

High Level Visit to Guatemala Guatemala City, Guatemala – 5-8 May 2025

Contribution to the IHO Capacity Building Work Programme 2025 and MACHC activity

CBWP2025 – A-06

High Level Technical Visit to Guatemala (2025 CBWP V3)

Task 3.2.1.5

MACHC – Meso-American & Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission

High level summary

- The launch of an investment plan to reinforce the country's critical infrastructures (ports and internal connection networks).
- The importance of Hydrography as a necessary tool to support the country's infrastructural and economic development.
- A plan to expand and enlarge Port Quetzal on the Pacific coast by 2040, as the main port of Guatemala.
- Centralized and inter-ministerial management of maritime and port policies.
- Need to invest in hydrography and training as sectors considered strategic for the country's economy.
- Very active participation in the IHO's Capacity Building programme, both at regional and international level.

Details:

At the invitation of the Guatemalan authorities (re: Letter of Vice-Minister of Navy dated 17 December 2024) and in line with the 2025 IHO Capacity Building Work Programme, a High Level Visit to the institutional, military and maritime authorities of Guatemala took place from 5 to 8 May 2025. The IHO was represented by IHO Director Luigi Sinapi and MACHC Capacity Building Coordinator Lucy Fieldhouse.

On 6 and 7 May 2025, the following meetings/conferences/visits were held - in that order:

- A. Visit to the Naval Hydrographic Service (Direction General de Asuntos Marítimos);
- B. Working meeting with Minister of National Defense General de División Henry David Sáenz Ramos;
- C. Visit to Vice-Minister of the Navy Vice Almirante Edy Santiago Chinchilla Archila and the Guatemalan Navy General Staff;
- D. Participation and *Lectio Magistralis* of the IHO Director at the 2nd ordinary meeting of the *National Commission of Maritime Administration (CONAMAR)*;
- E. Working meeting with Mr. Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala Dr. Bernardo Arévalo de León;
- F. Participation in the meeting of the *National Port Commission*;
- G. Helicopter transfer to Puerto Quetzal for:
 - Visit to the installations of the *Naval Command of the Pacific*;
 - Briefing and visit to the *Guatemalan Naval School*;
 - Technical meeting at the *Quetzal Port Company*;
 - Conference with exchange of presentations by the IHO Director and the Quetzal Port Company on the prospects for the expansion and development of the port.

The intense agenda of the Visit allowed for a fruitful exchange of information and points of view useful to both parties (Republic of Guatemala and IHO), highlighting the importance of subjects such as training in hydrography and nautical cartography, the need to invest in new technologies and instrumentation necessary to update the knowledge of the seabed and ports' depths, as well as the fundamental role of the IHO's Capacity Building programme for the Guatemalan Hydrographic Service.



Working meeting with the Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala

During the meetings with the Minister of Defense and the President of the Republic, there was the strong awareness of the Guatemalan highest authorities about the importance of investing in the ocean and all the disciplines related to it, such as Hydrography, Oceanography and Nautical Cartography, which are considered propaedeutic for the country's sustainable economic growth. The intention to continue along this path also became clear during the meetings and discussions held at CONAMAR and the National Port Commission, where the need to invest in new infrastructures both at sea (ports) and on land (railways) is considered a priority of Guatemala.

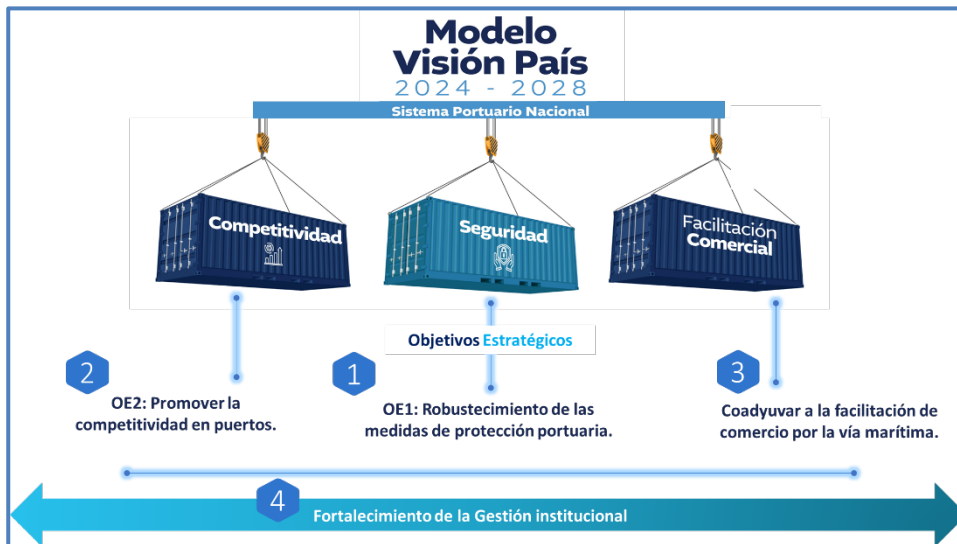


Working meeting with the Minister of National Defense of Guatemala

In this regard, it is worth highlighting the internal structure (CONAMAR) established by law for the management of national maritime policy, which brings together representatives of various ministries with interests in the sea (Defense, Transport, Foreign Affairs, Energy and Mines, Economy, Agriculture, Environment), representatives of port authorities and the Naval Hydrographic Service through the *Comisión Inter-institucional de Investigación Hidro-Oceanográfica (CIIHO)*. This peculiarity was highlighted by the IHO Director in his *Lectio Magistralis* at the 2nd ordinary meeting of CONAMAR, as well as it was proposed to the President of the Commission to transfer the CONAMAR's experience at the next MACHC meeting planned in December 2025 in Jamaica, to be proposed and possibly replicated in other states of the Meso-American and Caribbean region.



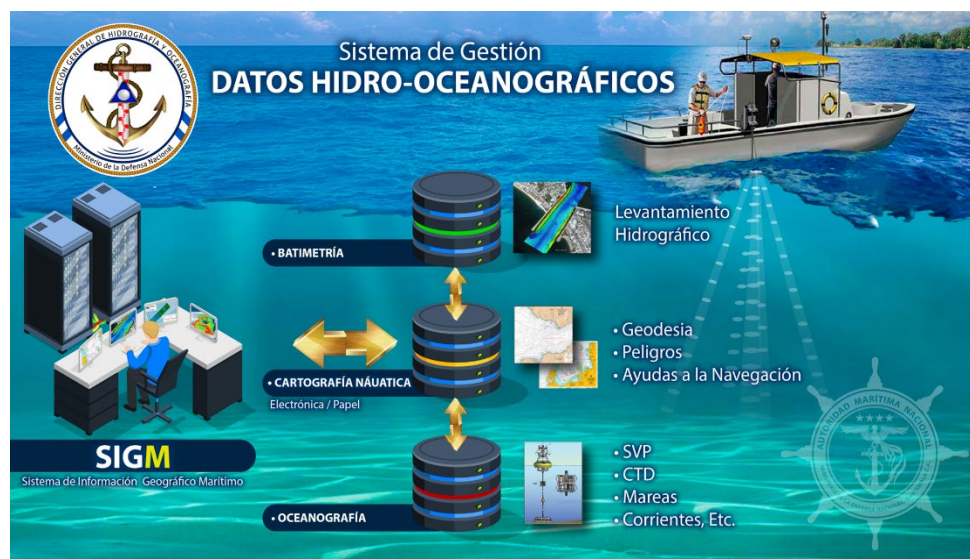
Participation and Lectio Magistralis at the 2nd ordinary meeting of CONAMAR



Strategic Vision of the Guatemalan National Port Model

Aligned with CONAMAR, the *National Port Commission* works within the framework of the same Strategic Vision for the Country, which is highlighted in the national model 2024-2028, aiming through three strategic objectives to develop a “Competitive”, “Safe” and “Commercially Accessible” National Ports’ System.

Integrated Geographical Maritime System (SIGM) of Guatemala



In both cases of CONAMAR and National Port Commission, a key role is reserved for hydrography and the availability – within the local port authorities – of personnel certified in hydrography and nautical cartography (Category A and B), and for the integrated hydro-oceanographic data management system called SIGM (Integrated Geographical Maritime System), with shared access and management by all the national authorities interested in the country's maritime growth and development.

With regard to the personnel certified in Hydrography and Nautical Cartography, it is worth highlighting the great interest and attention paid by Guatemala through the National Hydrographic Service to the IHO's Capacity Building programme. Proof of this is the fact that in 2025 – a unique case within the IHO's Capacity Building programme –, three candidates from Guatemala were selected (one per each IHO sponsored course) to participate in the Category "A" Hydrographic Science Training programme accredited by the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) and sponsored by the Republic of Korea, the Category "B" Nautical Cartography programme in Busan, ROK and sponsored by the Republic of

Korea, and the 17th GEOMAC course in Nautical Cartography Cat B at the UKHO sponsored by the Nippon Foundation.



Helicopter transfer to Puerto Quetzal and visit to naval and port facilities on the Pacific coast

Finally, the technical visit to the facilities of the Naval Pacific Command and the Naval School, as well as the conference held at the Quetzal Port Company are worth mentioning. In both cases, the importance of investing in hydrography and nautical cartography in the military, merchant, port, and fishing sectors was emphasized, as knowledge of the seabed in areas earmarked for port development represents an ongoing challenge to ensure accurate knowledge of the marine environment and a strong point for port and logistics development. In this regard, the attention of the naval-military and civilian sectors for the standardization work carried out by the IHO should be emphasized, with particular focus on the new S-100 Standard, which is considered – together with the new operational products of the S-100 Phase 1 – an added value for increasing the safe and digital management of the country's ports.

In conclusion, it is believed that the High-Level Visit to the Republic of Guatemala has highlighted a widespread interest and attention from the highest institutional, military and maritime authorities of the Country for hydrography and for the work carried out by the IHO, both considered indispensable and propaedeutic for the economic and sustainable development of the Country, in which it is important to invest both in terms of human and technical resources.