



IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

IRCC Circular Letter 01/2023

15 December 2023

Subject: IRCC achievements in 2023 and challenges for 2024

Dear IRCC Members,

There are just a few days left before this year is ending, a year that brought us further towards a new normal of cooperation and coordination in hydrography. I believe we are starting to find a good mixture of meetings both in presence as well as virtual and hybrid. I am sending this letter to inform you about some topics for the IRCC, its subordinate bodies and the Regional Hydrographic Commissions that resulted from the Council-7 meeting in October.

Council-7 was the first after Assembly-3 earlier this year, and Ms Pia Dahl as Chair and the new Council started successfully their new three year term.

Council-7 thanked IRCC, the RHCs and the subordinate bodies for the work accomplished since C-6 and I am more than happy to forward their thanks to you all. It is really a pleasure for me to chair the IRCC and work with you in the development and advancement of hydrography worldwide.

Following up on Decision A3/20b, the Council noted the outcome of a scoping team and endorsed IRCC's recommendations to establish a *Project Team on Fund Generation of IHO' Project Initiatives* under the IRCC. Thank you to those that provided input to the draft TORs and ROPs, which have been included. Subsequently, the IHO Secretariat has just issued the CL 40/23 on the establishment of the IHO Funding PT.

On the proposal for a new *Programme for Gender Balance in Hydrography* (as a follow-up to the successful *Empowering Women in Hydrography Project*), the Council agreed on the way forward in three steps, as suggested by the Secretary-General:

- a) The Council tasked the IRCC to first define, through the CBSC, the regulatory framework (M-3) for a continued activity on this social theme through a proposal for an IHO Resolution;
- b) The Council agreed to continue with the EWH project, led by the CBSC, supported by remaining funds and future financial and / or in-kind support as currently announced by CA, NO, DK, US, but still to be confirmed.
- c) The Council, supported by IRCC, will develop a proposal on the future framework for an IHO social Programme (incl. Gender Balance in Hydrography) to be submitted to A-4.

The Council welcomed the proposal from the IRCC to plan two workshops as follows:

1. Standards of Competence (IBSC) matters, to provide clarifications for the institutions on the preparation of submissions to the Board;
2. CrowdSourced Bathymetry (CSBWG), on the benefit of crowdsourced bathymetry and how to encourage and expand data contribution.

Both workshops are scheduled for the first semester in 2024 and we intend to have announcements in early 2024 from IBSC and CSBWG regarding dates and further details.

The Council acknowledged the current structure of the Strategic Plan (SP) 2021-2026 and agreed the objective for the next SP 2027-2032 should be limited to a revision of the current SP. The Council tasked the HSSC and IRCC to provide their inputs on the possible axis of evolution of the existing SP in preparation of the revision phase (2024-2025) of the current SP. This will be a topic at IRCC-16 and it would be great to have initial ideas from all of you at the meeting.

The Council tasked the IHO Secretariat to establish liaison with relevant data providers of MPAs and tasked the IRCC, through the MSDIWG, to establish a pilot project for the High Sea and MPAs adopted by IMO, to demonstrate the benefits of S-122 for non-navigation purposes. I am asking MSDI to take this task accordingly and report to IRCC-16.

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).

C-7 agreed on a way forward for the "*Champion of Hydrography Award*" and tasked HSSC and IRCC Chairs, supported by the IHO Secretariat (DTech John Nyberg), to prepare a proposed IHO Resolution for the *Champion of Hydrography Award*, to be awarded on an annual basis. This work has started. Once finalized, the IHO Secretariat will issue an IHO CL seeking the approval of IHO Member States on the proposed IHO Resolution.

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 Ecuador from 10 to 12 June 2024.

Let me finally send you warm seasonal greetings, best wishes for a happy new year in 2024 and good health for you and your families.

Best personal regards,



Thomas Dehling

Chair IHO Inter-Regional Coordination Committee