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IHO-IRCC14
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Develop a strategy and implementation framework for RHCs to engage with international and regional agencies, development partners and coastal states to support:
i. their understanding of hydrography, and
ii. their adoption and implementation of open data policies

Submitted by:	SWPHC Chair, SWPHC Work Plan & Priorities WG
Executive Summary:	Across the SWPHC international and regional agencies and development partners provide funding and deliver technical assistance and capacity building. While many of these activities fund significant in-country data capture programmes which generate large volumes of marine geospatial information, the value of hydrography is too often overlooked. Furthermore, much of this data is not made discoverable and available by the recipient country. This results in duplication of effort and sub-optimum return on investment.
Related Documents:	IHO Strategic Plan 2021-26. SWPHC Work Plan 2022-23. The Statement of Shared Guiding Principles for Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). IGIF Strategic Pathway 2, Policy and Legal.
Related Projects:	Implementation of the IHO Strategic Plan, Goal 2, Target 2.3

1. Introduction / Background

The IHO Strategic Plan (IHO SP) was developed to respond to challenges faced by Hydrographic Offices. One of the challenges is a multi-dimensional and complex landscape of stakeholders that invest in initiatives to improve the knowledge and sustainable use of the oceans. This can create increased demand for hydrographic data, as well as a long tail of activity for hydrographic offices. Yet, the resources and assets that are available to hydrographic offices are not increasing at the same rate.

With increased focus on our oceans by regional and international agencies, there is a need to support understanding of hydrography in the development sector; signal the importance of coordinated effort; avoid duplication and gaps; and enhance the value of data which is often collected but not used or otherwise made available. Hydrography often falls between the gaps; we need to help hydrography be recognised in its role in improving the knowledge about and the sustainable use of our oceans.

2. Analysis/Discussion

Goal 2 of the IHO SP states: *Increasing the use of hydrographic data for the benefit of society* is a response to *the ever-growing applications of marine data* that requires *that IHO takes a more prominent role in cultivating the use of hydrographic data through cooperative and collaborative efforts and identifying the need for collecting more data*.

Target 2.3 requests IHO Member States to: *Apply UN shared guiding principles for geospatial information management in order to ensure interoperability and extended use of hydrographic data in combination with other marine-related data*. In particular, in relation to Innovation principles:

e). ***Open data****: where feasible adopt policies that maximize access to and use of open, free and unrestrictive geospatial information for innovation, efficient and effective decision making and a spatially enabled society.*

The SWPHC notes an increase in international development activity involving hydrography; its value is often poorly understood and poorly recognised. There are issues of data discovery and the subsequent availability of marine geospatial information. This is relevant both in the region and globally, e.g., as demonstrated by the Seabed 2030 Project and the activities and goals of the IHO DCDB and CSBWG.

Even where data *is* discoverable, accessing it is a significant challenge as it is often unavailable due to the absence of or weak application of open data policies and non-existence or restrictive licencing practices by countries.

The SWPHC19 meeting included a session on Open Data which presented the value of open data to society, the economy and the environment. Drawing on a report published in 2021 by Deloitte *The value of Australian seabed mapping data to the blue economy* the use of seabed mapping data in the areas of navigation, exploration and research, contributed AUD9 billion to the Australian economy. This demonstrates the value of seabed mapping data to a single country. Just imagine what this would mean to the global blue economy.

3. Conclusions

The biggest challenge is that of 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.

4. Recommendations

a. Consider this report and acknowledge the points raised.

b. Consider 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.

5. Justification and Impacts

The benefits are:

- Collaboration and cooperation between RHCs to assist IRCC in the delivery of the IHO SP, Goal 2.
- Recognition by international and regional agencies, development partners and coastal states on the value of making data discoverable and available to the benefit of society, the economy and the environment. This would directly benefit the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project.
- Recognition by international and regional agencies, development partners and coastal states of the importance of hydrography in programming which involves the ocean.

The resources required to complete this work include either establishing a PT/WG or tasking an appropriate IRCC WG to develop a strategy and implementation framework/roadmap. We suggest this would include representation from the MSDIWG and the CBSC. A suggested timeline for this work, to meet the IHO SP timeframe, would be two years i.e., by 2024.

The work would include detailed proposals of the steps required to more effectively engage with the international development community and gain support to recognise the value of open marine geospatial information; this is expected to be actioned by RHCs with annual reporting to the IRCC.

The priority for this work is medium/high, to be confirmed by IRCC.

6. Action Required of IRCC

The IRCC is invited to:

a. **Discuss** this paper

b. **Agree** this is a challenging and a common issue across RHCs

c. **Confirm** this is a barrier to achieving Goal 2 of the IHO Strategic Plan

d. If b and c above, **agree** on the development of a strategy and implementation framework for RHCs, and **engage** with international and regional agencies, development partners and coastal states to support their understanding of hydrography and their adoption and implementation of open data policies

e. **Establish/Task** a PT/WG or an appropriate IRCC WG to develop a strategy and implementation framework/roadmap within a stated timeframe

f. Take any other actions deemed appropriate.