

Towards Greater Harmonization of ENC's

Following the successful joint production and release of the South China Sea (SCS) ENC on 30th March 2005, the EAHC MS recognized the need to further co-operate to harmonize the ENC's of various scales and usage bands. Valuable user feedback received from ships participating in the ECDIS sea trial using the SCS ENC's were very encouraging. User feedback also highlighted the need for large and medium scale ENC's at approaches to ports. This encouraged EAHC MS's to consider prioritizing the production of larger scale ENC's.

The initiative will be welcomed by ECDIS users, many of whom had in the past commented on the lack of medium and large scale ENC's covering ports and its approaches in the SCS area. Greater harmonization of ENC's will be in line with the IMO Correspondence Group for ECDIS' which proposed the mandatory ECDIS carriage for High Speed Crafts from 2008 and for all new vessels built from 2010.

The EAHC MS will be meeting in Bangkok, Thailand from 28th - 29th July 2005 to discuss issues relating to the harmonization of ENC's, for instance, different compilation scales, ENC data gaps, overlaps and depth contour intervals between ENC of different usage bands.

The benefits of harmonizing the SCS ENC data sets with larger and smaller scale ENC's are three-fold. First, the consistent presentation of the different ENC's usage bands would give greater confidence to ECDIS users. Second, there would be an increase in ENC coverage with large medium scale ENC's covering the major shipping routes, ports and harbors. Finally, the greater sharing of expertise and experience in ENC production and quality assurance would speed up the production and availability of official ENC's covering the East Asia region.

The recent SCS ENC project has demonstrated the excellent working relationship among the EAHC MS. The forthcoming ENC Harmonization Meeting underscores the commitment and continuous efforts of the EAHC to promote the use of official ENC's with ECDIS.

Reported by Mr. Jamie Chen
the SET Coordinator (Singapore)