

**15th MEETING OF THE IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC15
Tokyo, Japan, 12-14 June 2023**

**MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (MBSHC)
MBSHC report to IRCC15**

1. Chair

Chair: Vinka Kolić, Croatia, from April 2022

Vice-Chair: Romania, from September 2022

2. Membership

Members: Algeria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia (suspended), Slovenia, Spain, Syria (suspended), Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine.

Associate member(s): Israel, Palestinian Authority, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Observers: Albania, CIESM, Germany, IALA, IC-ENC, IOC, PRIMAR.

3. Meetings:

Between IRCC 14 and IRCC 15 no MBSHC conference was held.

In the previous period the following RHC meetings took place:

- 22nd MBSHC conference – VTC event, 27–28 May 2021
- 23rd extraordinary Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC23): Ljubljana, Slovenia, 30 March – 1 April 2022 (hybrid meeting). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, MBSHC23 was organized as a hybrid event according to MBSHC CL 03/2022.

Next meeting: MBSHC24 will take place in 2024. Date of the next meeting is still to be determined, tentative period is the first week of July 2024., Constanta in Romania.

4. Current MBSHC Working Groups:

International Charting Coordination WG for the charting region F (F-ICCWG)

During the 23rd Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission, Greece and Turkey offered their candidatures for the Region F ICCWG Coordinator.

It was agreed that Greece would be designated as Region F ICCWG Coordinator and Turkey as Vice-Coordinator on a rotating basis for a period of four years, two years each (MBSHC 23/07).

In 2023. 1st draft of text of revised ICCWG Terms of Reference-ToR and Rules of procedures - RoP was made and includes the scope, governance for coordination of S-101 production. (Region F CL No. 01/2023).

Member States agreed about the future role that regional cartographic coordination in the coming years with the implementation of S-100 products and services regarding INT charts. The role of F ICCWG Coordinator has been expanded to include coordination of S-101 in the F region.

Black and Azov Seas WG (BASWG)

Turkey is the Chair of the Black and Azov Seas Working Group. The main objectives of the WG shall

be: 1) to coordinate the hydrographic, cartographic, navigational, and maritime safety information needs (MSI) and requirements of the States in the Black and Azov Seas, 2) to coordinate the actions & resolutions in the region in accordance with the outcomes of the MBSHC meetings. Since IRCC14 one VTC meeting was held (01.03.2022 BASWG16). Actions are slowed due to actual present situation in the area and currently undermines the coordination between the Member States, especially 'ENC Overlap' issues have remained unresolved.

MBSHC S-1XX WG

Following decision MBSHC23/08, a working group MBSHC S-1xx dedicated to the S-100 roadmap implementation within the MBSHC region has been established.

A call for membership to the MBSHC S-1xx Working Group was issued by MBSHC circular letter No. 04/2022 in May. Ten applications were received (Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America) and MBSHC circular letter No. 06/2022 rev1, dated 13 July, provided the list of members and points of contact, and announced the selection of France (SHOM, Capt. Ronan Pronost) as chairman of the working group.

The terms of reference and rules of procedures of the MBSHC S-1xx WG were drafted by the Chair of the WG in November 2022 and circulated among its members. A VTC meeting/physical meeting is planned in the 2023.

The objectives of the MBSHC S-1XX WG are (but not limited to):

- Experience sharing between WG members on the implementation of the S-100 roadmap in their country/organisation (general policies, governance, tools, calendar);
- Coordinate the capacities in the region for a seamless development and production of S-1xx products in the area through the nine IGIF pathways (See Reference Action WENDWG12/33);
- Identify common axes and priorities for the MBSHC for the development of the S-1XX products and to set up actions to support MBSHC Members (presentation of technical specifications, training, assistance to Members to prepare the S-1XX production in compliance with the IHO S-100 roadmap);
- Coordinate the cooperative actions with Region F ICCWG and MBSHC Capacity Building Coordinator.

This WG is not intended to coordinate the S-101 production in terms of scheme, as this role has been given to the Region F ICCWG by the MBSHC.

5. Status of IRCC actions and recommendations relevant for the MBSHC:

Actions:

No	Action	Status
Action 1	IRCC invited RHCs and Subordinate bodies to provide comments and inputs on the governance document on Dual Fuel Concept for S-100 ECDIS, intersessionally. (Permanent)	Ongoing

Recommendations:

No	Action	Status
Recommendation 1	RHC are encouraged to increase the collaboration with the Data Quality WG and to try to find candidates for the vacancy of the Chair and Secretary positions	Ongoing

Recommendation 2	RHC to discuss how HO's can assume a geo-coordinating role to help ensure provision of data on a regional level	Ongoing
Recommendation 4	RHC to start or proceed with the debate on how the climate change related activities can be further investigated and what can be the role of the IHO	Ongoing
Recommendation 5	RHC to Encourage relevant Member States to report to the IMO Secretariat and the Chair of the EGC Coordinating Panel on the progress and status of implementation of newly recognized mobile satellite services by MSI providers	Ongoing
Recommendation 6	RHCs to establish an S-100 Coordinator role.	Completed. S-1XX WG established. The role of F ICCWG Coordinator has been expanded to include coordination of S-101 in the F region.
Recommendation 7	RHCs to apply Action WENDWG12/33 (WEND-100 Product Matrix will be made available on the WENDWG Repository webpage when finalised)	Actioned
Recommendation 8	RHC to encourage Member States and submitting institutions to engage with the IHO Secretariat early in the process of them preparing submissions for program recognition.	MS encouraged
Recommendation 9	RHC encourage Member States and submitting institutions to consult the Guidelines, the FAQs and the White Paper (IHR-Nov-2017 - Article: Maintaining the Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers) early in the process of preparing submissions for program recognition.	MS encouraged
Recommendation 10	HC Chairs to bring the IRCC CL 1/2020 to the attention of all coastal states within their respective RHC, encouraging them to offer a positive response, even if qualified, to	Ongoing

	enable provision of enable provision of CSB data into the public domain collected from ships within waters subject to their national jurisdiction	
Recommendation 11	RHC Chairs to bring the IRCC CL 1/2020 to the attention of all coastal states within their respective RHC, encouraging them to offer a positive response, even if qualified, to enable provision of enable provision of CSB data into the public domain collected from ships within waters subject to their national jurisdiction	Ongoing
Recommendation 12	RHC to encourage Member States to release datasets or subsets into the public domain via the IHO DCDB.	MS encouraged
Recommendation 13	RHC to encourage Member States to support the CSB initiative with positive actions, such as requiring all research vessels to collect bathymetric data for late uploading, when on passage or when it does not interfere with other research activities.	MS encouraged
Recommendation 14	Encourage RHCs to actively contribute with new data to GEBCO.	MS encouraged. MBSHC MS are active contributors to the European Marine Observation and Data Network - EMODNet Bathymetry portal. The EMODNet bathymetry data is used in the IHO-IOC GEBCO global grid.
Recommendation 15	Encourage RHCs to discuss how nations can share existing data.	MS encouraged
Recommendation 16	RHCs to encourage Member State and stakeholder bathymetric data contributions to the DCDB, regardless of origin.	MS encouraged

6. Agenda Items:

MBSHC Statutes

The new MBSHC Statutes was adopted during the MBSHC23, and in force as from 1 April 2022.

Cooperation with Member States

The enlargement of the MBSHC membership is beneficial. The most significant achievement is that Lebanon became a new MS of the MBSHC from February 2021. Lebanon is a good example of

improving capacities and its capabilities in Hydrography and Cartography, with the support of the Member States and IHO CB programmes. Lebanon also became MBSHC GEBCO/Seabed 2030/CSB ambassador.

Also, one of the significant issues was the incorporation of Albania as new 98th Member State of the International Hydrographic Organization. The IHO Secretariat was informed by the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Government of Monaco that the Government of the Republic of Albania deposited its Instruments of Accession to the Convention on the IHO on 3 May 2022. During the MBSHC23, IHO invited Albania to sign the MBSHC Statutes at the end of the meeting to become Full Member of the MBSHC region. Albania is in the process of signing the MBSHC Statutes.

Two Member States (Israel, Libya) are still non-members of the IHO and two Member States were suspended (Serbia and Syria).

Related to IRCC13 Recommendation 10, to apply Resolution 1/2005 in case of disasters occurred to support the affected States in their Regions, MBSHC created Disaster Response Framework and it was approved at the MBSHC23 (March 2022).

Maritime Safety Information (MSI)

The NAVAREA III Coordinator for this region is Spain. The NAVAREA III Region covers the Mediterranean Sea from the meridian 005° 45' W, and the Black Sea, including the Azov Sea. Since May 2020, the NAVAREA III navigational warnings have been broadcast on SafetyNET II. Since last March, this NAVAREA III Coordinator centre has been broadcasting in training mode through the IRIDIUM service, using the SAFETYCAST platform. The coverage of NAVTEX stations in this region is satisfactory, and the coordination between contacts is effective. The MBSHC Member States are encouraged to establish closer engagement between their National Maritime Safety Information Coordinators and the NAVAREA Coordinator. Due to crisis between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, an intense coordination activity NAVAREA is carried out in the Black and Azov Seas area. For the last two years, the number of NAVAREA III warnings continues to decrease. Most of the warnings, about 75 % of the messages, are from the Aegean Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Seas.

Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI)

The MBSHC ambassador on the MSDIWG is Italy. The MBSHC ambassador attended the MSDIWG12 (17–18 March 2021) in VTC, the MSDIWG13 in Singapore (9–13 May 2022, which was incorporated with the annual meeting of the OGC Marine Domain Working Group, the third expert meeting of the UN-GGIM WGMGI, the International Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, with the theme “Effective and Integrated Marine Geospatial Information” and the MSDIWG14 in Genova (30 January-3 February 2023, which was held in conjunction with the meeting of the OGC Marine Domain Working Group and the fourth expert meeting of the UN-GGIM WGMGI). Regular updates between MBSHC and MSDIWG have been exchanged through the ambassador. In November 2022, a workshop on MSDI funded by IHO CB programme was held in Turkey. Participants received a great benefit to develop their MSDI. MSDI is becoming more and more relevant due to marine spatial data integration and new standard S-100.

There is a constant need to cooperate with MS, to encourage training, awareness of the importance of the integrated geospatial information framework and involvement of the MS in the MSDI initiatives and challenges in the region.

Capacity Building

The Capacity Building (CB) Coordinator role of the MBSHC has been carried out by Türkiye. Capacity-Building activities, which are based on assessing the development and capacities of each coastal state within the region, play a key role in providing and maintaining a fundamental level of understanding and capability in related fields. This base makes it possible for the coastal states to cooperate, exchange information and experience. Another essential objective of these activities is to help the Member States fulfilling their obligations with respect to the SOLAS Convention.

Related to the approved and adopted revised Capacity Building Strategy at the A3 (decision 18) CB activities within the MBSHC region should be focused on the S-100 with the aim to have ability and capability of the MS to meet the requirements and delivery phases of the S100 implementation plan. Türkiye, as the MBSHC CB Coordinator represents the Commission at the CB Sub-Committee and is responsible for updating the MBSHC three-year CB plan, which is mostly shaped by the feedbacks of the Member States. A three-year CB plan was approved during MBSHC23.

Since the last IRCC14 (06-08 June 2022) two workshops funded by the CBSC were carried out successfully in December 2022, in Istanbul. 15 trainees from 10 different countries joined the workshops under the supervision of two trainers from the USA.

- Workshop on Cartographic Data Management (05.–07.12.2022)
- Workshop on MSDI development & implementation (07.–09.12.2022)

The challenge faced in terms of the CB activities is mainly related with the limited funds available each year. This situation has the potential of causing more severe repercussions as revised Capacity Building Strategy at the A3 was approved and adopted (decision 18) which states that S-100 is the priority related to CB activities. IHO should find ways to increase alternate sources of funding and partnerships for capacity building, as the demand far outweighs IHO CB funds.

Worldwide ENC Database (WEND) matters

Following MBSHC23, a working group dedicated to the S-100 roadmap implementation within the MBSHC region has been established (ES, FR, GB, GR, HR, IT, RO, SI, US, TR). The terms of reference and rules of procedures of the MBSHC S-1xx WG were drafted by the Chair of the WG in November 2022 and circulated among its members.

A first version of the IGIF Matrix has been implemented by the WG Chair, very low interest, and participation from the MS in the MBSHC region.

7. MBSHC cooperation with stakeholders (organizations, industry, etc.):

Cooperation with the Mediterranean Science Commission (CIESM)

During the MBSHC23, CIESM presented the joint IHO/CIESM initiative Mapping Marine Geological Risks in the Mediterranean Region. IHO reminded that in March 2021 the MoU was renewed to be updated with current global initiatives for the oceans, and that the IHO worked closely with the CIESM. IHO invited all the Member States of the Commission to participate in this development.

The importance was stressed of tide-gauge reporting in real time for the tsunami warning and of managing disaster hazards in the region, and the need was underlined for circulations models based on high-resolution bathymetric data. It was announced that the workshop on disaster response would take place in 2023.

Cooperation with International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA)

During the MBSHC23, IALA gave a presentation on goals, standards, committees, and obligations of IALA, as well as on the role and tasks of the IALA World-Wide Academy. The Academy specifically addresses capacity building and sharing of expertise with the whole world. It aims to ensure that all coastal states can fulfil obligations related to marine aids to navigation placed upon them in SOLAS. The IALA World-Wide Academy conducts training programmes, technical missions, and risk management training. IALA also reported on the renewed IMO VTS Guidelines, and encouraged all Member States to ratify the IALA Convention aiming to transform IALA from a non-governmental association to an inter-governmental organization.

Industry and RENCs

Both RENCs and Industry took part in the last MBSHC Conference and will be invited to the next one.

8. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed

a) Difficulties:

- A key challenge is to get more active participation from most MBSHC MS in the Committee/Working Groups of the MBSHC and IHO
- The main difficulties faced by the MBSHC are in the coordination of the INT chart schemes and ENC coverage. The only way forward is to conduct bilateral discussions for the solution of ENC overlapping issues.
- The escalated tension due to the ongoing military confrontation in the region (Black and Azov Seas) currently undermines the coordination between the Member States, especially 'ENC Overlap' issues have remained unresolved.
- Insufficient funds for capacity building programs.
- Difficult and slow adaptation of most of the MS in the MBSHC region to the process of digitalization in the whole maritime sector which starts with S-100 as a base line data model for IMO's e-navigation programme.
- Collaborative ecosystem to develop and apply S-100 based products – interoperability and reliability of the data of different kind of stakeholders.
- Lack of interest for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the MBSHC

b) Challenges:

- A major challenge is the implementation of S-100 products in the region because it is demanding in organizational, technical-technological, and financial sense. The most important strategic issue will be related to dual standards regarding the transition from S-57 to S-101 ENCs, or even triple mode because most of the MS in the MBSHC region will have paper chart production, S-57 and S-101.
- Key role of the RHC for harmonized production and distribution of future S-100.
- Awareness raising among MS – it is necessary to create an environment where many stakeholders such as maritime administrations, industry and other professional organizations can be involved and cooperate to facilitate widest possible implementation of S-100.
- Main challenge will be the establishment of the national S-100 Committee in each country. The National S-100 Committees should be composed of various national stakeholders that are involved in the development of S-100 standards especially significant end users such as Maritime administrations, Pilot services, Navy, Vessel Traffic Service, research institutes and industry in the fields of nautical publications, aids to navigation, e-Navigation and marine weather to allow varied participation.
- Improving cartographic coordination in the region is an ongoing task and permanent challenge.
- Improve capacity building programs. MBSHC region needs to develop e-learning capabilities which in turn will enable capacity building activities to reach a wider audience in a more cost-effective way. The main activities in the CB programme should be focused at S-100 Universal hydrographic model and MSDI.
- In order to enhance better results and ensure continuity of the work and implementation of the assigned tasks to the MS in the region, IHO/MS need to find a better way to motivate MS for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the MBSHC (other RHC) – funds/sponsorship on a yearly basis for the chairmanship.

9. Achievements and lessons learned:

- The new MBSHC Statutes was adopted during the MBSHC23, and in force as from 1 April 2022.
- New Member States and the enlargement of the MBSHC membership is beneficial.

- Following decision MBSHC23/08, a working group MBSHC S-1xx dedicated to the S-100 roadmap implementation within the MBSHC region has been established.
- The role of F ICCWG Coordinator has been expanded to include coordination of S-101 in the F region.
- The coordination role of the IENWG is a great example of the cooperation between European HOs in large EU funded projects.
- MBSHC MS are active contributors to EMODNet Bathymetry portal and EMODNet bathymetry data is used in the IHO-IOC GEBCO global grid.
- Capacity building activities play a key role in the Region, CB funds should be raised.
- Disaster Response Framework for the MBSHC region was approved.
- Progress has been made in the Region F concerning the solution of some ENC overlaps, INT and ENC charting schemes. Bilateral discussion is the only way for the solution of ENC overlapping issues and the only way for the step forward.

10. Conclusions:

The cooperation within the MBSHC was good but, due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic and because we had to learn to work virtually, communication and activities slowed down compared to the pre-pandemic period. All efforts to maintain communication and active participation of Member States through VTC meetings were not as effective and productive as they should have been, especially because MBSHC is RHC covering a small geographic area but with the largest number of countries and different kind of issues. It became clear that we are most productive to address strategic issues when we are working together and in person.

The main challenge in the MBSHC region is the implementation of the S-1xx framework services, and for that reason additional effort, capacity building activities, education, trainings, and cooperation among Member States in the region are required. MBSHC S-1XX Working Group should coordinate activities related to S-100 roadmap implementation within the MBSHC region. MSDI is becoming more and more relevant due to marine spatial data integration and new standard S-100. There is a constant need to cooperate with MS, to encourage training, awareness of the importance of the integrated geospatial information framework and involvement of the MS in the MSDI initiatives and challenges in the region.

11. Actions required of IRCC:

The IRCC is invited to:

- Note the report of MBSHC.
- Take any action considered appropriate.

Chair

Vinka Kolić, MSc