70 (including plans)
Harbour	239 (including plans)	Berthing	17 (including plans)
Total	418 (including plans)		

Illustration on the regional coverage with INT charts

Member States provided detailed reports on national initiatives which are of potential interest for the region such as France’s national digital platform for nautical information using S-124, a project to modernize nautical charting based on a unified cartographic source and UK’s views on the Future of Digital Charting.



The Commission received reports on recent activities of the relevant IHO subordinate bodies such as WENDWG and GEBCO Guiding Committee. The Commission discussed the responsibility for the submission of the IGIF matrix to the WENDWG in the future on behalf of the NSHC, and whether this should be dealt with by the NSICCWG (tasked with overall regional S-100 coordination) or the WENDWG Representative. The conclusion was that WENDWG Representative to continue submitting the IGIF matrix for NSHC to WENDWG.

The Commission finalized the Conference with the pending discussion of the revision of the statutes. Amendments to the NSHC Statutes had been proposed by the Chair (SE) and the Vice Chair (UK). The Chair explained the proposed changes, which are partly based on structural changes within the IHO, decided at the 2nd Assembly, since the last amendment in 2016. Furthermore, the draft also implements a gender-neutral language, changes to how NSHC Conferences shall be organised, and minor editorial revisions. The Commission discussed the topic and generally appreciated the revisions. Some Member States noted remaining minor editorial issues and proposed another review and approval process by correspondence, followed by a formal signing procedure at the next Conference.

The Commission approved Sweden's proposal to meet 8–10 April 2024 in conjunction with NHC67 in Malmö, Sweden.