

**9<sup>TH</sup> ROPME SEA AREA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION MEETING  
(RSAHC9)  
Muscat, Oman 15-17 November**

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2022	
Task 3.2.1.10	RSAHC - ROPME Sea Area Hydrographic Commission

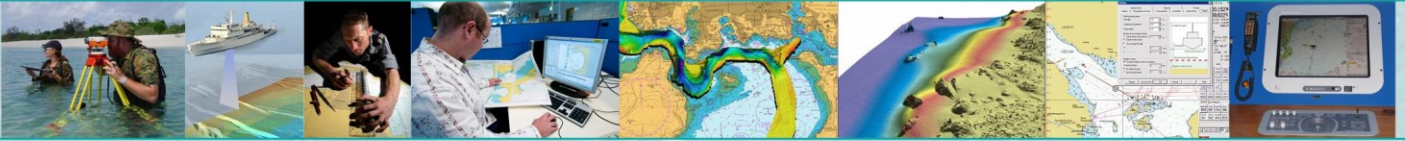
The 9<sup>th</sup> ROPME Sea Area Hydrographic Commission (RSAHC9) meeting was held in Muscat, Oman from 15 to 17 November 2022. The meeting was chaired by Captain Yahya bin Mohammed Al Balushi, Head of Oman National Hydrographic Office (ONHO) and attended by 32 registered participants. Five RSAHC Member States (Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman and Pakistan) were represented, as well as France, UKHO, IALA, AMNAS (Arabian Maritime Navigation and Aids Services), MENAS (Middle East Navigation Aids Service) and Industry (IXBlue, Kongsberg, Teledyne Geospatial, FUGRO and EOMAP). The IHO Secretariat was represented by Director Luigi Sinapi.



*Opening Ceremony - Participants at RSAHC9*

The meeting was preceded by an Opening Ceremony in the presence of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology of Oman, H.E. Eng. Khamis Al Shamakhj. In the opening speeches, the Undersecretary, the Director of OHNO and the IHO Director stressed the importance of the 9<sup>th</sup> RSAHC meeting for the





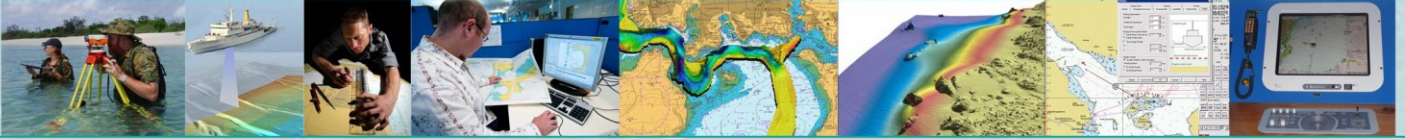
region and the Persian Gulf countries after a long interruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting how sea-related matters play a fundamental role in the life and development of all Persian Gulf countries. The RSAHC9 meeting falls in a particular period of the IHO's operational life, just after the recently concluded 6<sup>th</sup> IHO Council Meeting and just ahead of the third session of the IHO Assembly, which is the principle decision making organ of the IHO to discuss and approve the IHO Work Programme and Budget for the next three years and to endorse and improve the numerous initiatives already underway. The IHO Director highlighted the key IHO activities of regional and international significance to the hydrographic and maritime community, such as the implementation of the S-100 Roadmap following the latest positive news from the IMO on the implementation dates of the S-100 ECDIS, the IHO's renewed commitment to the UN Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) as the largest initiative ever launched in favour of the oceans at the international level, the hydrographic Capacity Building programme, which remains a topic of great sensitivity for the International Hydrographic Organization, and then the IHO Crowdsourced Bathymetry initiative and Nippon Foundation GEBCO Seabed 2030 project.



*RSAH9 meeting, visit to the OHNO and visit to AMNAS*

On the occasion of the Sultanate of Oman's hosting the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the RHAHC, His Excellency Eng. Saeed bin Hamoud bin Saeed Al Mawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, received IHO Director Sinapi on 16 November 2022 at the Ministry's HQ., in the presence of Captain Yahya bin Mohammed Al Balushi, Head of the National Hydrographic Office of Oman. During the meeting, they highlighted the role played by the organization to ensure the safety of international navigation through the development of standards, in addition to matters of maritime interest. On 16 and 17 November 2022, the IHO Director paid a visit to ONHO and AMNAS, where the capacities of the two offices were described.





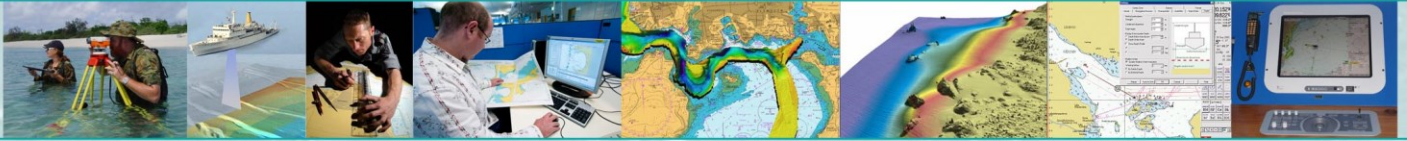
*Visit of the IHO Director to the Ministry of Transports, Communications and Information Technology*

The Regional Hydrographic Commission welcomed Iraq as a new Member State of the IHO. Iraq has undertaken to sign the RSAHC statutes to become a Member of the Regional Hydrographic Commission. Following this signing, the RSAHC will be able to count all Persian Gulf coastal States among its members. Despite the absence of four States of the Region (Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar), the meeting represented an important opportunity to consolidate the cooperative relationship between the Persian Gulf States, both bilaterally and regionally.

Particular attention was paid to Capacity Building issues, highlighting an agenda full of appointments and initiatives sponsored internationally by IHO and IALA. On the whole, between 2022 and 2023, a joint IHO-IALA Technical Visit to the IR of Iran (originally planned in 2022 and then postponed to the second semester of 2023), a High Technical Visit to Iraq (following the adhesion of Iraq to IHO) and two IALA Technical Missions to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have been planned, two candidates from the Region participated in 2022 in the GEOMAC course in Cartography Cat. B course sponsored by the Nippon Foundation at the UKHO and the Hydrography Cat. B course at the KHOA in the ROK. Personnel from the RSAHC participated in 2022 to a MSI course organized by NIOHC, highlighting the importance of collaboration between the Regional Hydrographic Commissions as a further opportunity for Persian Gulf States to utilize the activities of the IHO's Capacity Building programme. At the proposal of Iran, the RSAHC Chair will send a Circular Letter to all members of the Region to seek their willingness to provide financial support to the Capacity Building programme.

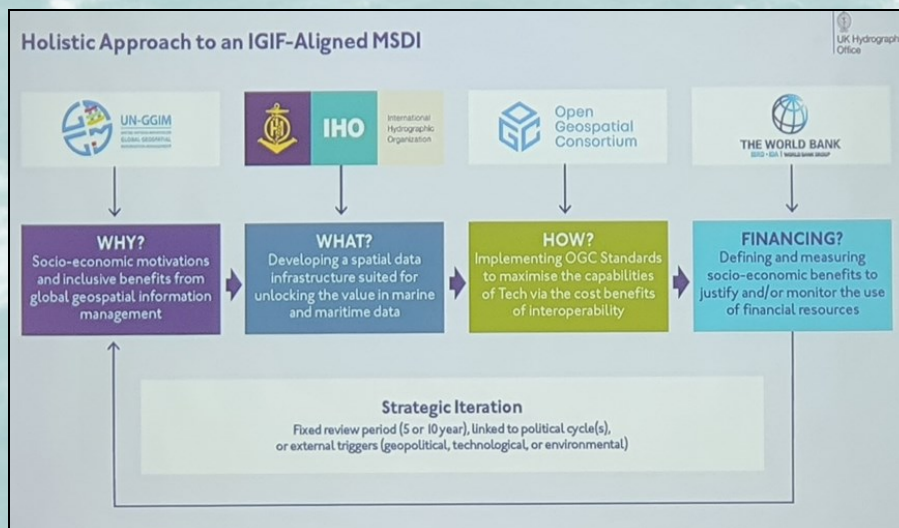
During the discussion of national reports, the need for greater effort in the areas of education and training in hydrography and cartography was highlighted, exploiting all the opportunities provided both internationally and nationally, through bilateral agreements with the countries





of the RSAHC and neighboring regions. In the area of MSI, Pakistan - as the coordinator of NAVAREA IX - reported to regularly use, in addition to the Inmarsat System, the Iridium Satellite System for the dissemination of nautical information throughout the region of responsibility, as the second recognized mobile satellite service (RMSS) approved by the IMO. All the promulgated MSI warnings are available on website.

In the area of MSDI, RSAHC is in line with the principles of the UNGGIM - IGIF and now ready to start working towards the creation of a MSDI at regional level, similarly to other Regional Hydrographic Commissions. The RSAHC Chair will send a Circular Letter to the members of the Region for the creation of a regional MSDI Working Group. In this regard, the IHO Director encouraged the national representatives present at the meeting to participate more actively in the IHO MSDI WG.



*The holistic approach to MSDI iaw the UNGIM-IGIF pathways*

During the meeting of the ICCWG, the INT Chart and ENC regional coordinator urged the representatives of the RSAHC Members to update the Chart Catalogue S for Region I directly into the IHO IntoGIS II system, in accordance with the IHO publication S-11 Part B, and to send reports on INT charts and schemes more promptly. Furthermore, in accordance with the WEND principles and IHO Resolution 1/2018, he brought to attention the need for greater collaboration at bilateral level between those coastal States or Primary Charting Authorities of the Region concerned, whose ENCs are affected by overlaps. Finally, in line with the WEND S-100 Principles and recommendations, the RSAHC Chair will send a Circular Letter to invite all members of the Region to propose a candidate for the new role of S-100 Services Coordinator or the expansion of the role of Regional Chart Coordinator to include S-1xx products.

The 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the RSAHC is planned to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2023 or 2024 (dates and location to be defined).