

Proposal to change the area of coverage of the Meso American-Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC)

Submitted by: Brazil

References: a) IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended;
 b) IHO Publication S-11 “Guidance for Preparation and Maintenance of International Chart and ENC Schemes and Catalogue of International Charts”;
 c) Statutes of the MACHC;
 d) Statutes of the SWAtHC;
 e) Minutes of the 20th MACHC Conference (MACHC20);
 f) MICC Report and Presentation at the 20th MACHC Conference;
 g) Minutes of the 21st MACHC Conference (MACHC21); e
 h) MICC Report and Presentation at the 21st MACHC Conference.

Proposal

The proposal concerns the expansion of the current area subject to the Meso American-Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC) in order to include the waters of the Brazilian Amazon basin that flow into the Atlantic Ocean. This procedure aims to harmonize the MACHC region corresponding to the IHO International Charting Region B with the region where the Brazilian hydrographic and nautical cartographic activities in the Amazon basin are being reported at the MACHC Conferences. At the same time, these activities are not being reported at the South-West Atlantic Hydrographic Commission (SWAtHC) Conferences.

Comments

In 2005, MACHC region was expanded to include the Atlantic Ocean’s waters offshore the Brazilian coast and, as a result, Brazil joined the MACHC. The geographic boundary between MACHC and SWAtHC regions, respectively, IHO International Charting Regions B and C1, is the parallel 0°, according to IHO Publication S-11 and to MACHC and SWAtHC Statutes.

In 2019 during MACHC20 and in 2020 during MACHC21, MICC Chair reported the need of adjustment of the MACHC region boundary to include the Amazon basin being reflected on IHO and other sites depicting RHC boundaries. This issue was also reported in the Minutes of the MACHC20 and MACHC21.

Currently, the Equator divides Regions B and C1 and, at the same time, the delta of the Amazon River, which is the main entrance from the Ocean Atlantic to the Amazon basin. Unfortunately, the Equator as a boundary for the MACHC does not includes the Pará River, one of the accesses in the immense estuary complex at the delta of de Amazon basin, and the Tocantins-Araguaia waterway that Brazilian Hydrographic Office considers as part of the Amazon basin for the purposes of hydrographic surveys and cartographic production. The city of Belém, where the 2016 MACHC Conference took place, is by the Pará River.

The IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended (“Establishment of Regional Hydrographic Commissions”) states in Paragraph 8 that “Geographical areas of the RHCs will

normally coincide with INT chart regions, modified as appropriate, to meet regional requirements and special circumstances”.

Therefore, MACHC and SWAtHC must approve a change in the limit with which they border from 0° (Equator) to 01° South so that the Amazon basin is fully included in the MACHC region.

In that regard, Brazil has submitted a proposal to the SWAtHC Meeting in August-September of 2021 that approved a new border with MACHC at 01° South.

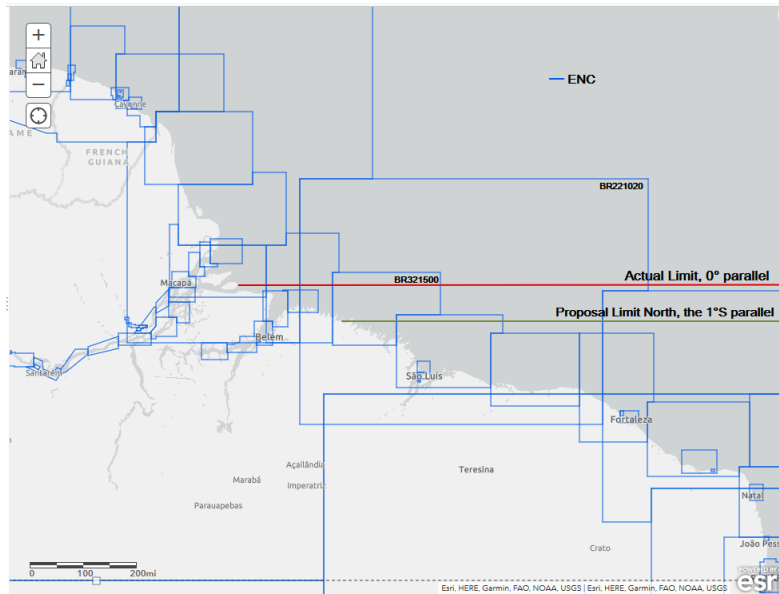


Figure 1 - ENC Scheme near the boundary of the MACHC and SWAtHC regions

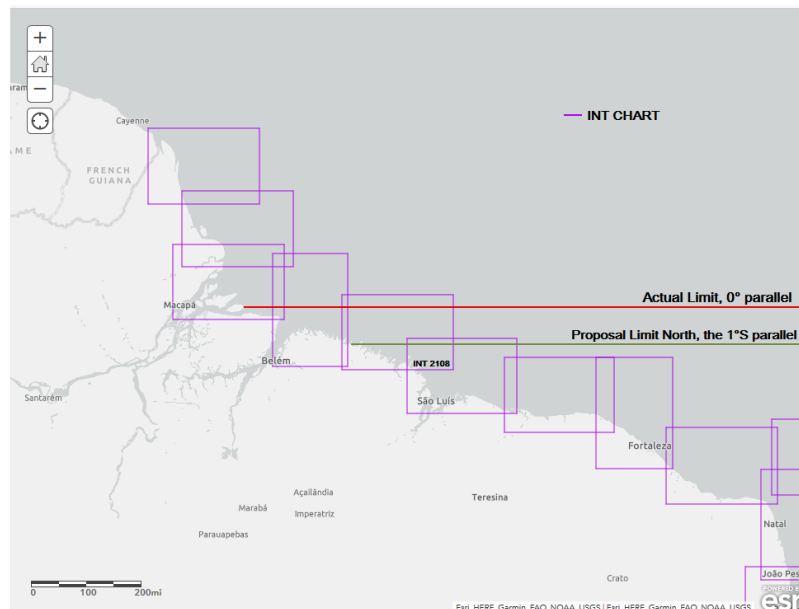


Figure 2 - INT Scheme near the boundary of the MACHC and SWAtHC regions

No changes to the INT Chart and ENC schemes will be necessary. The Brazilian Hydrographic Office will maintain the cartographic scheme of the Amazon basin, in conformity with the 3rd Brazilian Nautical Cartographic Plan and the INT Chart and ENC schemes of MACHC and SWAtHC.

In this way, the MACHC Statutes must reflect the new geographic areas covered by both Commissions, MACHC and SWAtHC.

After the approval of this proposal by MACHC, the IHO Secretariat should be informed of this change in order to update its website and related documents (e.g. IHO International Charting Regions).

Recommendations

It is suggested to modify the Statutes of the MACHC, as follow:

- 1) Replace the current image in Annex 2 of the Statutes of the MACHC with the image of the Annex to this proposal; and
- 2) In Article 1 b): add the sentence “The hydrographic basins flowing into the defined geographic Region are part of it.”.

Action Required of MACHC

The MACHC is invited to:

- a. Note this proposal;
- b. Approve the change of the area of coverage of the MACHC and the Recommendation 1) of this proposal;
- c. Approve the Recommendation 2) of this proposal; and
- d. Take any other decisions and actions considered necessary.

Annex of the Proposal to change the area of coverage of the Meso American-Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC)

