

13th Meeting of the Nautical Information Provision Working Group (NIPWG13)
Wollongong, Australia, 15 – 18 September 2026

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2026

- Task 2.1.2.5 Organize, prepare and report meetings of NIPWG
- Task 2.5.2 Support the development and implementation of Maritime Services
- Task 2.8.1 Maintain S-12, as appropriate - Standardization of List of Lights and Fog Signals
- Task 2.8.3 Maintain S-49, as appropriate - Standardization of Mariners' Routeing Guides

High level summary

- Along with the adoption process of S-98 edition 3.0.0 and all Phase 2 Product Specifications (operational editions), NIPWG13 meeting was focused on raising S-100 use cases and technical issues emerged from its thematic task groups.
- A new Chair and Vice-Chair were elected for the next inter-assembly period.

Details

1. The 13th meeting of the Nautical Information Provision Working Group (NIPWG) was held at the Sage Hotel in Wollongong (Australia) from 15 to 18 September 2026, hosted by the Australian Hydrographic Office. Commodore Darryn Mullins, National Hydrographer of Australia, opened the meeting, followed by an Indigenous Opening Ceremony to welcome the meeting participants.
2. The meeting was chaired by Mr Stefan Engström (Finland), NIPWG Chair, seconded by NIPWG Vice-Chair Mr. Jens Sjøe Christiansen (Denmark) and supported by Mr James Weston, Secretary (United Kingdom). Forty-one delegates from 12 Member States and twenty expert contributors representing various stakeholders attended the meeting. The IHO Secretariat was represented by Assistant Director Eric Langlois. Along with the soon to be adoption of the Phase 2 products specifications (operational editions), NIPWG focused its 13th meeting in pursuing its HSSC mandate and raising key questions and technical issues raised by its different task groups and side-activities.
3. Activities within the IMO Data Harmonization Working Group, in which NIPWG represents the IHO, were presented, in particular the IMO Compendium that encompasses 34 datasets of different purposes (e.g. Just-in-Time reporting, noon data report, meteorological and oceanographic observations, Ship reporting system and maritime services). The need for data harmonization between the IMO Compendium and the IHO GI Registry via context-dependent definitions of concepts came up as a potential cooperation axis between IHO and IMO, having in mind the forthcoming discussion that will take place at Council next month (C-10) on the IHO engagement at the IMO.
4. Discussions took place on Security Scheme related use cases (multi-signature certificate issuance, renewal/dissemination of data certificates from producers/RENCs to VARs) were discussed, where some of them still require further clarification.
5. As tasked by S-100WG, NIPWG presented an overview on its S-100 file size limits study. Key findings and take aways were that:

- Application processing efficiency depends on aspects other than pure size - numbers of “data units” (features or grid cells).
 - Display effects (especially data crowding on displays) are another factor.
 - For frequently updated data (gridded forecasts), data volume over time should also be considered.
 - A corollary to these findings was that data transfer constraints are not necessarily the primary factor in setting size limits.
6. With the completion of the Phase 2 product specifications, NIPWG also discussed the possibility of resuming work on S-126 Product Specification development and decided to include it in its 2027 Work Plan and seek HSSC approval at HSSC19.
 7. S-100 interoperability and applicability as set out in edition 3.0.0 of S-98 (endorsed by HSSC, to be adopted shortly) developed via use cases such as the development of complex pick reports within S-100 ECDIS. As an extended part of that discussion, a break-out session was held to explain how Marine Resource Names (MRN) works and their current use by IALA to build Aids to Navigation unique identifiers, recalling the HSSC18 paper by DE/DK/FR. Some of the take aways of that session set out as the need to define a proper IHO MRN namespace allocation and issuance policy and to harmonize MRN concepts and models across S-1xx custodians (IHO, IALA, WMO, etc).
 8. The possibility to use S-100 Sea Trials Area datasets to illustrate and test some of the above-mentioned use cases (interoperability, file size, etc) was brought up as a good practice to be ensured by the IHO Secretariat.
 9. Regarding S-128, AMSA (Australia) presented a proposal on real-time services and dynamic products in the S-128 catalogues. The proposal suggests including a link to real-time services rather than listing all individual datasets/items (e.g. in-force bulletins).
 10. A broad spectrum of developments and concepts were presented by Member States and expert contributors:
 - S-122/S-125 dataset generation from S-57 ENCs presented by BSH (Germany),
 - Graphic interface to facilitate data visualization and product specification content browsing, like Shom’s S-100 PS Explorer and some specific Phase 2 products related online tools developed by the National Taiwan Ocean University (NTOU).
 - Data/information portals offering online services (e.g. NGA),
 - ESRI showcased the potential of AI usage as a transverse tool from documentation maintenance, research or data engineering was also raised based on practical cases.
 - NAVTOR provided its overview on S-100 development as an OEM, regarding its preparedness to meet the S-100 timelines, with a first type approved ECDIS system available in 2028.
 11. The creation of a new Technical Support SubGroup to assist Task Groups in their activities was discussed and finally endorsed by NIPWG. Having noted the progress and ongoing discussions within the IHO Project Team in charge of the restructure of the HSSC-IRCC sub-bodies, a NIPWG federated management model was confirmed as one of the most effective mechanism and encouraged to pursue in that way.
 12. As for each meeting following an IHO Assembly, a new Chair Team was elected to take office for the next inter-assembly period (2026-2029). M. Dave Lewald (US) was elected as NIPWG Chair and Ms. Stéphanie Vrac (FR) as Vice-Chair. M. James Weston has been confirmed as NIPWG Secretary for the same period.

Group Photo



Next meetings

NIPWG will arrange its 4th VTC (2026) meeting in December (dates to be confirmed). The 14th meeting of NIPWG is planned in France (Brest) hosted by the French Hydrographic Service (Shom) on the week commencing 13 September 2027.