

HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (HSSC)

Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

- Ref: a/ Decision 4 of the XVIIIth IHC (editorial corrections made in July 2013).
b/ IHO CL 23/2015 and CL 41/2015 (amendment to the Rules of Procedure).
c/ Entry into force of the Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO.
d/ Decision 6 of the 1st Session of the IHO Assembly (amendment to Art. 2.8, see paragraph 12 of Doc. A.1/WP2/01).
e/ IHO Circular Letter N° 02/2019 dated 10 January 2019.
f/ IHO Circular Letter N° 02/2024 dated 9 January 2024.

Considering the need to promote and coordinate the development of standards, specifications and guidelines for official products and services to meet the requirements of mariners and other users of hydrographic information, the International Hydrographic Organization establishes a Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) with the following Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure. The HSSC shall be the IHO Technical Steering Group acting on behalf of all Member States and shall report to each ordinary session of the Assembly through the Council.

1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1 Monitor the requirements of mariners and other users of hydrographic information concerning the use of hydrographic products and information systems that may require data and information provided by national hydrographic authorities, and to identify those technical matters that may affect the activities and products of those authorities.
- 1.2 Monitor the work of specified IHO Inter-Organizational Bodies engaged in hydrographic services, standards and related technical activities as directed by the Assembly and provide advice and guidance to the IHO representatives as required.
- 1.3 Study and propose methods and standards for the acquisition, assessment and provision of official hydrographic data, nautical products and other related services.
- 1.4 Maintain technical liaison with other relevant stakeholders, such as type-approval authorities, navigation equipment manufacturers, and the hydrographic data user-community.
- 1.5 Prepare and maintain publications related to the objectives of the Committee.
- 1.6 Prepare a Committee Work Programme in support of the IHO Work Programme 2 (Hydrographic Services and Standards) and propose it to each ordinary session of the Assembly through the Council.
- 1.7 Monitor the execution of the Committee Work Programme and report to each meeting of the Council, including an evaluation of the performance achieved.
- 1.8 Consider and decide upon proposals for new work items under the Committee Work Programme, taking into account the financial, administrative and wider stakeholder consequences and the IHO Strategic Plan and Work Programme and report to each meeting of the Council.
- 1.9 Propose to the Assembly through the Council, the establishment of new Sub-Committees, when needed, supported by a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis.

- 1.10 As required, establish Working Groups to fulfil the Committee Work Programme, in conformance with Article 6 of the General Regulations and approve their Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.
- 1.11 Monitor the work of its Sub-committees, Working Groups and other bodies directly subordinate to the Committee.
- 1.12 Review annually the continuing need for each Working Group previously established by the Committee.
- 1.13 Liaise and maintain contact with relevant IHO and other bodies to ensure that IHO work activities are coordinated.
- 1.14 Liaise with other relevant international organizations and Non-Government International Organizations (NGIOs).
- 1.15 These Terms of Reference can be amended in accordance with Article 6 of the General Regulations.

2. Rules of Procedure

- 2.1 The Committee shall be composed of representatives of Member States. The Chairs of the relevant subordinate bodies of the Committee, or their nominated representatives, shall attend and report at all Committee Meetings. RENCs, International Organizations and accredited Non-Government International Organizations (NGIOs) may attend Committee Meetings. Expert Contributors who can provide relevant and constructive contribution to the work of the Committee may be invited by the Chair to participate in meetings on case-by-case basis. When an IHO Open Stakeholders' session is planned and embedded in a meeting of the Committee, all Stakeholders participating in this session are entitled to attend the HSSC meeting for its entire duration.
- 2.2 A Director of the Secretariat shall act as Secretary to the Committee. The Secretary shall prepare the reports required for submission to each meeting of the Council and to sessions of the Assembly as directed by the Council.
- 2.3 The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be a representative of a Member State. The election of the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be decided at the first meeting after each ordinary session of the Assembly and shall be determined by vote of the Member States present and voting. If the Chair is unable to carry out the duties of the office, the Vice-Chair shall act as the Chair with the same powers and duties.
- 2.4 The Committee shall meet once a year, unless decided otherwise by the Committee, whenever possible in conjunction with another relevant conference or meeting. The venue and date of the meeting shall be decided at the previous meeting, in order to facilitate participants' travel arrangements. Meetings should normally be scheduled to precede a session of the Council or Assembly by approximately four months. The Chair or any member of the committee, with the agreement of the simple majority of all members of the Committee, can call extraordinary meetings. Confirmation of the venue and date shall normally be announced at least six months in advance. All intending participants shall inform the Chair and Secretary ideally at least one month in advance of their intention to attend meetings of the Committee.
- 2.5 Decisions shall generally be made by consensus. If votes are required on issues or to endorse proposals presented to the Committee, decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of Committee Members present and voting. When dealing with inter-sessional

matters by correspondence, a simple majority of all Committee Members shall be required.

- 2.6 The draft record of meetings shall be distributed by the Secretary within six weeks of the end of meetings and participants' comments should be returned within three weeks of the date of despatch. Final minutes of meetings should be distributed to all IHO Member States and posted on the IHO website within three months after a meeting.
- 2.7 The working language of the Committee shall be English.
- 2.8 The Committee shall progress its work primarily through Working Groups, each of which shall address specific tasks. Working Groups shall operate by correspondence to the maximum extent practicable.
- 2.9 Recommendations of possible strategic importance made by the Committee shall be submitted to IHO Member States for adoption through the Council to the Assembly. The Committee should appreciate and determine the need to go through the Council for recommendations. If prior endorsement of the Council is not deemed necessary by the Committee, the recommendations on standards and publications can be submitted directly to the IHO Member States for approval, once endorsed by the Committee.
- 2.10 These Rules of Procedure can be amended in accordance with Article 6 of the General Regulations.