

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
for the  
**MesoAmerican – Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission**  
**Electronic Chart Committee**

**1. Background**

The Electronic Chart Committee of the MesoAmerican – Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC-ECC) was formed to encourage the production of electronic chart data and to promote the use of official electronic chart data, e.g. Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs), for the region aboard ECDIS-equipped vessels. The overall goal is to facilitate and promote the use of official electronic chart data (ENCs) for safe, efficient, and environmentally sensitive maritime navigation. Recognizing that regional capacity to produce ENCs is currently limited; improving coastal states' ability to acquire data and produce accurate paper and electronic charts has been identified for special emphasis. Respectively, exploring opportunities for alternative uses and support for the acquisition of hydrographic data and services forms an integral part of this effort.

**2. Objectives**

- a. Facilitate the production and exchange of official source data in the IHO data exchange format
- b. Promote the use of officially issued ENCs
- c. Improve hydrographic capacity of regional coastal states towards the long-term goal of producing ENCs in accordance with the CBC work programme
- d. Identify sources for acquiring and installing the necessary equipment, software tools and related training in accordance with the CBC work programme
- e. Speed up ENC coverage of the region, particularly in key ports and along major shipping routes.
- f. Decide on a method or methods for distributing ENC data to the shipping market.
- g. Increase the awareness of the benefits to exchange source data in the IHO data exchange format.

**3. Authority**

The Electronic Chart Committee (ECC) is a special Committee of the MesoAmerican – Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC). Its membership and activities are in accordance with the Statutes of the MACHC.

#### 4. Composition and Leadership

The ECC membership consists of representatives from the MACHC, including:

- Full Members (IHO Member States within the Region who are signatories of the Statutes of the MACHC)
- Associate Members (Regional Non-IHO Members who are signatories of the Statutes of the MACHC)
- Other Members States of the IHO outside the MesoAmerican – Caribbean Sea Region who contribute to the safety of navigation through their activities in the fields of hydrography, nautical charting or nautical information in the Region and are signatories to these Statutes.
- Representatives of entities and/or organizations, which, in the opinion of the COMMITTEE, can provide relevant and constructive contributions to the work of the ECC, may be invited.

a. The ECC will be chaired by a representative of a Member State. The Chair and the Vice Chair shall be chosen by the Member States represented in the COMMITTEE, and will serve for a period of two years. Selections of the Chair and Vice Chair should occur at the first meeting of the COMMITTEE after a Commission meeting. If no COMMITTEE meeting is scheduled, selections shall be conducted within one year after the Commission meeting and shall be initiated by the existing Chair.

b. The Chair shall assume the responsibility for all secretariat activities, including the development of the Agenda and scheduling of meetings. The Chair, in consultation with the Vice Chair shall assume responsibility for maintaining and/or updating the list of ECC contacts, as well as generating and circulating Summaries of meetings.

c. The Vice Chair shall assist the Chair in the preparation for meetings and shall act as Chair if the Chairman is unable to act at the Meeting or any part thereof.

d. Technical Coordinator(s) may be established to assist in attaining COMMITTEE goals. Specific actions and/or Terms of Reference for such a role may be formulated and distributed to all ECC members and appended to this document for reference. In general, the Technical Coordinator shall be responsible for:

1. Preparing technical advice and providing support to the COMMITTEE or Task Groups as needed
2. Coordinating with Member States and other stakeholders on technical issues
3. Assisting the Chair and Vice Chair in preparations for meetings and project planning arrangements
4. Submitting Reports to ECC Chair and Vice Chair as appropriate 3 months prior to the next meeting

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## 5. Procedures

- a. Meetings shall be conducted by the ECC Chair (or Vice-Chair in the Chair's absence-see paragraph 4-d) and shall generally be held in conjunction with MACHC meetings. Alternatively, the Chairman may call intercessional meetings as considered necessary or at the request of the majority of participants. A participating member shall normally provide meeting facilities and administrative support. Notification of meetings and an agenda with supporting materials will be distributed to participants and associated designated attendees at least 30 days in advance of a meeting. Action items and decisions will be identified at the end of each meeting.
- b. Decisions should generally be made by consensus. However, if votes are required on issues, only Member States may cast votes. Decisions shall be determined by simple majority of those present, or if by correspondence, by the majority of replies received within a pre-determined time frame. Votes shall be on the basis of one vote per Member State represented.
- c. The ECC should work by correspondence, meetings, workshops or symposia. The ECC should meet at least once a year. In those years when the full Commission meets, the ECC shall meet in conjunction with the Commission.
- d. Permanent or temporary Task Groups may be established by the ECC to undertake detailed work on specific assigned topics. Specific actions and/or Terms of Reference for those Task Groups may be formulated and distributed to all ECC members and appended to this document for reference. Task Groups shall be chaired by a governmental representative considered to possess the appropriate background for the intended purpose as determined by the ECC. The Chair of any Task Group shall be responsible for:
  1. Preparing the Agenda for all Task Group Meetings
  2. Preparing, circulating and finalizing Summaries of meetings and submitting them to the ECC Chair within 60 days of the meeting
  3. Following up on all related Actions
  4. Submitting Progress Reports to the ECC Chair three months prior to the next MACHC/ECC meeting.
- e. Permanent or temporary bodies such as Coordinators(s), composed of non-governmental technical experts may be established by the ECC to assist in attaining COMMITTEE goals. The objective of such bodies or individual shall be to:
  1. Render advice on key technical issues
  2. Recommend opportunities for mutual cooperation/collaboration
  3. Provide support in organizing and executing technical activities in support of the Committee as a whole and/or its individual Task Groups.

- f. The ECC meetings shall generally be conducted in English, unless all the participants agree otherwise and as resources permit. Minutes shall be produced in English, and if resources permit, in Spanish.
  - g. Within 30 days after a meeting, the Chair will promulgate minutes of meetings, including details associated with the decisions and actions.
  - h. All members should inform the Chairman in advance of their intention to attend meetings of the ECC.
  - i. Amendments to these terms of reference may be made at any time by concurrence of the participating members.
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