

REPORT OF A TECHNICAL VISIT TO GEORGIA

- References:
- a. BASWG 10th Meeting
 - b. CBSC 8th Meeting
 - c. IRCC 2nd Meeting

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the meetings at References a, b and c the IHO Inter-Regional Co-ordination Committee agreed to the funding of a technical visit to the Republic of Georgia, to provide advice on Georgia applying to join the IHO and on the development of their hydrographic capability.

2. The Technical Visit Team comprised:

Name Role

Stephen Shipman, IHB, Hydrographic Expert

Ricardo Grela Valcárcel Spain, MSI Expert (NAVAREA III Coordinator)

Eşref Günsay, Turkey, Cartographic Expert

3. The study team arrived in Batumi Georgia on Monday 13 December 2010 by Turkish Airlines flight from Istanbul, Turkey. The team were met at the airport and transferred to the Hotel Alik. Road transport for all visits within Georgia were provided by the Ministry of Defense of Georgia, Juridical Person of Public Right, State Hydrographic Service.

4. Georgia is not a member of the IHO but is an Associate Member of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC), although they attended to the 2009 meeting of the Commission held in Odessa, Ukraine. Since 2008 Georgia has participated in meetings of the Black and Azov Seas Working Group (BASWG) a working group of the MBSHC.

5. Georgia is a member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and a signatory to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention. SOLAS places an obligation on contracting Governments to arrange for the collection, compilation, dissemination and maintenance of all information required for safe navigation. Thus Georgia is required to collect and publish Maritime Safety Information (MSI), arrange for hydrographic surveys to be undertaken and nautical charts and publications to be compiled and published and for these documents to be maintained.

6. The IMO through Assembly and Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) resolutions and through statements made by the Secretary General has urged Coastal States to join the IHO in pursuit of their hydrographic obligations. Numerous United Nations General Assembly resolutions have also promoted these maritime tasks and membership of the IHO.

7. Initial arrangements for the technical visit were made through the Chair of the BASWG and Captain Valerian Imnaishvili of the United Transport Administration, Maritime Transport Department of the Republic of Georgia. Discussions during the visit were held primarily with Captain Valerian Imnaishvili and with the Deputy Director of the Georgian State Hydrographic Service (GSHS), Captain Avtandil Kvaratkheia. The Director, Captain Murtaz Kapanadze, was unavailable due to being in hospital. Mr Gocha Abshilava, Head of Adjara Area, and Mr Paata Pachulia, head of the Survey, Correction and Cartographic Department also attended some of the meetings. Other members of GSHS were met during the tour of the facilities.

8. The information in the IHO Yearbook requires updating as follows:

Ministry of Defense of Georgia
JPRR State Hydrographic Service
93, D. Tavaddebuli str.
Poti
Republic of Georgia

Director : Captain Murtaz Kapaanadze
Deputy Director : Captain Avtandil Kvaratskhelia

Telephone : +995 393 78402
Fax : +995 393 21772
Mobiles : +995 77 950011 & +995 77 194640 (Deputy Director)
E-mail : hidrographia@list.ru

DESCRIPTION OF MARITIME ACTIVITIES

9. Maritime traffic is primarily through 4 ports:

Batumi : General Cargo, Oil and Gas;
Poti : General Cargo and Containers;
Supsa : Oil and Gas; and
Kulevi : Oil and Gas

10. Safety of Navigation is the responsibility of the GSHS whose headquarters are in Poti and with a sub-office in Batumi. The GSHS is part of the Ministry of Defence and has responsibility for: Hydrography; Nautical Cartography; Maritime Safety Information; Lighthouses and Navigational Aids; and Marine Meteorology. The total number of staff employed by the GSHS is 71 and a detailed breakdown is given in Annex D. A Coast Guard Force operates under the control of the Ministry of the Interior.

11. The budget for the GSHS for 2010 was approximately US\$1.5 million and comes directly from Harbour and Light dues from vessels using Georgian Ports.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

12. Historical hydrographic information was lost when the Soviet Union collapsed and withdrew from the region. Some hydrographic surveys of the approaches to Batumi and Poti ports have been conducted by Turkey in 2000 and the USA in 2001 and 2007. Bathymetric plots are held by the GSHS and have been used to update UK charts 3313 and 3317. The approach channel to the port of Poti is continuously dredged to maintain cleared depths. Systematic surveys to modern standards are required for all Georgian waters.

13. The role of National Coordinator for navigational warnings is held by the Director of the GSHS. The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) has not been implemented. Local warnings, in the national language, are broadcast through VHF by the Harbour Masters. GSHS want to establish a National NAVTEX station and procurement of the equipment is planned for 2011. They also wish to broadcast warnings in the English Language as part of the International Service through the NAVTEX station at Samsun operated by Turkey.

14. The GSHS has two very elderly survey boats (LHSB81 and LHSB82), 1 hydrographic survey boat and 2 small boats. These vessels are also used for the maintenance of navigational aids and portable hydrographic equipment is fitted to them on a temporary basis. Some modern

hydrographic equipment has been purchased during the last 4 years and more is due to be purchased in 2011. For details see Annex C. The Staff is keen and enthusiastic but lack formal hydrographic qualifications. The GSHS staff plan is shown at Annex D.

15. The charts and nautical publications for Georgian waters were produced by the Soviet Union and following its collapse and subsequent withdrawal from the region all charts, publications and other necessary information for chart production were removed. Currently GSHS has produced two paper charts which cover Batumi and Poti Harbours and their approaches. These have not however been published and no ENC's have been produced. These locally prepared charts do not meet IHO Standards for paper charts (S-4). Chart coverage of Georgian waters is poor and the INT charts in the region are made by Turkey and the Russian Federation. Georgian authorities are not content for the Russian Federation to produce INT charts of Georgian Waters and raised this matter during the BASWG10 meeting held in Istanbul in May, 2010. There is no chart scheme for Georgian waters and the development of such a scheme is considered a priority for the GSHS. Following this there will be a need for systematic hydrographic surveys to support the subsequent production of charts.

16. Presentations covering:

- a. General Aspects of hydrography and membership of the IHO;
- b. Establishment of a National Hydrographic Office;
- c. Maritime Safety Information; and
- d. Chart schemes for the Black Sea – Charting in General and Chart Scheme of Georgian Waters.

were prepared but not shown due to a lack of resources. Copies of the presentations, in pdf format, were passed to the GSHS before departure.

PROPOSALS FOR CO-ORDINATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

17. There is no National Hydrographic Committee bringing together all parties interested in either using or collecting hydrographic information. Such a committee representing the interests of defence, transport, coast guard, boundary delimitation, environmental protection, tourism, academic research could provide high level direction and funding for the collection, dissemination and use of hydrographic data.

18. Georgia currently has a limited hydrographic capability. It has a small dedicated and enthusiastic staff but they lack formal hydrographic and cartographic training. There is also a limited capability in the English language. New equipment has been purchased recently and further purchases are planned. The vessels used for hydrographic surveys are very old and will need replacing in the next few years. These vessels are also used for the maintenance of navigational aids. The possibility of conducting hydrographic surveys from vessels operated by the Coast Guard Service should also be investigated. There is a need for some staff to undertake relevant training courses (IHO Cat B) and they would also benefit from on job trainings to be provided by other States in the Region.

19. GSHS does not currently possess the necessary tools and experience for chart production, but have plans for relevant purchases in 2011 (See Annex D). The software tools they plan to purchase will be appropriate for both paper chart and ENC production. They have sufficient staff to meet their envisaged charting requirements although they will need the appropriate training. Following appropriate skills training they would benefit from on site on job training from more experienced States in the region. The software tools they plan to purchase will also meet the requirements for hydrographic product database management. Their efforts and preparations to date have focussed on the ability to produce navigational charts and they have not yet considered the production of nautical publications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. It is recommended that Georgia:

- a. Participate fully in the activities of the MBSHC and BASWG;
- b. Apply for membership of the IHO as this will allow them to achieve the maximum benefit from the IHO Capacity Building programme;
- c. Consider the formation of a National Hydrographic Committee to oversee hydrographic provision;
- d. Continue with equipment purchase and training as proposed;
- e. Seek opportunities for staff to attend hydrographic and cartographic training courses. Some opportunities may be available through the IHO Capacity Building Programme e.g. the Marine Cartography Course hosted by the UK Hydrographic Office. Other opportunities may be offered by other States in the Region. Details of other courses can be found in IHO Publication C-47;
- f. Seek opportunities to improve the English language skills of key staff members;
- g. Arrange for the dissemination of MSI via both national and international services. Georgia was advised of the existing NAVTEX stations and service areas in the Black Sea, which cover Georgian waters. The GSHS should therefore seek agreement for the broadcast of Coastal warnings in the international NAVTEX service through existing stations. Prior to finalizing the establishment of a national NAVTEX station the GSHS should consult the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel regarding the allocation of a B1 Character (broadcast time slot). ;
- h. Establish a chart scheme to cover Georgian waters; and
- i. Establish a prioritised survey plan to update the information required for the charts.

FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

21. The following actions are proposed:

- a. Georgia:
 - See recommendations above.
- b. MBSHC Chair:
 - (1) To promote Georgian participation in the MBSHC, BASWG and membership of the IHO;
 - (2) To liaise with Georgia on development of Capacity; and
 - (3) To keep Georgia informed on all Capacity Building activities available through the IHO and other regional initiatives.

c. IHB:

- (1) To facilitate Georgia's application to join the IHO; and
- (2) To investigate availability of any hydrographic / cartographic / MSI training that might be open to Georgian participation.

Eşref Günsay
Lieutenant
Head of MBSHC Technical Visit Team

Annexes :

- A. Terms of Reference of the MBSHC Technical Visit Team.
- B. Summary of Events.
- C. Equipment availability and procurement plans.
- D. Staff List

Distribution: Chairman of the MBSHC