

**13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
IHO-IRCC13  
VTC, 23-25 June 2021**

**Report of the East Atlantic Hydrographic Commission**

<b>Submitted by:</b>	EAtHC Chair
<b>Related Documents:</b>	EAtHC CL 01/2021; EAtHC CL 02/2021
<b>Related Projects:</b>	

<b>Chair:</b>	Rear Admiral Carlos Ventura Soares (Portugal)
<b>Vice-Chair:</b>	Ingenieur general Laurent KERLEGUER (France)
<b>Secretary:</b>	Commander João Vicente (Portugal)
<b>Member States:</b>	Cameroon, France, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Spain.
<b>Expert Contributors:</b>	UKHO

## 1. Meetings Held During Reporting Period

EAtHC VTC (not a plenary session): 28 and 29 of September 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 16th Conference of the Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission (EAtHC16), initially scheduled for Lisbon, Portugal, 2020, was postponed, first to April 2021 and, later to September 2021 according to EAtHC CL 01/2021.

In order to minimize the effects of this postponement and keep the momentum in the region, a VTC was conducted, virtually “hosted” by Portugal, for a Charting Region G Technical Meeting on 28 September and a Special EAtHC Session was held on 29 September 2021. These events were chaired by RAdm CE Okafor, Hydrographer of the Nigerian Navy (NNHO) with the support of France, as chart coordinator and as capacity building coordinator.

About twenty delegates from six Member States (France, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal and Spain) and four Observers (Gambia, Gabon, United Kingdom and the United States of America) participated. Unfortunately, no Associate Members of the EAtHC were present in these VTC events. Director Abri Kampfer and Assistant Director Yves Guillam represented the IHO Secretariat.

Before the end of the VTC, Rear Admiral Carlos Ventura Soares (IHPT, Portugal) took over the Chairmanship of the EAtHC while France was elected as Vice-Chair.

Next meeting: EAtHC 16 plenary conference, 29 September to 01 October 2021, preceded by MSI & MSDI Seminar (27 and 28 September 2021). If by July 21st, 2021, the COVID 19 situation is still not under control, two options are to be considered regarding the meeting format and the sanitary risk:

- Hybrid conference (part of the members face-to-face and those who are unable to travel to Lisbon can participate via VTC);
- Only via VTC if major COVID 19 related restrictions are still expected to be in place.

## 2. Work Program

The work has been done in accordance with the work programs of the IHO and its subsidiary bodies. In the end of 2020 the EAthC Chair participated in the IRCC and in the C-5 VTC meetings. Most of CB activities scheduled for 2020 were postponed to 2021. The exception was the technical visit to Togo conducted by IHO/SHOM (from 31 October to 05 November 2020 - CBWP 2020: A-09). MSI & MSDI seminar back-to-back with the EAthC conference, initially planned for 2020 were also postponed to 2021. The EAthC CB coordination activities is made by SHOM.

The International Charting Coordination (ICC) activities are still ongoing and they are being coordinated by SHOM, the Region G Charting Coordinator. The Region has a new INT Chart producer: the strengthening of the NNHO's capacities now enables Nigeria to gradually take over responsibility for chart production of its waters. SHOM also prepared the ICC-WG ToRS & RoPs for approval in the next conference.

The following activities are ongoing / started:

- Revising the EAthC statutes in order to approve them in the next conference;
- MSDI questionnaire in order to verify the interest and commitment of members related to the creation of a MSDI related WG;
- Compilation of the SPI indicators for the IHO Strategic Plan;
- Invitation of EAthC observers to the next conference;
- Commander João Vicente (EAthC Secretary) was appointed as EAthC crowdsource/seabed coordinator for 2030 activities and participated in the last CSBWG.

## 3. Progress on IRCC Action Items

The following table summarises the progress made during the reporting period:

No.	Action (Agenda Item)	Responsible	Deadline	EAthC Action
12/1	RHC to Instruct MS in the promotion and distribution of publication of S-67 Mariners' Guide to Accuracy of Depth Information in Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) to the Marine Institutions and Education Schools.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	In progress, The Chair raised this by CL 02/2021 and will remember it at the next meeting.
12/2	Member States to review the paper on the Future of paper Charts and provide feedback on it.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	In progress. The Chair raised this by CL 02/2021 and will remember it at the next meeting.
12/3	Member States are strongly encouraged to continue updating C-55.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	In progress. The Chair raised this by CL 02/2021 and will remember at the next meeting.
12/4	RHC to implement the IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended by A-2.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	In progress, will be completed in the next EAthC Conference. Revision of statutes to conform with IHO Resolution 2/1997.
12/6	Invite the Member States who have experience in developing and providing eLearning contents to share their resources and experiences to the eLearning PT.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	In progress, will be completed in the next EAthC Conference.

12/11	Promote the discussion of any item with relevance to SDI/MSDI/MSP and to take appropriate actions.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	In progress. A questionnaire was sent to the members. In the next conference the decision to create a MSDI WG will be in the agenda.
12/12	Consider CSB and Seabed 2030 initiatives to be permanently added as an agenda item at future RHC meetings.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	Will be done in the next EAHC conference.
12/13	Encourage Member States to support the CSB initiative with positive actions, such as requiring all research vessels to collect bathymetric data for later uploading, when on passage or when it does not interfere with other research activities	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	Will be done in the next EAHC conference.
12/14	Support the modification of the current "RHC Seabed 2030 Coordinator" to a joint "RHC CSB/Seabed 2030 Coordinator" and provide the identification of the Coordinators.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	Complete. Portugal, Cdr João Vicente is the EAHC CSB/Seabed2030 Coordinator.
12/16	Encourage MS to release datasets or subsets into the public domain via the IHO DCDB.	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	Will be done in the next EAHC conference.
12/17	Encourage Member States to promote the vital need to map the entire seabed.	RHC Chairs	Continuous	Will be done in the next EAHC conference.
12/19	Encourage all Member States to make existing seabed mapping data available for use by Seabed 2030 in the GEBCO Grid.	RHC Chairs	Continuous	Will be done in the next EAHC conference.
12/20	RHC to participate at Regional level in those actions of the UN Ocean Decade matching with IHO's new strategic targets (IRCC12-08C).	RHC Chairs	IRCC13	Will be done in the next EAHC conference.

#### **4. Problems Encountered**

Some of the region's coastal states are still lacking basic hydrographic and cartographic capacities. It would be very important for national agencies to lobby their governments to adhere to IHO.

Considering the interest shown on MSI by most nations within the region, a seminar on capacity building will be organized in 2021 in Lisbon.

Communication problems between members and between some national agencies are persistent. The main cause is the lack of update of contact lists when hand-over / take-over of jobs and positions occur. In this matter, members are requested to keep their contact details regularly checked and updated.

Awareness on the importance of Hydrography is increasing within the Region. Still EAHC Members should sustain collaborative efforts until the region's hydrographic capacity is fully developed for the good of all mariners.

#### **5. Any Other Items of Note**

Nothing to report.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommended Actions**

The last face-to-face EAtHC meeting occurred in 2018. The correspondence between members via email has not been very effective in the region. Consequently, the EAtHC Chair believes that the best way to engage with members and reach the goals set for the region is by conducting face-to-face meetings and capacity building actions. This is the main reason Portugal, supported by France, is making all possible efforts for the next conference (EAtHC16) to take place on a face-to-face or hybrid mode.

## **7. Justification and Impacts**

A seminar on S-100 was funded in CBWP2021 for EAtHC but was not organized due to the pandemic situation. It would be expected for it to be postponed to CBWP2022 but it is proposed to have it replaced by a seminar on "Relationship with NAVAREA II and PCAs – Risk assessment – Survey specification" which is more in line with the present needs of EAtHC members.

In the next EAtHC conference it should be considered inviting some IHO Subsidiary Bodies related to topics not regularly discussed in the Commission, such as crowdsourced bathymetry, SEABED 2030 activities, MSDI activities, etc.

## **8. Action Required of IRCC**

The IRCC is invited to note the report.

