

## THE IHO INTERNATIONAL CHART, THE WAY AHEAD

by the Directing Committee of the IHB

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At a time when there is recurring demand from the shipping world for an international set of charts or an "international catalogue of selected charts", intended to enable international shipping to make use of the best available national charts, the IHO INT chart concept has fortunately advanced to a stage where its implementation in full can begin. It is the purpose of this paper to outline the means whereby this implementation could be achieved, as envisaged by the Bureau.

Before considering future steps to extend the INT chart coverage to include charts at medium and large scale it is useful to look at the origin and purpose of the concept and its development so far.

The first proposal, made at the 1967 I.H. Conference by France and the Netherlands, said: "It is recommended that a commission be set up to study the constitution of an international set of charts. This set should enable all the IHB Member States to print in facsimile all the charts required for world-wide navigation".

Recognising the magnitude of the problem the Conference established a commission with terms of reference which confined the study to small scale charts i.e. smaller than 1/1,000,000 "required for world-wide navigation in international waters".

The concept of international charts was examined by Rear Admiral W. LANGERAAR in an article in the *International Hydrographic Review* of July 1969 in which he pointed out the enormous waste of effort in copying for reproduction the charts of other nations and advocated the concept of "translated facsimile reproduction". He stated that it was his sincere conviction "that this type of charting foreign coasts is the fastest, most detailed and most reliable way to serve one's shipping with the best there is at the lowest possible cost".

Captain V. A. MOITORET, Director IHB, reporting the progress of the Commission in the same issue of the Review stated that "the advantages (of facsimile reproduction) could be extended and broadened to encompass an international set of charts so that any one nation would be able to avoid the extensive compilation and drafting work required to produce all of them individually", and that thereby "the needs of all could be met,

each member being free to adopt any or all of the charts in the total scheme as needed".

The Commission on small scale INT charts dealt with both specifications and scheming and made such progress that the Bureau was able to publish its report in Circular Letter No. 21 on 4 July 1970. Compilation by 17 "producer" Member States began at once and by June 1979 75 % of the 83 charts schemed had been published and most of these had been adopted by a number of "printer" Member States.

This ready acceptance of the INT chart concept was further demonstrated by the adoption, at the 1972 I. H. Conference, of a resolution proposed by UK which brought into being a new commission to study the problem of producing, at medium and large scales, an international set of charts suitable for the needs of international shipping. Again because of the magnitude of the task this study was restricted, this time to the waters of North West Europe, and the commission was designated the North Sea International Chart Commission (NSICC) under the Chairmanship of Mr D. W. NEWSON (UK).

With small scale INT charts a reality and the approval of the above proposal to extend the concept to charts at medium and large scales, the full intention of the original French/Netherlands proposal became a possibility.

In the *International Hydrographic Review* of July 1974 the UK Hydrographic Department contributed an informative paper on the principles of international charting. This paper defines the main aim by quoting from the IHO Resolution of 1972: "the production of a set of charts suitable for the needs of international shipping... Such international charts would enable those IHO Member States who provide, or wish to provide, charts outside their own national waters, to print by facsimile with minimum modification, selected modern charts". The paper goes on to state that the intention of the resolution is that IHO Member States share the task of making reproduction material available and keeping it updated, with the two following major advantages: "Firstly to allow countries which do not print and issue NMs outside their national waters at present to do so, in their own language, and with their own modifications of style if desired.

Secondly, by sharing the effort, to make it easier for all countries to keep their charts of foreign waters updated, and thereby to use their resources with greater efficiency."

The major task of the NSICC soon emerged as the production of a comprehensive set of internationally agreed or acceptable chart specifications. This was, of course, a much more complicated problem than for small scale charts, as was the scheming of the area.

The NSICC reported to the 1977 I. H. Conference, which in turn recommended the Report for "consideration as a reference text for extending International charting at medium and large scales to other regions of the world".

The IHB, having noted the remarkable advances in the standardisation of symbols and abbreviations which had been achieved by the NSICC, proposed the formation of a Chart Specification Committee which would

have as its first task the extension of the NSICC specifications to meet world-wide requirements. This committee was constituted by the 1977 I. H. Conference "to adapt and extend the specifications for International Charts to cover all navigational charts in the interests of standardisation". Since then the CSC has commenced the extension of the NSICC specifications into the new "Chart Specifications of the IHO", and one whole section "Topography" (No. 300), has already been published and circulated. A second section "Hydrography and Navigational Aids" (No. 400) is currently being issued.

It is quite clear from the foregoing proposals, resolutions and remarks that the goal is to facilitate the incorporation and maintenance of foreign charts in national sets for the advantage of foreign-going ships. With the work of the CSC in extending the specifications well advanced, it is now appropriate to consider the implementation of the full concept of the INT chart.

Among the advantages to be gained from an INT set of charts is that the number of charts needed by international shipping, and consequently the maintenance workload, can be reduced. As was pointed out in the NSICC Report, national sets of charts are enlarged by the necessity to provide for the navigation of all classes of vessels down to the smallest and provide "information sources, usually at very large scales, to meet the requirements of various national users". The first step therefore in producing an international set of charts is the scheming of a series which, whilst using the minimum number of charts, meets the "needs of international shipping".

The CSC, at its first meeting in April 1979, adopted the following recommendation:

"The CSC recommends that the IHB encourage IHO Member States to form regional charting groups to devise schemes of INT medium and large scale charts, referring to the principles stated in Part III of the NSICC Chairman's Report to the XIth I. H. Conference (CONF./XI/Doc.3)."

The Bureau foresees the formation of Working Groups from Member States, perhaps set up by the Regional Hydrographic Commissions, to scheme within geographical regions the limits of a series of International Charts at the necessary scales. The guiding principles for this task given in the NSICC Report para. 34 on page 10 were used for the North West European area and resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of charts required to meet "the needs of international shipping". Similar schemes, agreed regionally, will provide the chart limits for production of INT charts which the responsible hydrographic offices can undertake as and when opportunity and their capacity permit.

In order to best serve the interests of international shipping, regional working groups should involve not only all the charting authorities within the area but also those external hydrographic offices whose chart series include the concerned area. It is considered that regional schemes, before implementation, should be forwarded to the Bureau with a view to obtaining as much conformity as possible and compatibility with adjoining regions.

Meanwhile the Bureau will continue to publish the sections of the specifications as they are approved by the CSC. Whilst these specifications are intended primarily for INT charts, they will also provide a standard for those countries wishing to use them for national charting. Certain provisions contained in the NSICC Report, which apply only to INT Charts and deal in the main with administrative and maintenance procedures, will be published separately as "INT Chart Regulations".

Since these specifications and regulations have been drawn up by the NSICC and the CSC, both of which were constituted for that purpose by the IHO, and whose total membership includes 20 Member States; and since the NSICC Report was recommended by the XIth I. H. Conference as a basis for extending the INT chart concept, it is not necessary at this stage to invite comment or amendment. Rather, it is more important to issue the specifications as soon as possible in order that the INT chart concept can be progressed beyond charts at small scales. Early issue of the specifications is also important to those countries which are waiting to use them for their national charting.

It is the intention of the Bureau to lay before the XIIth I. H. Conference the completed publication "Chart Specifications of the IHO", together with the "Regulations for INT charts".

It is noteworthy that the NSICC Report clearly recognised that "charts produced according to the specifications may still retain a degree of individuality in the less fundamental aspects of, for instance, the use of colour and representation of land relief". The Report went on to say: "Hydrographic experience indicates that the conversion of any country's charts to a new specification would be a gradual process, taking a considerable number of years. It is also likely that, either temporarily or permanently, there would be national requirements, reflecting changes in the country's preference or needs, to introduce minor variations into the specification."

If the experience with the small scale INT charts is any guide it can be hoped that, once the limits of the necessary charts have been agreed regionally and inter-regionally and the specifications, now in the course of finalisation, have been disseminated, Member States will begin issuing INT charts at all scales and the needs of international shipping will be met more rapidly than has been thought possible.

With the implementation of the INT chart the task of meeting the needs of international shipping, which is the underlying purpose of the IHO, will be spread amongst all Member States. Those hydrographic offices whose charting has been necessarily confined to national waters will, with little extra effort, be able to give service to their national shipping sailing overseas, by providing the best and most suitable charts of foreign waters with an updating service through national Notices to Mariners.