

Given that many of their activities serve similar professional constituencies, the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reinforce their relationship. The purpose of the MOU, signed during a FIG Working Week in Athens, Greece in May 2004, is to provide a framework for continuing liaison and mutual sharing of knowledge and expertise.

by Hugo M Gorziglia, director, IHB,
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Commission 4

IHO/FIG Hydrographic Co-operation

Capacity-building for West and Central Africa

The United Nations, through various Assembly resolutions, encourages intensified efforts to build capacity for developing countries, in particular coastal African states, to improve hydrographic services and the production of nautical charts. The IHO invited FIG Commission 4 Hydrography to collaborate in this challenge. This paper provides a brief description of IHO activities through the East Atlantic Hydrographic Commission (EAthC) and the contribution made by FIG. It describes the 5th FIG Regional Conference held in Accra, Ghana in March 2006, and concludes with IHO and FIG views in regard to training opportunities in the region. The MOU has demonstrated that words can be turned into deeds. It forms the basis for joint action and, in this case, of direct benefit to the coastal countries in western and central Africa.

1. IHO Capacity-building in West and Central Africa, and FIG Contribution

a. East Atlantic Hydrographic Commission (EAthC)

EAthC meetings in 2000 and 2002 deemed the situation in the region worrying; a view shared by participant IHO member states, associate members of the Commission and observers. As a result, they decided to create a team of experts in hydrography, marine cartography and marine information tasked with visiting countries

where a lack of surveys, charts and nautical information had been identified. The French Naval Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service (SHOM), in charge of co-ordinating the project, invited all the littoral states in West Africa, from Morocco to the Democratic Republic of Congo, to consider accepting a visit from the team of hydrographic experts. Seventeen nations responded positively and sixteen of these were visited during four trips between 2002 and 2004. The team was struck by the differing maritime situations of each country they visited. In many cases the authority with overall responsibility for safety of navigation had not long been established. Often the division of areas of responsibility was not entirely clear among Port Authorities, National Maritime Authorities and Naval Forces. Countries generally expressed a desire to improve the safety of navigation in their waters and to build a national hydrographic capability to serve their needs in the future.

b. Technical Workshop

Forty-five delegates from seventeen countries attended an EAthC Technical Workshop held in October 2004 in Brest, France. The aim of this event was to gather together responsible authorities from the coastal states of West/Central Africa who had participated in the technical visits carried out by the West Africa Action Team (WAAT) and to highlight the importance of hydrography and safety of

navigation. Emphasis was put on the need to be able to achieve Phase I of the 'Development of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Capability'. This involves collecting and circulating nautical information necessary to maintain existing charts and keep publications up to date.

c. Technical Seminar

In October 2004 an initiative was approved for a one-week seminar for National Hydrographic Committee chairmen of the EAthC region countries. The objective was to raise awareness at government level of the importance of hydrography to safety of navigation and national economic development, and to explore initiatives of common regional interest. It was agreed that the seminar would take place in October 2005 at the International Maritime Academy (IMA) in Trieste, Italy. Invitations to the seminar were circulated in May 2005 among official national contacts or those identified during the WAAT technical visit. Nineteen countries were invited to identify a 'key national person' to attend the seminar, ideally the chairman of the National Hydrographic Committee, National Maritime Safety Committee or equivalent and, if any, the person to assume national responsibility for monitoring establishment of that country's hydrographic capabilities. The need to ensure continuity of this effort was highlighted. Unfortunately, despite twelve positive responses, only six persons attended.



(From right to left:) Adam Greenland, chair, FIG Commission 4, Hugo M Gorziglia, IHB director and Dominique Baggio, France (SHOM).

IHB Capacity Building Funds were used to partially support seminar attendance of participants from the EAHC region. IHO Member states, and FIG, funded their own representatives. The Seminar was held over five days. The first three covered general aspects and the last two days focused on regional aspects.

d. FIG contribution

FIG and IHO have co-operated for many years as members of the former Technical Assistance Co-operation Co-ordination Committee (TACC) and on the FIG/IHO/ICA International Advisory Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers (IAB). FIG participated in the first meeting of the IHO Capacity Building Committee (CBC) in 2003.

Within the context of this paper we will refer especially to the contribution FIG Commission 4 has made in regard to IHO Capacity Building efforts in the western and central Africa region. For this and other purposes several meetings were held between the chairman of Commission 4 and the director of IHB in charge of CB matters to exchange opinions on content of events and to identify appropriate speakers, including FIG experts. One of the key topics to be discussed at the seminar was the economic benefit associated with a national hydrographic capability. It was a member of FIG Commission 4 that presented this important topic. Participants at the seminar were impressed by the views and experience shared by the expert. The IHO is appreciative of this support and has requested that FIG Commission 4 participate in the next Technical Seminar to the Meso-

American and Caribbean Hydrographic Commission Region, scheduled for October 2006 in Acapulco, Mexico.

II. FIG Commission 4 Hydrography and the 5th FIG Regional Conference

The 5th FIG Regional Conference was held in Accra, Ghana in March 2006, the first time that FIG

had organised its regional conference in West Africa. The interest in Ghana and the region, particularly Nigeria, exceeded all expectations. Attendees totalled almost 650, representing fifty countries, twenty African and thirty overseas countries. FIG Commission 4 organised two technical sessions of nine papers. Topics included Marine and Coastal Zone Management and a more general session on Hydrography. One paper from Nigeria entitled 'Charting Nigerian Waters for Safer Navigation' was selected as the April 2006 FIG Article of the Month.

The IHO was invited to present a keynote paper in Accra. In Plenary Session 2, Capacity Building in Africa, IHB director Capt. Hugo M Gorziglia presented a paper on IHO capacity-building efforts in the region. Capt. Dominique Baggio, SHOM, France, expanded upon this subject in his presentation assessing future prospects for hydrography in western and central Africa.

III. Training Opportunities in the Region

The IHO team that visited the countries in the region between 2002 and 2004 proposed the Regional Maritime Academy (RMA) in Accra, Ghana as a potential facility to provide regional training. Given the opportunity provided by the FIG Regional Conference, FIG Commission 4 and IHO organised a meeting with a representative from the Accra RMA, Capt. Edwin Botch-

way. This encounter was very encouraging, and both FIG and IHO made a firm commitment to support the RMA in providing a focus for training in the region. Initial follow-up actions included letters of recognition and support to the RMA senior executive. IHO endorsement of the RMA as a regional training centre raises the RMA profile within the region and gives added impetus to its programme of maritime studies.

The RMA is studying the IAB standards and comparing them to the course outline and detailed syllabus of its current programme. It is anticipated that the RMA will submit a course of study to the IAB for review and approval. Local practitioners have been approached to assist with delivery of the practical elements required for a hydrographic training course. In addition, industry/professional information has been provided to RMA, including conference proceedings, meetings, articles and the new IHO Manual of Hydrography M-13.

IHO and FIG wish the RMA every success in their endeavours and look forward to collaborating on future capacity-building efforts in the region. More information on IHB (☎1) and FIG (☎2), see their websites. ■

Biographies

Captain Hugo Gorziglia, Chilean Navy, has devoted his career to hydrography, nautical charting and applied oceanography. He was Chilean Hydrographer and National Oceanographic Committee Chairman from 1994 to 1997. In 2002 he was elected IHB director. Among other responsibilities, he holds the chair of the Capacity Building Committee and the Hydrographic Committee on Antarctica.

Adam Greenland holds the position of senior hydrographic surveyor with LINZ Hydrographic Services (Land Information New Zealand). He worked formally with the Port of London Authority and the UK Merchant Navy. He is current chair of FIG Commission 4 'Hydrography'.

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Web references

- 1 www.iho.shom.fr
- 2 www.fig.net (FIG Commission 4)