

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

**EASTERN ATLANTIC HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION**

**EAtHC report to IRCC15**

**1. Chair**

**Chair:** Radm Laurent Kerléguer, France, October 2022 – present  
 Radm Mário Simões Marques, Portugal, January 2022 – October 2022  
 Radm Carlos Ventura Soares, Portugal, October 2020 – January 2022  
 Radm Chukwuemeka Ebenezer Okafor, Nigeria, October 2018 – October 2020

**Vice-Chair:** Capt Mostafa Tafhry, Morocco, October 2022 – present  
 Radm Laurent Kerléguer, France, October 2020 – October 2022  
 Radm Carlos Ventura Soares, Portugal, October 2018 – October 2020

**2. Membership**

Members: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Spain

Associate members: Benin, Cabo Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo, United Kingdom

Observers: Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Liberia, São Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, USA, IALA, IHO Secretariat

**3. Meetings:**

Following EAtHC meetings have taken place:

- 16<sup>th</sup> EAtHC meeting, 29 September – 01 October 2021, Lisbon – Portugal
- 17<sup>th</sup> EAtHC meeting, 28 – 30 September 2022, Mindelo – Cabo Verde

Next meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> EAtHC meeting, 13 – 17 May 2024, Casablanca – Morocco

**4. Current EAtHC Working Groups:**

- a) International Charting Coordination WG (ICCWG)
- b) Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure WG (MSDIWG)

**5. Status of IRCC actions and recommendations to RHCs**

**a) Status of actions (relevant for the EAtHC):**

*IRCC14/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.**

**b) Status of Recommendations to RHCs:**

*IRCC14/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.**

*IRCC14/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 via the EAthC MSDIWG.**

*IRCC14/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.**

*IRCC14/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.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 6: RHCs to establish an S-100 Coordinator role.*

**Completed – EAthC ICCWG scope extended to S-100 coordination.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 7: RHCs to apply Action WENDWG12/33 (WEND-100 Product Matrix will be made available on the WENDWG Repository webpage when finalized).*

**Ongoing – EAthC ICCWG Workshop planned in October 2023.**

*IRCC14/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 programme recognition.*

**Ongoing.**

*IRCC14/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 programme recognition.*

**Ongoing.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 10: RHC to encourage all Member States to respond to IHO CL 21/2020 and, if possible, offer a positive response, even if qualified, to enable provision of CSB data into the public domain collected from ships within waters subject to their national jurisdiction.*

**Completed – action included in the EAthC list.**

*IRCC14/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 CSB data into the public domain collected from ships within waters subject to their national jurisdiction.*

**Completed – action included in the EAthC list.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 12: RHC to encourage Member States to release datasets or subsets into the public domain via the IHO DCDB.*

**Completed – action included in the EAthC list.**

*IRCC14/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.*

**Completed – action included in the EAthC list.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 14: Encourage RHCs to actively contribute with new data to GEBCO.*

**Completed – action included in the EAtHC list.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 15: Encourage RHCs to discuss how nations can share existing data.*

**Ongoing.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 16: RHCs to encourage Member State and stakeholder bathymetric data contributions to the DCDB, regardless of origin.*

**Completed – action included in the EAtHC list.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 17: RHC to reply to the WEND WG template SPI 1.3.1.*

**Ongoing.****6. Agenda Items:**

The agenda items dealt with during the period have followed the IHO Work Programmes one, two and three, in compliance with the IHO subsidiary bodies. The main activities are listed below.

**a) EAtHC Capacity Building:**

Since September 2020, 5 technical visits have been carried out in EAtHC region: Benin, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo. 6 other technical visits are planned: Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mauritania, Morocco, Sierra Leone and São Tome and Príncipe. These technical visits represent an important tool for the regional capacity building policy. They enable the Coastal States to be aware of the national and regional issues of hydrography, MSI and marine cartography and to know the prerequisites. With the help of the experts who realize the visits, the Coastal States can identify the actions to be done to improve their organization, coordination and capacities.

The 17th Conference in Mindelo was preceded by a 2-day seminar funded by the IHO and related to the relationship with NAVAREA II Coordinator and PCAs, risk assessment and survey specification. This seminar made it possible to raise the awareness of many States in the region on these major issues for the development of hydrography and enabled many of these States to attend the EAtHC Conference. All the participants shared their concerns and experiences in the management of Maritime Safety Information, in data exchange with the NAVAREA II Coordinator (France) and/or their Primary Charting Authority (PCA). The IHO Secretariat reiterated a well-known recommendation in the EAtHC on the establishment of a National Hydrographic Committee, since it appeared that those Coastal States who have established their own national hydrographic committee are in a much better situation for meeting their SOLAS obligations.

During these events, training needs are identified for Coastal States but most are not carried out due to lack of funding.

**b) EAtHC ICCWG:**

The charting coordination of Region G is led by France. The INT charts coordination is ongoing with mature schemes for most of the scale bands.

In order to develop the coordination of the ENC production, the EAtHC entrusted the ICCWG, in consultation with the IHO Secretariat, with the implementation of the ENC scheme in INTtoGIS for the usage bands 1 to 3. This action is ongoing in view of the upcoming dual-fuel period with the transition to S-101 ENCs, the effective maintenance of a S-57 scheme being an indispensable prerequisite to a good charting coordination during this period.

The ToRs & RoPs of the EAtHC ICCWG were revised and approved during the 16th EAtHC Conference.

During the 17th EAtHC Conference, the Commission decided to extend the mandate of the ICCWG to

coordinate the implementation of S-100 products for Region G. In this context, a working meeting on the coordination of S-100 products is planned with the EAtHC ICCWG members during 2023 in order to define a strategy and to propose to the Commission a revised version of the ToRs & RoPs.

c) EAtHC MSDIWG:

During the 16th Conference, the EAtHC approved the creation of a MSDI Working Group under the chairpersonship of Portugal. Its first meeting occurred in VTC in February 2022 with the participation of 7 Coastal States. This MSDIWG is also in charge of coordinating for the EAtHC Region the project Seabed2030 and the crowdsourced bathymetry issue.

The 2 main objectives of this working group are to support the development of MSDI through the EAtHC area and to promote the CSB initiative.

d) Maritime Safety Information:

The coordination relating to MSI in the NAVAREA II is carried out by France. Each Conference allows for the monitoring of the situation in terms of nautical information feedback and the transmission of urgent and rapid notices to mariners.

The seminar that preceded the 17th EAtHC Conference mainly focused on the MSI theme with presentations and recommendations from the NAVAREA II coordinator.

On the occasion of the 17th Conference, the attention of Coastal States was drawn to the need to set up national hydrographic committees, or similar national bodies, to gather the stakeholders concerned by MSI and safety of navigation.

e) Disaster Response:

A plan for disaster response framework for the region was approved during the 16th EAtHC Conference.

f) Revision of the EAtHC Statutes:

A revised version of the EAtHC Statutes was unanimously approved during the 16th EAtHC Conference on 1st October 2021. The objective was for the EAtHC to be more compliant with the IHO Resolution 2/1997 “ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSIONS (RHC)” as amended.

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

The EAtHC is trying to restore regional dynamics by involving the MOWCA, PMAWCA and AMSSA organisations, starting by a participation of their representative in the next Commission conferences. Their involvement can improve the vision of regional projects and cooperation to which CHAtO could contribute (capacity building...).

**8. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed**

a) Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the region have postponed some capacity building activities and an EAtHC conference.

b) Awareness on the importance of Hydrography is increasing within the Region. Still EAtHC Members should sustain collaborative efforts until the region’s hydrographic capacity is fully developed for the good of all mariners. A good attendance to the EAtHC Conferences is necessary to raise awareness in the region and to start a dynamic. Many countries in the region do not have the travel budget to attend Conferences. Organising an IHO-funded seminar prior to the conferences not only raises awareness, but also allows states to attend the conferences. Still, the low available budget from IHO for capacity

building makes it increasingly difficult to fund such seminars. External funding should be sought but with an uncertain result.

c) 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. The EAtHC tries to accompany these coastal states in the process of accession to the IHO, notably through the technical visits. These technical visits, carried out in the frame of the CB policy of IHO, are vital for less developed countries in order to help them identify priority needs, the necessary means and to derive a list of actions in order to start a dynamic that will eventually lead them to meet the obligations of the SOLAS Convention. Here again, the lack of budget threatens the carrying out of such technical visits. Training or provision of equipment fall outside the IHO's CB framework for non IHO members, alternative funding solutions remain very difficult to put in place, making this much needed support erratic. More technical visits are needed for CB.

d) Communication problems persist in the region, between the EAtHC Secretariat and some Members and national agencies. The lack of updated contact lists when hand-over / take-over of positions occur is the main reason. Members were requested to keep their contact details up to date.

e) EAtHC tried to contact MOWCA, PMAWCA and AMSSA agencies without success. The Commission is trying to work through the member states of these organisations to re-establish contact and ensure the willingness of these organisations to cooperate

## **9. Conclusions:**

The EAtHC continues to keep and strengthen the cooperation in the region.

Hydrographic capacity development in the EAtHC region remains a challenge, with most of the Central & Western African coastal states lacking hydrographic infrastructure and relying on a third State to provide hydrographic services and fulfil their SOLAS obligations. The current pattern of capacity building has allowed only limited progress despite particular attention by the IHO to the EAtHC region and the involvement of some Member States (acting as Primary Charting Authority in that region).

With this in mind, efforts must therefore be continued with greater involvement of the Coastal States primarily concerned by the development of their hydrographic services in order to meet their SOLAS obligations, with the support of the IHO and the IHO Member States of the region.

At the same time, there is a growing need to develop capacity building actions for the benefit of Member States in particular to support the transition to S-100, whereas currently most of the actions carried out benefit non IHO Member States. The resources, both in terms of in-kind contributions from Member States to carry out these actions and in terms of capacity-building funds, are not sufficient to achieve these two objectives at the same time.

Member States should share their education and training programs and develop on-job training (ex: onboard hydrographic survey training, in-office chart production training, etc.).

Member States should articulate the IHO CB initiatives with national initiatives in order to have very consistent on-job training in the coastal State.

## **10. Actions required of IRCC:**

The IRCC is invited to:

- a. Note the report of the Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission.
- b. Take any other action considered appropriate.

Radm Laurent Kerléguer

EAtHC Chair