

3rd SESSION OF THE IHO ASSEMBLY

Monaco, 2-5 May 2023

REPORT OF THE

North Sea Hydrographic Commission, NSHC

1. Chair:

Koen Vanstaen, Belgium, October 2019 – April 2021
Georg Lárusson, Iceland, April 2021 – April 2022
Magnus Wallhagen, Sweden, April 2022 – present

Vice-Chair:

Árni Þór Vésteinsson, Iceland, October 2019 – April 2021
Magnus Wallhagen, Sweden, April 2021 – April 2022
RAdm Rhett Hatcher, United Kingdom, April 2022 – present

2. Membership:

Members: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom

Observers: IHO Secretariat

3. Meetings:

34th NSHC Meeting, 27 – 28 April 2021, VTC hosted by Belgium

35th NSHC Meeting, 5 – 6 April 2022, Reykjavik Iceland

36th NSHC Meeting, planned 29 – 30 March 2023, VTC hosted by Sweden

4. Agenda Items:

The agenda items dealt with during the period have followed the IHO Work Programmes one, two and three.

As a consequence of the revised **IHO Strategic Plan**, discussions have followed within the NSHC on how the Commission could take further steps to implement the Strategy. Belgium prepared a questionnaire to get a compilation of the NSHC MS plans for the implementation of the prioritized S-100 products. In connection the Commission had a discussion at the 35th NSHC meeting 2022 on the theme “What does the future have in store for us”. The coordination of the **S-100 Implementation** within NSHC has been discussed, but this important matter needs to be addressed further at coming meetings.

A foundation for high resolution navigational products in future S-100 ECDIS, as well as delivery of hydrographic data for other purposes than navigation, is a **well surveyed seafloor**. NSHC MS have shared experiences about ongoing mapping programmes and of particular interest are the ongoing INFOMAR seabed mapping programme to survey all waters in Ireland and the Norwegian Marine Base map project having the objective to survey and establish Marine Base Maps for the shallowest waters of Norway.

Several of the NSHC MS are contributing to the EU Commission initiative to establish the **EMODNet Bathymetry portal** where bathymetry for all European waters is available. These data can be reused for the IHO **GEBCO** dataset and as such contribute to the **Seabed 2030** project. The Commission has also discussed how **Crowd Sourced Bathymetry** could contribute in the region.

Five sub working groups are established under NSHC. Despite difficult circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic, the working groups have continued their ongoing tasks. The **North**

Sea ICCWG is working with the coordination of ENC's and INT-charts, the **Tidal WG** is discussing on how to harmonize the different chart datum used in the region. The **Re-Survey WG** has been working on coordination of hydrographic surveys in the North Sea as well as to study new methods of surveying such as the usage of Autonomous Surface Vessels. Coordination of Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure is handled by the joint BSHC and NSHC WG, **Baltic Sea North Sea MSDI WG**. The WG has initiated a joint project with OGC on testing the new IHO Product Specifications on Marine Protected Areas, S-122. The first two project periods, sponsored by the Danish Geodata Agency and OGC, have been terminated. The outcome has been reported to the IHO NIPWG who is responsible for the development of S-122.

At the 35th NSHC Meeting the **North Sea Maritime Safety Information WG** was established with the objectives to coordinate MSI messages in the North Sea region and to facilitate harmonization of new and existing methods to provide MSI to the shipping industry. The MSI WG will work in cooperation with the similar Baltic Sea MSI WG, established by BSHC, and as such these two working groups cover NAVAREA I.

5. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed:

The COVID-19 pandemic hampered the work of the Commission and its working groups. NSHC34 was postponed from 2020 to 2021 and the NSHC WGs meetings were limited to VTCs. Even if achievements could be made also during VTCs, the conclusion was after the first physical meeting (NSHC35 in April 2022) that face-to-face meetings are more productive.

Chairing of some of the NSHC WGs has changed with the NSHC Chair. It has been concluded that chairing of the WGs needs to be on a long-term basis for effectiveness. Steps to change this have been introduced.

NSHC had some challenges to measure the Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs) associated with the IHO Strategic Plan. The ongoing work within IRCC to simplify the measurements of the SPIs is appreciated.

6. Achievements/outputs/conclusions:

- Establishment of a Maritime Safety Information (MSI) Working Group (NSHC MSIWG)
- The cooperation within the NSHC is good and efficient. The NSHC MS participate actively in the NSHC WG. MS have continued to contribute to the work of the IHO and have been active in IHO working groups and Committees.
- NSHC was finally able to conduct a face-to-face NSHC35 – thank you Iceland for great hosting.

7. Actions required of the Assembly:

- a) **Note** the report of the North Sea Hydrographic Commission (NSHC)
- b) **take** any other action considered appropriate.