

Report of the IHO Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group (MSDIWG)

Introduction

The 18th International Hydrographic Conference confirmed the importance of marine spatial data infrastructure (MSDI) activities for the IHO and its Member States.

As seen through a HO perspective, it is important that the IHO takes the lead in addressing MSDI matters for the maritime sphere through its MS. In view of IHO's definition of hydrography in place, MSDI delivers the instruments for the enhanced scope of hydrographic information users. MSDI is to create the framework for the future provision of this information beyond the classic field of surface navigation. The MSDIWG should be seen as an appropriate WG to deal with these challenges.

Analysis/Discussion

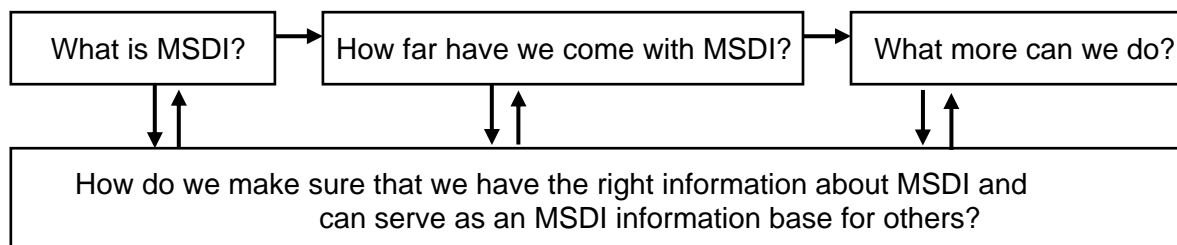
The IHO's MSDIWG has published the publication C-17 - Spatial Data Infrastructures: The Marine Dimension - Guidance for Hydrographic Offices, which outlines the benefits of developing spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) to reinforce coordination among maritime authorities.

At a time when the EU INSPIRE Directive is fully in its implementation phase across the European countries and SDIs are being developed worldwide at the national, regional and local levels, this approach to coordinated access to, and management of, geographic information has become a standard. However, as C-17 identifies, the integration of maritime data in SDIs has been limited at best, though there can be as many benefits to be gained by coordinated access to maritime information as to terrestrial data.

MSDIWG Work Programme

At MSDIWG4 in Copenhagen a draft work programme was established including a revision of the MSDIWG Terms of Reference. These will be presented to HSSC5 for approval.

The following work programme was developed with a five-year horizon. It includes four proposed initiatives that will create the framework for the MSDIWG.



- Initiative 1: What is MSDI? – A general approach to MSDI
Aim: To create a general and uniform understanding of the key elements of MSDI, including concept descriptions of four subareas:
- Technical issues
 - Data and harmonisation

- Governance
- Liaison with other organisations

Initiative 2: How far have we come with MSDI? – A review and status report
 Aim: To review regional and national status of MSDI development

Initiative 3: What more can we do? – A strategic approach to further MSDI development
 Aim: To address the opportunities and challenges for MSDI, leading to the creation of strategic plan for how the working group can support the MSDI development within the IHO and among the Member States

Initiative 4: Training and communication
 Aim: To ensure that the WG members are adequately trained and prepared to actively move MSDI development forwards, and to position the working group as a hub of expertise concerning MSDI. Further, to ensure that MSDI stakeholders are linked to other SDI initiatives as a way to ensure that MSDI is integrated into larger scale SDI work.

Other MSDI initiatives

At the 15th Conference, the BSHC recognised the need to initiate a study of MSDI in the Baltic region in order to identify areas where MSDI implementation is underway, where problems can be foreseen and how the Baltic member states view the future development of MSDI in the region.

Therefore, the BSHC 15th Conference established the BSMSDIWG with the task of studying MSDI in the Baltic region.

The Working Group should:

- Identify and analyse the current status of individual MS MSDI implementation;
- Consider MSDI policies within related international projects such as e-navigation, ICZM, INSPIRE, EU Integrated Maritime Strategy, the Marine Strategy Framework and EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;
- Analyse how maritime authorities can contribute their spatial information and related updates, so information can easily be collated with other data to generate a current overall picture for the region;
- Focus on how BSHC can benefit from a regional approach to MSDI in the future; and
- Monitor the development of SDI that could be relevant for the Baltic region.

A BSHC MSDIWG workshop is planned in 2013 with the AIM to discuss, how MS can benefit from a regional approach to MSDI.

Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management

EU has recently published a proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council dealing with establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management. The proposal for a directive is attached as annex 1.

The main purpose of the proposed directive is to promote the sustainable growth of maritime and coastal activities and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources by establishing a framework for the effective implementation of maritime spatial planning in EU waters and integrated coastal management in the coastal areas of Member States.

The proposal establishes a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management in the form of a systematic, coordinated, inclusive and trans-boundary approach to integrated maritime governance. It obliges Member States to carry out maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management in accordance with national and international law. The aim of the action is for Member States to establish a process or processes that cover the full cycle of problem identification,

information collection, planning, decision-making, management, monitoring of implementation, and stakeholder participation.

Implementing acts will ensure consistent implementation of the Directive throughout the EU and facilitate reporting from the Member States to the Commission and, where relevant, the exchange of data between Member States and with the Commission. Article 10 in the proposed directive especially focuses on data collection and exchange of information. Article 12 and 13 describes Cooperation with other Member States and third countries.

As seen from a HO perspective a MSDI could support such varied activities as coastal zone management planning and maritime spatial planning including the management of energy production at sea, fishing, marine environmental protection and nature conservation, planning charts, navigation, civil and military preparedness, tourism, and maritime spatial planning.

Conclusions and Recommended Actions

There are growing needs for better coordination of individual authorities' management of maritime information. While a national single window can aid in the reporting process among maritime stakeholders, information flow among the authorities is also a critical factor for ensuring the effective and efficient coordination of their work.

A MSDI ensures that relevant maritime authorities can contribute their spatial information and related updates, and that this information can easily be collated with other information to generate a current, overall picture. As a result, MSDI can support such varied activities as coastal zone management planning of energy production at sea, fishing, marine environmental protection and nature conservation, planning charts, navigation, civil and military preparedness, tourism, and maritime spatial planning.

As coordinated maritime spatial planning also gains increased focus at the EU level, not least through the Integrated Maritime Strategy and the Marine Strategy Framework, the needs for better integration of maritime data are becoming increasingly evident. Towards this end, discussion has begun among HOs as to the degree to which the maritime-oriented elements of the INSPIRE Directive can be implemented at an accelerated rate.

As seen from a HO perspective, the MS now have a direct possibility to actively participate in the development of a well functioning MSDI within the hydrographic domain and its surroundings with the possibility to benefit from a national and a regional approach.

The IHO MSDIWG is, in this perspective, seen as a vital WG. Together with RHC the MSDIWG can function as a discussion forum where practical solutions can be tested and pilot projects can be initiated.

The NHC 57th Conference is invited to discuss the implication of the EU proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council dealing with establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management from a HO perspective and how MS can benefit from a regional approach to the proposal including a national and regional approach to MSDI.

The MS that are not participating in the IHO MSDIWG are encouraged to consider participation in the planned MSDIWG5 that is planned to take place in the beginning of 2014 as a back-to-back arrangement with an MSDI conference.

Actions required from the NHC 57th Conference:

The NHC 57th Conference is requested to consider this report and to take appropriate actions.