

Updating IHO Publication S-44, Standards for Hydrographic Surveys - Planning for the Future of Safe Navigation

Vrignaud Christophe (France) and Ironside Simon (New Zealand)

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SUMMARY

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Christophe Vrignaud and Simon Ironside

Almost ten years have passed since the Monaco-based intergovernmental International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) adopted the current (5th) edition of its Special Publication No. 44, Standards for Hydrographic Surveys (S-44) in February 2008. This publication, which can be downloaded at www.iho.int/iho_pubs/standard/S-44_5E.pdf, provides a set of minimum standards for the conduct of hydrographic surveys and collection of data that will be primarily used in the compilation of nautical charts to ensure safe navigation and the protection of the marine environment.

At its 8th meeting, in November 2016, the IHO Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) established a new Project Team on Standards for Hydrographic Surveys (HSPT) tasked to conduct a comprehensive review of S-44 and the development of future standards. The official terms of reference require the HSPT to “...review the existing edition (5th) of the IHO publication S-44 Standards for Hydrographic Surveys, identify deficiencies...” and “...when undertaking this task, to consider, as a minimum,...” the need to prepare a draft for the 6th Edition “...in support of safety of navigation data products and services...” for subsequent approval by IHO Member States.

The composition of the HSPT was officially released in March 2017. FIG Commission 4, through

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Working Group 4.1, is a member of the HSPT. The inaugural Project Team meeting took place in Paris in June 2017, with Representatives from thirteen IHO Member States (Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Sweden, UK and USA), Observers (International Federation of Hydrographic Societies) and Expert Contributors (iXBlue, University of Southern Mississippi, IIC Technologies, ARGANS and Fugro).

One of the principal outcomes of the Paris meeting was compilation of a list of S-44 limitations. Work is currently being undertaken analysing these deficiencies and finding the best possible solutions for the benefit of the international hydrographic community. Another outcome was an online questionnaire designed to gauge the views of S-44 users, stakeholders and the wider hydrographic community on a range of S-44 related topics. The HSPT is keen to gather a wide spectrum of opinion from the commercial hydrographic sector to inform the review of S-44 and guide its improvement for current and future users.

The objective of this paper is to present an overview of these HSPT works.

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