

**21st MEETING OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING SUB-COMMITTEE (CBSC21)
7-9 June 2023, Tokyo, JAPAN**

Paper for the Consideration by CBSC21

CBSC Report for RSAHC Region

Submitted by: RSAHC CB Coordinator
Executive Summary: This document provides a summary report of the CB activities in the RSAHC region.
Related Documents: RSAHC CB Plan 2023-25
Related Projects:

1. Introduction / Background

The Persian Gulf is one of the most strategic waterways in the world due to its importance in global oil transportation. This region produces nearly one third of the world's oil, and holds over half of the world's crude oil reserves, as well as more than 25% of world's natural gas reserves, which is why the Persian Gulf is known as the World Oil Reservoir. The waters in the Persian Gulf are comparatively shallow, with the average of 50 meters, and deep-draught tankers may have to navigate for a considerable distance with little water beneath their keels. For these reasons, it is crucial that parties to the SOLAS Convention undertake hydrographic surveys as and when required that they arrange for the compilation and publication of hydrographic data.

During the ROPME-IHO Workshop concerning the hydrographic activities of the ROPME and Red Sea regions held in Kuwait on 24-27 October 1999, the idea of forming a Regional Hydrographic Commission was raised. The ROPME Sea Area Hydrographic Commission (RSAHC) was subsequently established in Tehran, on 7-10 October 2000 at the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) of the I.R. of Iran.

The RSAHC Region comprises of 12 Coastal States, nine of which are the Member States: Bahrain, IR of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and three are Associate Members (France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America). Moreover, there are a number of Observers, such as Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), and Middle East Navigation Service (MENAS), International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), now known as the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation, Arabian Maritime and Navigation Aids Services (AMNAS).

At present, the Chair of the RSAHC is Captain Yahya Mohammed AL BALUSHI (Oman) and the Vice-Chair of RSAHC is from Saudi Arabia.

2. Assessment of Capacity Building Phase Stage of Coastal States

See Annex A (CBSC21-08.6I)

3. Activities Completed since CBSC20

- Bahrain presently has one cartographic staff attending the IHO-Nippon Foundation GEOMAC CAT B course in Taunton, UK.
- Using some online learning materials by some members of RSAHC region, such as I.R. of Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia from IHO e-Learning Center at KHOA.
- Also since the CBSC20 Meeting, one officer from Oman has completed the CAT-B course in cartography in December 2022 in UK.
- One officer from Oman is expected to complete a Master Degree Program in GIS in September 2023 in Malaysia.
- Two officers from Oman have completed CAT-A course in Hydrography in October 2022 in UK
- One Bahraini staff attended the online ENC technical conference by IC ENC.
- Bahrain also has bilateral cooperation agreements with UK and USA, which are renewed periodically.
- Category "B" Nautical Cartography Program, sponsored by Republic of Korea, 19 June to 03 November 2023, for which Mr. Abdullah Ali Saleh Al Balushi from Oman and Mr. Ali Farhan S Alzahrani from Saudi Arabia were accepted from RSAHC Region.

Views/Comments for additional funding:

- Referring to the Action List of 9th RSAHC Meeting, held from 15-17 November 2022 in Oman, concerning views/comments for additional funding, some RSAHC MS including I.R. of Iran, Pakistan and Oman had some comments/views concerning this matter as follows:

I.R. of Iran: Iran is ready to conduct courses for RSAHC MS under CB training programs, such as:

- 1- Tides and Sea Level Data Collection, Analysis and Prediction (5days)
- 2- MSDI Toward Marine Integrated Framework. (5days)

Pakistan: Additional funding by RSA countries is supported for willing MS. Moreover, IHO may approach to enhance the CB funding of RSAHC.

Oman: Oman can provide courses, such as:

- 1- An Introductory Course in Charting, Using PCC Software (5 days)
- 2- Levelling Course (5 days)

4. Activities Planned for 2023

- Technical Joint IHO/IALA Visit to I.R. of Iran, which is planned to be done by November 2023.
- S-101 Production Course, as a joint activity between RSAHC and NIOHC regions
- MSI Course, to be conducted as a joint activity between RSAHC and NIOHC regions in November 2023.

5. Challenges Faced in the Region

As you are all aware, our region is one where political issues leave a direct impact on the outcome of RSAHC activities and decisions. In our region, usually three or four Member States are highly active in

IHO programs, and some do not participate actively in any programs at all, while some others prefer to work with adjacent regions (some Member States of RSAHC are members of NIOHC as well, and have their needs regarding capacity-building met through that commission). For this reason, it is almost impossible to have integrated and up-to-date information of capacity-building needs from all RSAHC Member States in our region. I hope that under the chairmanship of Oman as the RSAHC Chair, and Saudi Arabia as the RSAHC Vice Chair, we would achieve better cooperation between all the regional Member States, specially CB training activities.

6. Achievements and Lessons Learned

A number of the Member States have announced their training needs for the next three years through the CB Coordinator for this region, and all Member States of RSAHC could be trained at various levels, in order to ensure a much needed capability on hydrography and nautical cartography, promote familiarity with the methods of conducting hydrographic surveys, and improve safety of navigation through enhanced navigational products. Therefore, in most cases, we could ignore our political differences, and consider safety of navigation in our regional waters as the region's first priority.

In line with the efforts of IHO to economize costs for the CBSC programs, the RSAHC has negotiated and planned a number of activities and trainings, to be conducted jointly with the NIOHC as the adjacent region. It is hoped that the planned activities, as mentioned in the RSAHC 3-Year Work Plan for CBSC (2023-25), will be conducted successfully, and result in the projected outcomes.

7. Conclusions:

With the election of Oman as the RSAHC Chair and Saudi Arabia as Vice-Chair at present, we hope to encourage the involvement of all Member States in the RSA region, and have better achievement in CB programs, because it is necessary to have excellent and effective means of communication between all Member States.

Moreover, the IHO Secretariat strongly supports joint CB submissions in the favor of promoted cooperation between the neighbor RHCs and cost-effective use of the limited CB funds. For this reason, I am also keen to have joint CB programs for at least the next 3 years between RSAHC and NIOHC.

8. Actions Required of RSAHC:

The Capacity-Building Sub-Committee is invited to:

- A. take note of this update of RSAHC CB 3-Year Work Plan, and
- B. take any actions considered appropriate.

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