

3rd SESSION OF THE IHO ASSEMBLY
Monaco, 2–5 May 2023

REPORT OF THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (SWPHC)

1. Chair

Commodore Fiona Freeman	Australia	until June 2020
Mr Adam Greenland	New Zealand	from June 2020

Vice-Chair

Mr Tony Hanuagi	Solomon Islands	from February 2020
Lt Cdr Gerard Rokoua	Fiji	from September 2021
Lt Cdr Jervis Robinson	Fiji	from February 2023

2. Membership

Members: Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vanuatu.

Associate Members: Cook Islands, Indonesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau,

Observers: Marshal Islands, New Caledonia, Tokelau, Tuvalu.

Observer Organizations: IALA, IMO, GEBCO, Pacific Community (SPC).

3. Meetings

The SWPHC has met annually since the 2nd Session of the IHO Assembly in November 2020, as follows:

SWPHC18	Online	17-19 February 2021
SWPHC19	Online	23-25 February 2022
SWPHC20	Wellington, New Zealand	22-24 February 2023

The online Commission meetings were well attended with all Member States attending the meetings. SWPHC18 and SWPHC19 meetings were held online as a result of travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The third meeting was held in-person and was preceded with a 2-day IHO funded Capacity Building (CB) workshop on Hydrographic Governance. Most non-Member States in the region also attend the SWPHC meetings and workshop. An 'Industry Session' forms part of the meeting agenda and valuable input to CB initiatives was provided by industry representatives who were invited as 'Expert Contributors'.

4. Agenda Items

The main agenda items dealt with since the 2nd Session of the IHO Assembly pertained to the following:

- i. Exchange of information through National Reports
- ii. Development of a regional response ([SWPHC Work Plan](#)) to the IHO Strategic Plan 2021-2026 through a [gap analysis](#)

- iii. Exchange of experiences with implementing S-100
- iv. Investigation of UN-GGIM Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF-H)
 - a. [Open Data – the value proposition](#)
 - b. [Building Partnerships: Understanding the World Bank](#)
 - c. [Implementation case studies](#)
- v. Regional collaboration on [Safety of Navigation: Delivering as one](#)
- vi. Regional initiatives in support of [Empowering Women in Hydrography \(EWH\)](#)
- vii. Delivery of a regional Hydrographic Leaders Programme (HLP)

4.1. Capacity Building (CB) activities

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, in-person activities planned for 2020, 2021 and 2022 were postponed with agreement of the IHO Capacity Building Sub-Committee. An IHO CB Funded workshop on Hydrographic Governance was held in-person before the SWPHC20 meeting in February 2023. In addition, preparations are underway to hold a IHO funded CB MSI Workshop in July 2023 in Fiji; and a Disaster Response exercise is planned for 2024 in conjunction with SWPHC21.

4.2. SWPHC Working Groups

i. [International Charting Coordination Working Group \(ICCWG\)](#)

The [SWPHC ICCWG](#) comprises Producer Nations (Australia, France, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States of America) who publish Paper Charts and ENC's in the region. It is chaired by Australia, the INT Chart Co-ordinator for Region 'L', and the main responsibility is the coordination of nautical charting in the region, ensuring the paper chart INT series is comprehensive and current, and the ENC coverage is appropriate.

The focus is on paper charts at 1:500,000 and smaller and ENC Nav Purpose 1 and 2 coverage.

ii. [Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group \(MSDIWG\)](#)

The [SWPHC MSDIWG](#) was created with the propose to promote the sustainable development and use of the oceans, seas and inland waters in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The WG effort is based on the 9 Strategic Pathways from the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, Integrated Geospatial Information Framework.

The WG is comprised of members from Australia, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, United Kingdom (Chair) and the United States of America.

iii. [Work Plan & Priorities Working Group \(WP&PWG\)](#)

The SWPHC WP&PWG was established in 2021 to develop and maintain a SWPHC 3-6 year draft work plan and priorities to achieve the Goals and Targets of the IHO Strategic Plan and the SWPHC Work Plan. The WG is comprised of members from Australia (Chair), Fiji, France, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States of America and Vanuatu.

The [SWPHC Work Plan](#) was presented at SWPHC19.

4.3. SWPHC Work Plan activities

i. Hydrographic Leaders Programme (Mar – Nov 2022)

This new initiative, led by the SWPHC, was launched at SWPHC19 in February 2022 (SWPHC CL05/2021 - [Call for Nominations](#)) and aims to:

- support development of a leadership pipeline and increase awareness of the hydrographic activity and interests in the region
- build and encourage an active and self-sustaining network of leaders in hydrography in the region, and
- contribute directly to the region's alignment with the IHO Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026, the UN's Shared Guiding Principles for Geospatial Information Management, and the Joint Canada-IHO Project Empowering Women in Hydrography

The programme has been delivered on-line and included workshops covering Law of the Sea, S-100 and Hydrographic Governance, as well as personal skills and behaviours. The cohort is comprised of 17 participants from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, United Kingdom and Vanuatu.

The programme culminated with members of the HLP attending and leading a session at the SWPHC20 meeting, and attending and assisting with the delivery of the CB funded Workshop on Hydrographic Governance preceding SWPHC20.

ii. Extratropical Surge and Tide Operational Forecast System (ESTOFS) Workshop (Sep 2021) – led by NOAA

This workshop presented NOAA's Global Extratropical Storm Surge and Tide Operational Forecast System (Global ESTOFS) and provided examples of how it could be used in the region.

iii. SWPHC S-100 Workshop #1 – experiences in implementing S-100 (Oct 2021) – led by LINZ

This workshop was an opportunity for Hydrographic Offices to share their S-100 journey so far and allow others to learn of their experiences and developments in scoping the S-100 work. The meeting also ensured that all coastal States in the region were informed of progress and provided an opportunity for any questions.

iv. SWPHC Seabed 2030 Webinar series (May, Jun and Jul 2021) – led by LINZ

A series of four webinars with the objectives of raising the awareness of the Seabed 2030 Project; promote collaboration and coordination; review current status of ocean mapping in the region; demonstrate online tools; presentation of CSB activities; and engage the community of stakeholders. Presentations were provided by Jennifer Jencks (Director IHO DCDB), Kevin Mackay (Head, Seabed 2020 South and West Pacific Regional Center) and Stuart Caie (SWPHC Seabed 2030/CSB Coordinator).

v. SWPHC S-100 Workshop #2 – Updates and Value Proposition (Oct 2022) – led by LINZ

In response to [SWPHC19 Action Item #16](#), this workshop was held to coordinate the efforts on the implementation of S-100; promote the cooperation and exchange of experiences; and identify Capacity Building requirements.

vi. Presentation on Maritime Cybersecurity (Feb 2023)

In response to IRCC14 Recommendation 3, a presentation was delivered by the UK at the 1-Day VTC SWPHC20 Pre-meeting.

All recordings from the above workshops with the presentations are available on the [SWPHC Events & recordings](#) webpage.

5. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed

The main challenges (now and yet to be addressed) in the region are:

- Engaging and coordinating with international and regional agencies, development partners and coastal states at a senior enough level, to raise awareness of the benefits of hydrography and adopting and giving effect to open data policies and mutually agreeable practices. (ref: IRCC14-06.11: SWPHC substantive paper)
- Supporting hydrographic governance in Pacific Island Countries and Territories with the introduction of S-100 Next Generation Charting Products & Sunsetting of the Traditional Paper Chart.
- Provision of mechanisms to ensure greater inclusion and participation of SWPHC Member States at IHO meetings, in particular the IHO Assembly (SWPHC20 Action 21). Ref: 3-Day SWPHC20 Meeting, Agenda Item 7, Draft Minutes V1.0.
 1. The South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission welcomed the support of the Capacity Building Fund which enabled greater participation from across the region in the 20th Commission meeting held in Wellington, New Zealand, February 2023.
 2. The South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission will continue to encourage IHO membership for Coastal states in the region.
 3. Recognising that travel to Monaco from the South West Pacific region can be prohibitively costly, the Commission understands that funds will not be made available by the IHO to enable in-person participation at the A3 Assembly.
 4. Whereas not all IHO Member States will be able to travel and participate in the IHO A3 Assembly, **the Member States of the South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission resolved that:**
 - a. every provision should be made to allow all States to enjoy the benefits of their membership of the IHO and to join and participate so far as possible through appropriate mechanisms. This is important given that the IHO Assembly takes place only once every three years. The South-West Pacific Hydrographic Commission has made inclusion and representation the core of its work plan and we request, and IHO Member States require, the IHO to do the same.
 - b. Failure to support mechanisms for remote participation reduces the opportunity for diversity and inclusion in the hydrographic community.
 - c. Failure to support mechanisms for remote participation excludes Member States from their rights and duties as IHO Member States. These are important membership rights which include the right to comment, vote and contribute to discussions on the IHO's work and priorities.

6. Achievements / Outputs / Conclusions

- SWPHC allocated two seats on IHO Council (CL 43/2022, 7 November 2022). Fiji and New Zealand are designated as the SWPHC Representatives to the Council. Fiji is the first Pacific Island Country to be designated a seat on Council.
- SWPHC18 (2021) Coastal States provided a high-level gap analysis for each goal of the Strategic Plan to develop the SWPHC Work Plan.
- IRCC14-06.11 [SWPHC substantive paper](#) recommending the development and implementation of a strategy to engage with international and regional agencies, development partners and coastal states to support knowledge and understanding of hydrography and the value associated with open data policies in respect of marine geospatial information.

- [SWPHC paper and presentation of IHO Strategic Plan and SWPHC Work Plan](#) to the Pacific Regional Maritime Transport Officials Meeting, November 2022. The paper requested the meeting to engage and collaborate with IHO, IMO, IALA and regional partners to deliver as one the delivery of future Safety of Navigation services in the Pacific region. This paper will be presented at the 5th Pacific Regional Energy & Transport Ministers Meeting in May 2023.
- SWPHC19 meeting (February 2022) included a session on the UN-GGIM Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) & Open Data – the value proposition.

The intent was to kick-start a regional discussion on the value and benefits of geospatial information, the framework and sharing data. The outcome is to seek actions and commitment from SWPHC members to collaborate with international and regional entities and coastal States to develop a strategy to support the implementation of the IGIF, understand the value of open data and commit to sharing data.

- The Hydrographic Leaders Programme (HLP) was launched in February 2022. It is a direct response to the **SWPHC Goal 1** *Increase SWP influence at IHO and other international/intergovernmental bodies*. Sixteen participants from 12 countries took part in the HLP.
- The first meeting of the SWPHC MSDIWG was held February 2021 and the WG held its 8th meeting in December 2022. The main focus areas of the WG is the development of a [data sharing proposition](#) (presented at SWPHC20); encouraging Coastal States to share data and adopt open data policies; and adopt and implement the UN-GGIM Integrated Geospatial Information Framework-Hydro (IGIF-H).
- A SWPHC Empowering Women in Hydrography Pacific Network was established in September 2022 to build relationships and support career growth through mentoring, opportunity, and awareness. Fifty-five women have joined the network to-date from around the region as well as from the UK and US; and work in national hydrographic offices, maritime safety authorities, navies, Government science organisations, industry and academia.
- SWPHC20 meeting (February 2023) included sessions on the UN-GGIM IGIF focusing on building partnerships and understanding the World Bank; and implementation case studies from the Philippines and Kiribati.
- SWPHC20 also included a session on *Safety of Navigation: Delivery as one* with contributions from IHO, IMO and IALA. This led to an action for IHO, IMO and IALA to work together with the SWPHC and the Pacific Community (SPC) to address the capacity building needs of the Member States in the SWP region.
- Members are active on IHO committees and working groups but face challenges of attending in-person meetings due to distance and prohibitive travel costs.

7. Actions required of the Assembly

- **Note** this report.
- **Note** the SWPHC Work Plan 2022-2023.
- **Consider** the implementation of appropriate mechanisms to ensure greater inclusion, representation and participation of SWPHC Member States at IHO meetings, in particular the IHO Assembly.
- **Take** any other action considered appropriate.