

IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

IRCC Circular Letter 01/2024

16 December 2024

Subject: IRCC achievements in 2024 and challenges for 2025

Dear IRCC Members,

I am sending this letter to update you on the IRCC-related topics since our last meeting in June in Ecuador. I especially would like to inform on the outcomes of Council-8 meeting in October that are important for the IRCC, its subordinate bodies and the Regional Hydrographic Commissions.

Council 8 noted the IRCC report and commended the IRCC, the RHCs, and IRCC Sub-Committees and Working Groups for their achievements since C-7, as well as the excellent direct cooperation between HSSC and IRCC and their subordinate bodies.

The Council commended the RHCs for their outstanding and broad scope achievements in implementing standards, sharing best practices between coastal States, promoting capacity building and coordinating production in their charting regions.

The Council endorsed the establishment of an IRCC PT in charge of drafting a proposed IHO Resolution on Gender Balance / Inclusiveness. It took note that the Scoping Team established by IRCC proposed ToRs for creating a dedicated Project Team to draft a Resolution to submit to C-9 for endorsement and then to A-4 for approval. The Council invited the IRCC assisted by the IHO Secretariat to issue CLs for endorsement of the ToR / ROP and the subsequent creation of the Project Team by the end of 2024.

In accordance with Decision A3/8c, the Council noted that IRCC tasked the MSDIWG to not invest in another portal, but to focus on global thematic layers by means of the existing IHO GIS infrastructure (like those already available on the INTogIS).

The Council noted the update on MSDIWG activities by the IRCC Chair, supported by Director Dr Nyberg, and noted the request from UN-GGIM to reinforce the relationship between the MSDIWG and the Marine Geospatial Working Group of UN-GGIM, for efficiency reasons. The Council invited MSDIWG through the IRCC to consider Decision 14/111 - Integrated marine geospatial information, made at UN-GGIM 14 and to propose a way forward.

The Council tasked the MSDIWG through the IRCC, in liaison with the NIPWG, Protected Seas, ECDIS OEMs, GIS software manufacturers, the UN, IUCN, and IHO Member States, to coordinate a pilot project aiming to demonstrate the operational implementation of S-122. This supersedes decision C7/44.

The Council noted that the IHO was not in a position at the moment to fill the Capacity Building gap of ~245,000 euros (among which ~188,000 for S-100 supporting activities) due to the missing dues. The Council invited CBSC to consider priorities of additional CB activities for 2025 covered by the 2024 savings with a focus on S-100 related CB activities. The Council invited IHO Member States and external partners (such as RENCs) to mobilize funding to fill the remaining gap for S-100 related CB activities through financial and/or in-kind support.

The Council noted the update on the activities of the IHO Fund Generation Project Team. It requested the Project Team to enhance the ToRs to incorporate a systematic survey of current and future IHO standards products and services for which users can potentially be charged and propose basic conditions such as single fee, subscriptions or other options. This refers to the HSSC proposal to develop and integrate an online application function supporting the Security Scheme administration process in the IHO Portal, in order to collect administration fees from the OEMs using the security scheme.

The Council noted the completion by IRCC of two workshops:

- one on Standards of Competence (IBSC) matters, to provide clarifications for the institutions on the preparation of submissions to the Board;
- one on Crowd Sourced Bathymetry (CSBWG), on the benefit of crowd sourced bathymetry and how to expand data contribution.

The Council approved the proposed amendments to Annex 2 of the S-100 Implementation Roadmap. This new version of Annex 2 includes in particular the ENDS diagram and the revised S-100 timeline. Council tasked the WENDWG/NIPWG through the IRCC/HSSC respectively, to prepare a concise narrative to be added in the ENDS diagram, with the option to reshape it in style if appropriate.

The Council welcomed the intention of the WENDWG to provide, from 2025 onwards, inputs to the IHO Secretariat's annual information reports to IMO NCSR meetings, presenting the planned availability and coverage per RHCs, of S-100 Phase I Products and Data Services.

The Strategic Plan Review Working Group (SPRWG) is concluding its scoping phase at the end of 2024, with the second meeting scheduled for December 19th. The WG is pleased to report strong regional representation, with 13 of 15 Regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHCs) participating in the process.

The RHCs play a vital role in gathering perspectives from all member states and regions, enabling a bottom-up approach that captures the diverse views within our community. This inclusive approach builds upon the valuable inputs already received from HSSC16, IRCC16, and C-8 meetings.

As we move into the drafting phase in early 2025, the SPRWG will present a draft revised Strategic Plan at IRCC17 for feedback. To ensure productive discussions during IRCC17, RHC Chairs are encouraged to familiarize their members with the strategic documents available on the IHO Portal (SPRWG page), in both full and summary formats.

Despite the compressed timeline, the SPRWG is confident in the IHO community's ability to collaboratively refine and strengthen our strategic direction for 2027-2032.

The IHO Secretariat provided an update on proposed engagement at the upcoming 3rd UN Ocean's Conference (UNOCIII) which will be held from 9-13 in Nice, France. The UNOC will be preceded by a number of events, including the One Ocean Science Congress (4-6 June, Nice) and the Blue Economy and Finance Forum (7-8 June, Monaco). Member States are encouraged to take advantage of the alignment of IRCC-17 to these events, and to engage early with national delegations to participate accordingly. Member States are invited to inform Assistant Director Harper (samuel.harper@iho.int) of their interest or intention to participate in the UNOCIII. It is expected that details on the options for participation in the UNOCIII will be made available in January 2025, and a virtual update/coordination meeting is planned for 1000 CET (UTC+1) 24 January 2025.

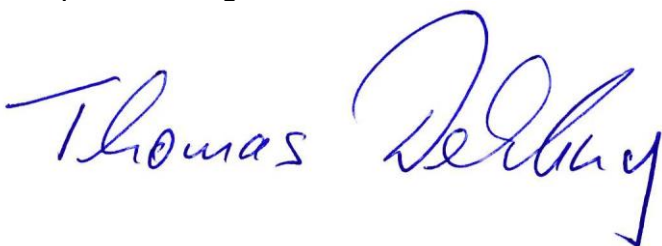
Regarding the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade), IHO Secretariat is developing a register of IHO Member States representatives who are involved in their national Ocean Decade Committee, if any, and individual Member States contributions. The register will primarily serve as a means for the Secretariat to properly measure the overall contribution to IHO Strategic Goal 3.

I would like to thank all of you for your most valuable contribution to the inter-regional coordination of the IHO and I am looking forward to seeing you all in good health at the next IRCC meeting, to be held in Monaco at the IHO Secretariat from 03 to 05 June 2025. Please make your hotel bookings as early as possible. There are several other events in the area around this time of year.

IRCC 17 will be the last IRCC meeting before Assembly 4. This implies that Decisions and Proposals from or via IRCC have to be made at that meeting at the latest.

Let me finally send you warm seasonal greetings, best wishes for a happy new year in 2025 and good health for you and your families.

Best personal regards,



Thomas Dehling

Chair IHO Inter-Regional Coordination Committee