

HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEYS WORKING GROUP (HSWG)

Terms of Reference

(as adopted by HSSC12, October 2020 including amendments to Annex B to Doc. HSSC12-05.6A agreed at the meeting. Reviewed HSSC16, May 2024)

1. Introduction

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is an intergovernmental consultative and technical organization that was established in 1921 to support safety of navigation and the protection of the marine environment. The objectives of the IHO are:

- a. Promote the use of hydrography for the safety of navigation and all other marine purposes in order to raise global awareness of the importance of hydrography;
- b. Improve global hydrographic capability, capacity, training, science and techniques;
- c. Improve global coverage, availability, quality, and facilitate access to hydrographic data and metadata;
- d. Establish and enhance the development of consistent international standards and guidance for hydrographic data and techniques;
- e. Enhance coordination of hydrographic activities and cooperation among its Member States;
- f. Maintain and develop hydrographic techniques and advancing procedures, liaising with industrial contributors.

At the 5th meeting of the IHO Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC5) it was noted that, after the restructuring of the HSSC Working Groups, there was not a single WG focused on hydrographic surveying. At HSSC8 a Project Team on Standards for Hydrographic Surveys (HSPT) was established to review IHO publication S-44 – *Standards for Hydrographic Surveys* – with the task of preparing a draft 6th Edition. In addition, the HSPT was tasked to submit a proposal and recommendation on whether the HSPT should continue as a standing working group with details of appropriate tasks for the proposed working group to undertake. At HSSC12 it was agreed that there was a need for a standing working group, a Hydrographic Surveys Working Group (HSWG), whose focus should be on all aspects related to the conduct of hydrographic surveys and the maintenance of relevant IHO publications.

2. Objective

- a. Maintain IHO publication S-44 – *Standards for Hydrographic Surveys* – preparing and proposing revisions and amendments to reflect changes in the demands of hydrographic data users, particularly those pertaining to data quality and standards;
- b. Update IHO publication C-13 – *IHO Manual on Hydrography* – to reflect

current techniques, methodologies and survey systems, in particular to ensure harmonization with the standards articulated in S-44;

- c. Create and maintain B-13, Guidance to Satellite Derived Bathymetry;
- d. Support the education on the use of S-44 by developing supporting documentation to articulate best practice guidance;
- e. Support the translation task for S-44, B-13 and C-13 to enable their widest possible application and use;
- f. Maintain close liaison with other HSSC and IRCC working groups, in particular the work of the Data Quality Working Group (DQWG) to meet the presentation/visualization requirements of nautical data to the maritime customer, and the CBSC to support the educational and best practice elements;
- g. Identify new systems, technologies and methodologies and exchange experiences, best practice and challenges amongst member states in line with the IHO objectives;
- h. Act as a focal point for hydrographic surveys industry engagement with the IHO.

3. Authority

This WG is subordinate to the HSSC. Its work is subject to HSSC approval.

4. Composition and Chairmanship

- a. The HSWG shall comprise representatives of IHO Member States (MS), Expert Contributors (EC), observers from accredited non-governmental international organizations (NGIO), and a representative of the IHO Secretariat. A membership list shall be maintained and posted on the IHO website;
- b. EC membership is open to entities and organizations that can provide a relevant and constructive contribution to the work of the HSWG;
- c. The Chair and up to two Vice-Chairs shall be a representative of a MS. The election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be decided at the first meeting after each ordinary session of the IHO Assembly and shall be determined by vote of the representatives of Member States present and voting;
- d. A Secretary shall be elected from the Working Group, and need not be a MS representative;
- e. If the Chair is unable to carry out the duties of the office, a Vice-Chair shall assume the Chair with the same powers and duties;
- f. ECs shall seek approval of membership from the Chair;
- g. EC membership may be withdrawn in the event that a majority of the Members represented in the HSWG agrees that an EC's continued participation is irrelevant or unconstructive to the work of the HSWG;

- h. Project team and sub-team leads may be elected within their membership, but may also be directly appointed by the Chair if deemed appropriate;
- i. All members shall inform the Chair in advance of their intention to attend meetings of the HSWG;
- j. If a large number of EC Members seek to attend a meeting, the Chair may restrict attendance by inviting ECs to act through one or more collective representatives.

5. Procedures

- a. The HSWG should work by correspondence, teleconferences, group meetings, workshops, or symposia. The HSWG should meet at least once a year. When meetings are scheduled, and in order to allow any HSWG submissions and reports to be submitted to HSSC on time, no HSWG meetings should occur later than nine weeks before a meeting of the HSSC;
- b. Decisions should generally be made by consensus. If votes are required on issues or to endorse proposals presented to the HSWG, only the representatives of Member States may cast a vote. Votes at meetings shall be on the basis of one vote per Member State represented at the meeting. Votes by correspondence shall be on the basis of one vote per Member State represented in the HSWG;
- c. Sub-working groups and project teams may be created by the WG or proposed to HSSC to undertake detailed work on specific topics. The terms of reference and rules of procedure of the sub-working groups and project teams are determined or proposed by the WG as appropriate.
- d. The date and venue of group meetings shall normally be announced by the Chair at least four months in advance.
- e. The draft record of meetings shall be distributed by the Chair or Secretary within six weeks of the end of meetings and participants' comments should be returned within three weeks of that date. Final minutes of meetings should be posted on the IHO website within three months of a meeting.
- f. The HSWG should liaise with other IHO bodies, international organizations and industry to ensure the relevance of its work and timely notice of changes to the standards;
- g. The HSWG should report to HSSC on its activities and submit a rolling two-year work plan, including expected time frame and milestone targets.