

Proposal for the establishment of a Maritime Safety Information (MSI) Working Group

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: Over the last several years the International Maritime Organization approved new methods to enhance the provision of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) to mariners at sea. The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) continues to make progress on the S-100 product specification for navigational warnings, S-124. To facilitate the implementation of any necessary changes in procedures for disseminating MSI required by the Global Maritime Distress and Safety Systems (GMDSS), there is a need for a Working Group in the IHO's Meso American and Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission to address new dissemination methods, future enhancements, and how to collaborate to best achieve both.

Action to be taken: MACHC to endorse the establishment of a Working Group / Project Team for Maritime Safety Information.

Related documents: None

1. Background

The delivery of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) has changed over the last few years, not only internally but also internationally. With the development of IHO S-100 standard for navigational warnings, S-124, the revision of the Joint IMO/IHO/WMO manual on Maritime Safety Information, the observed general increase in the number of navigational warnings broadcast, an increase in global space operations, and the potential increase in responsibility for national coordinators as S-124 becomes operational, the cooperation and communication between MSI providers has become of the utmost importance. For example, Maritime Autonomous Surface Shipping (MASS) operations are a new type of event to consider. In 2021 NAVAREA IV promulgated two navigational warnings for the MASS vessel MAHI TWO as it crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Further, the exponential growth of space operations both by commercial and government entities has impacted member states of the MACHC. This past year there was space debris off the coast of the Bahamas, and Cape Canaveral has indicated to NAVAREA IV/XII that it has the capacity to handle multiple launches in a 24 hour window.

These scenarios all demonstrate the need for engagement, improved communications and cooperation between coastal states that provide MSI and this, coupled with the potential for new digital dissemination systems and the renewed push for resilience and information sharing, translates into MSI providers being busier than ever. With these changes the World-Wide Navigation Warning Service (WWNWS) subcommittee has encouraged development, contingency planning, and cooperation between Coastal States and NAVAREAS. Within

NAVAREA IV and XII this communication and information sharing is of particular importance due to the large number of MSI providers.

It is therefore suggested that the MACHC create a working group to improve the delivery of new policy, communication, and cooperation between NAVAREA and constituent MSI providers. This will permit members, associate members, and observers to better engage with partners in a suitable forum, particularly to understand requirements, consistency and efficiency within the MACHC area of responsibility.

2. Analysis

On behalf of the USA, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) serves as the NAVAREA IV and XII coordinator. Part of this role is to engage and collaborate with national coordinators to ensure that standards and policy are properly implemented and adhered to. Contact with costal states is currently carried out mostly by email, given the significant number of costal states within the MACHC; little direct MSI engagement is achieved. While NAVAREA IV and XII has been able to achieve the IRCC Strategic Performance Indicator of 90% —successful communication with coastal states within the NAVAREA—it will potentially remain a challenge to maintain this metric. An established working group will allow coastal states to be fully engaged with the modernization of MSI and provide a forum to properly plan for national coordinator continuity throughout the MACHC. The MACHC MSI Working Group would follow a similar trend by other hydrographic commissions. The MSI working group in the Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission has been a successful tool for numerous years and the recently established MSI working group in the North Sea Hydrographic Commission, established in the spring of 2021, will likely achieve similar results.

3. Objectives of the Working Group

Engage with National Coordinators to:

- Facilitate that the GMDSS MSI services in the NAVAREA are arranged in compliance with the regulations and recommendations of the IMO, IHO and other relevant organizations.
- Facilitate cooperation concerning technical and administrative matters related to the MSI service.
- Facilitate the exchange of information about events that could affect safety at sea within the NAVAREA.
- Facilitate the exchange of advice concerning all aspects of daily MSI work.
- Facilitate harmonization of new and existing methods that make MSI and other relevant information to shipping available.
- To evaluate and compile views on new and changed methods of providing MSI and to forward these to the relevant body.
- To exchange information about major planned operations at sea that are expected to affect international shipping in coastal waters of adjacent countries.
- Improve and develop capacity building.

4. Proposed Members

Membership to be open to member states, associate member states and observers of the MACHC.

The IMO NAVTEX and IMO EGC Coordinating panels and other relevant official international bodies could also be invited to be members/observers as decided by the WG.

5. Conclusions

Collaboration is needed by National Coordinators and NAVAREA Coordinators to address MSI developments and issues and to improve communication.

6. Recommendation

The USA recommends that it is the right time for the MACHC to endorse the establishment of a new Working Group for Maritime Safety Information to improve the delivery of new policy, communications and cooperation between NAVAREA IV/XII, NAVAREA V and constituent MSI providers. Through the work of this group the MACHC will better engage our partners abroad in a suitable forum, particularly to understand requirements, consistency, and efficiency between all nations within our area of responsibility.

The United States offers to serve as the Chair of the MACHC MSI Working Group.

7. Actions requested of the MACHC

The MACHC is invited to:

- a. Note the report.
- b. Endorse the establishment of the MACHC MSI Working Group.