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| **NAUTICAL CARTOGRAPHY Working Group** |

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**NCWG Letter: 02/2017**

UKHO ref: HA317/010/031-14

Finnish ref: LIVI /326/00.03.01/2017

Date: 12 September 2017

**Subject: NCWG Procedures - NCWG3 Actions 9, 10 and 41**

Dear Colleagues

**Action 9**

A proposal was made at NCWG3 to establish an NCWG ‘Bulletins’ system. For the background to this, please see NCWG3-06.1A, especially paragraph 6 and, in the Annex, paragraphs 4.8-13. After some considerable debate, the meeting accepted the principle of establishing an ‘NCWG S-4 Bulletins’ system (although other names were suggested, such as ‘digest’ or ‘news’). The purpose of this letter is to confirm the principle and decide on some detail.

NCWG is a panel of experts appointed by IHO Member States to make recommendations on all matters of nautical cartography. They have a mandate to maintain IHO publication S-4, which contains the IHO’s Chart Specifications; see NCWG Terms of Reference §4a (i and ii). S-4 Part B provides general concepts and rationale for the portrayal of features on charts, whether electronic or paper, and it also contains the specification for paper charts (see B-100.3). Every year, NCWG considers various suggestions put forward by Member States for updating both roles of S-4 and through its meetings and by correspondence, it determines the appropriate actions necessary to revise existing guidance and introduce new guidance for developing maritime situations.

Ideally, the revised or new guidance should be promulgated as soon as possible, to achieve the best possible standardization of cartographic practice across Member States. However, S-4 is listed as an IHO Technical Standard and subject to the terms of IHO Resolution 2/2007 (as amended), referred to in this letter as Res.2/2007, which requires:

* a detailed consultation process with all stakeholders,
* followed by approval by HSSC (at its annual meeting),
* and then approval at the following IHO Council meeting,
* then approval by Member States (via Circular Letter with a three-month initial period for responses),
* then a final decision on action by the Chair of NCWG,
* incorporation into a revised edition of S-4.

This is inevitably a lengthy process, taking considerably more than a year. Meanwhile, it is possible that Member States need urgent advice on how to chart whatever item is under consideration.

The suggested bulletins system is therefore a method of informing Member States that a particular cartographic issue has been considered by the appointed panel of experts (NCWG) and what these experts have decided to be the best and standard guidance for its charting. While this is necessarily non-authoritative until completion of the Res.2/2007 process, and cannot therefore be incorporated into S-4 (or INT1 if required), it would allow Member States to make a judgement on what to do in time limited situations. Note that significant change to the NCWG’s (and the former CSPCWG’s) proposals for updating S-4 has never happened.

Although not an exact replication of the S-57 Encoding bulletins (details of which can be found at <http://www.iho.int/mtg_docs/enc/enc_prod/S-57EncodingBulletins.htm>), the general purpose is similar:

* They are all pieces of information that chart producers should be aware of;
* They are not yet authoritative;
* If/when approved, they will be incorporated into the actual standard (S-4) at the next opportunity;
* A list of incorporated bulletins will be retained for reference.

It is proposed that items will only be included in the bulletin once agreed by NCWG and listed in two sections:

* Clarifications to S-4 agreed by NCWG \*
* NCWG Proposals in progress for IHO approval

\* Note that Res.2/2007 allows the production of revised versions of S-4 to simply incorporate clarifications (without the lengthy Res.2/2007 consultation process). However, this could lead to too many revised versions, while clarifications could be retained in the ‘bulletin’ until the next major revision.

**Action 10**

A decision was taken to add a paragraph to procedures about issuing an ‘invitation to meeting’ letter about 6 months in advance of the NCWG meetings, to allow time for budget and visa approvals and also to invite suggestions for subject matter. Consequently, we suggest a new paragraph 3.5:

The Secretary will issue an invitation to the next NCWG meeting about 6 months in advance of the agreed date, to allow time for representatives to bid for the necessary budget approval, obtain visas and make travel arrangements. The letter will also request representatives to suggest topics for the agenda.

**Action 41**

All WG members were asked to consider hosting NCWG4 in the period September 2018 to February 2019 with a back-up plan to meet in Monaco from November 2018. So far, no invitations have been received. Yves Guillam has advised that IHO Secretariat is planning meetings for 2018 and available slots will soon be booked up. Please could all WG members consider urgently whether they could host NCWG4.

As usual, we have included a response form with some questions for you. Please respond by **7 November 2017**.

Yours sincerely,



Mikko Hovi,

Chair NCWG

Annex: Response form

Annex to NCWG Letter 02/2017

**NCWG Procedures - NCWG3 Actions 9, 10 and 41**

Response Form

(please return to NCWG Secretary by **7 November 2017**)

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If you vote ‘No’ to any of the following questions, please explain in the ‘Comments’ section. You can also use that section to record other suggestions, e.g. for different names.

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| **No.** | **Question** | **Yes** | **No** |
| 1 | **Action 9:**  Do you agree that there should be an NCWG Bulletins page on the IHO website? |  |  |
| 2 | If yes, do you agree it should be called ‘NCWG S-4 Bulletins’? |  |  |
| 3 | Should the Bulletins page be divided into the following two sections?   * Clarifications to S-4 agreed by NCWG * NCWG Proposals in progress for IHO approval |  |  |
| 4 | **Action 10:**  Do you agree with the wording of the proposed new paragraph 3.5? |  |  |
| 5 | **Action 41:**  Could your organization host NCWG4 between September 2018 and February 2019? |  |  |

Further comments:

Name:

Organization: