INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION
MESO AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN SEA HYDROGRAPHIC
COMMISSION

MACHC MEIP Maritime Environment Infrastructure Programme
Letter to Members March 2016

11 March 2016

Dear MACHC Member

I would like to inform you of the discussions that took place during the MEIPWG meeting held on 9 December 2015 in Antigua and the follow on discussions that took place during the MACHC16 plenary meetings from10 – 12 December.

You will recall that at the 15th MACHC meeting held in Manzanillo, Mexico in December 2014, I asked you all to provide me with a direction for the MEIP.

You unanimously requested that the MEIP WG "piggy back" on the ENC on-line viewer and set up an area specifically for the MEIP.

I sent out two letters to members during 2015, and also posted the MEIP annual report on the IHO MACHC website prior to MACHC 16.

MEIPWG Meeting 9 December

At this meeting, the MEIP Chair, Mr. Chris Thorne, presented a PowerPoint explaining the history of the MEIP and its establishment during the St Kitts MACHC meeting in 2011. He briefed the meeting on the discussions held during MACHC 15 in Manzanillo in 2014, the direction we were given on moving forward, and the results of the last year's efforts.

LT Anthony Klemm from the US provided a demonstration of the MEIP Online Viewer and the capabilities thus far.

A participants list was passed around during the course of the meeting for participants to provide their contact information (45 people were in attendance)

The Member States (MS) were reminded that if they wished to use IC-ENC to make their .000 files available in the viewer, they have to submit a letter to IC-ENC specifying which cells they wish to be included before their ENC data will be released for use in the MEIP Viewer.

The MEIPWG believed that they had achieved the objectives set by the MACHC Members in Manzanillo in 2014, and they had been pleasantly surprised by the MS willingness to participate which was clearly demonstrated by the number of .000 files currently included in the viewer.

The MEIP Chair explained the rationale behind the need for password protected access to the on-line viewer to ensure MS had confidence that their data was not able to be downloaded.

He also explained that we had not achieved the original aims of the MEIP, but we had managed to take a significant step towards it. The MEIPWG believe that we should keep moving forward in the hope that MS would eventually allow more and more data to be included once they had developed a trust in the protection of the data.

The MEIP Chair informed the meeting that the MEIPWG would be asking MACHC MS to approve the following proposal during the plenary of MACHC 16:

- WG to continue working with NOAA and MS to develop the viewer and its content.
- Seek approval from MS to remove the password protection.
- This will enable the data to be viewed by a wider audience and will hopefully generate more interest and more data

The proposal generated a lot of discussion of which the following comments were noted:

- CDR Ricardo Lopez from Mexico asked, why haven't additional MS beyond the initial Band 1 ENC providers supported this MEIP Viewer with their respective ENC that they are willing to share? He also encouraged the other MS to support this effort.
- CDR Paulo Matos from Brazil said that they had some initial concerns about data protection when this MEIP Viewer was first proposed.
- Dr. Leendert Dorst from the Netherlands reminded the MS that Blue Economy stimulation was part of the original purpose of the MEIP. The Netherlands thinks that there should not be password protection on the MEIP Viewer in order to promote the Economic Development that it was intended to support.
- LT Anthony Klemm from the US let the MS know that Tom DePuyt from ESRI was available at MACHC to provide further details about protection of the data if a particular MS has concerns about the potential removal of a password from the MEIP Viewer site.
- Mr. Calvin Thompson from Jamaica raised a concern about the potential that users might try to use the MEIP Viewer for navigational purposes. This is not the intended purpose of the MEIP Viewer and the users need to be cautioned about this on the site.
- CAPT Gustavo Gutierrez from Colombia said that they are generally supportive of the effort but they had some concerns.
- France said that they thought that the MEIP information should be made available via a WMS to support the Economic development. They suggested that maybe the MEIP WMS should be available via both IC-ENC and Primar.
- LT Anthony Klemm from the US mentioned that because of the current password protection a WMS is not possible at this time.
- CDR Ricardo Lopez from Mexico reminded the MS that the data is still protected even without the password protection. He said that maybe for now we could maintain the password protection as the MEIP Viewer is developed to allow time for MS to build confidence in the protection of their data.
- President Robert Ward from the IHO stated that "the King is wearing underwear and nothing else" in relation to the MEIP effort thus far. The purpose of this MEIP Viewer is to support economic development and at this point very few potential users actually have access to the MEIP Viewer because of the password protection. How does this help economic development? He recommends that the MEIP WG go back to look at the original purpose for the MEIP development so that we can better focus our efforts.
- The MACHC Chair, CAPT Marc v.d. Donck, said that the MEIP efforts thus far are baby steps forward. He said that we have many challenges within the MACHC region because of the various MS with different political agendas and business models. It is a different environment than Europe which is very much unified via the efforts of the EU.
- Mr. Tom DePuyt of ESRI stated that the WMS is there in the background in the current MEIP Viewer. Once the password protection is removed there are a lot of additional capabilities that can be added like routing to support economic development. Also other WMS's could be brought into the mix once this is opened up.
- CDR Ricardo Lopez from Mexico mentioned that we need to take action. The data layers need to be made available so that potential economic users can export MEIP information for use in GIS Analysis.
- President Robert Ward from the IHO stated that the fundamental question is whether the MS are going to make their data publically available via the MEIP Viewer or not? It could potentially be done at a price for those potential economic users if that is the direction the MS would like to go.
- The MACHC Chair, CAPT Marc v.d. Donck, asked do we take the password off or not? Otherwise the MEIP Viewer will have very little impact for the intended economic users.
- Mr. Alberto Costa Neves from the IHO said that he will follow up with some of the historic documentation from when the MEIP was first proposed so that the WG will fully understand the original proposal and direction given.

The MEIPWG Chair reminded the MS that they had given the WG the direction during MACHC 15 and this was what had been followed. Any change of direction needed to be agreed by MS during the plenary session.
He thanked all attendees for their contributions and said that he would ensure the MS were informed of all the comments during the plenary session.

MACHC 16 Plenary - 11 December
The MEIPWG Chair presented the report of the WG to MS (that had been posted on the MACHC website) and asked them to note the report and reminded them about the direction from MACHC 15 Meeting.
He also asked the MS to approve the WG proposals to:

1. WG to continue working with NOAA and MS to develop the viewer and its content.
2. Seek approval from MS to remove the password protection.
3. This will enable the data to be viewed by a wider audience and will hopefully generate more interest and more data

Once again this generated a lot of discussion between MS of which the following comments were noted:

- CAPT Marc v d Donck, the MACHC Chair, said the MEIP Proposal is clear and in line with the TOR. If the MS is uncomfortable with the password removal they do have the option to remove their data so that the MEIP Viewer project can move forward and other MS can benefit from it.
- Admiral Tim Lowe from the UK asks that the MEIP provide the MS a much better understanding of the purpose of the MEIP and where the group plans to go. Additionally, he stated that it is likely that if the password protection is removed the UK will likely have to withdraw their chart information from the MEIP Viewer when this happens. However, he did follow up that if he had a better understanding of the purpose and plan of the MEIP Viewer he may be able to re-input the UK chart information into the MEIP Viewer at that time.
- CAPT Gustavo Gutierrez from Columbia asks that the MEIP Viewer focus on SOLAS support, and Amphibious Operations. They also are supportive of removing the password for the MEIP Viewer.
- CAPT Marc v d Donck, the MACHC Chair, reminded everyone that the MEIP Viewer is for Economic Development and not for Navigation or Warfare purposes.
- Mr. John Nyberg from the US said that the US supports the removal of the password from the MEIP Viewer. Also, it was obvious from the Netherlands Coast Guard comments the MEIP Viewer is not built for Safety of Navigation. He also said that the efforts thus far are an accomplishment for the MACHC Region.
- CAPT Marc v d Donck, the MACHC Chair, said that SDI is an abstract concept sort of like the internet. It is a valuable tool for everyone but sometimes hard to understand. He feels that the MEIP Viewer is a step in the right direction.
- Cuba says that their cells will continue to be available in the MEIP Viewer and is supportive of the removal of the password.
- LT Anthony Klemm of the US stated that the WMS allows analysis in a GIS Setting. However, the data in the view is not downloadable by the user.
- CAPT Marc v d Donck, the MACHC Chair, asks that the MEIP give a clearer answer on the purpose of the MEIP and where the group is going with it to help answer the UK question.
- CDR Manuel Ricardo Lopez Cruz of Mexico says that we have to be able to plug in this data with other data to make better decisions with analysis.
- Mr. John Nyberg from the US suggests that we have a quick MEIP Meeting later today to determine a way forward and to help answer the UK question about the MEIP and its purposes and objectives.

- France stated that sharing data was not originally the intended objective of the MEIP. Additionally, they said that release of their data would be done in alignment with their national data release policy.

The MACHC Chair asked if we could return to this item in AOB to be discussed on morning 12 December

AOB meeting 12 December

There was a great deal of discussion that went on during that final session to include adding other data and formats like a WMS in the MEIP Viewer. ESRI / NOAA didn't think the inclusion of other formats like a WMS would be a problem. Also, the additional information could be very useful in supporting the various non-navigation purposes and analysis by non-navigation users of the MEIP Viewer.

There was discussion of following up on other SDI efforts like PAIGH, OECS and FOCAHIMECA as well. At this point in time there are plans being formulated to meet with Paul Cooper in the next few weeks to better understand PAIGH's efforts on the SDI front and whether there are any efficiencies that can be gained by taking a look at their efforts.

The biggest area of discussion centered on the potential removal of the password protection from the MEIP Viewer to help open this tool up to a wider community. There were many MS that were supportive of this password protection removal. Likewise there were several MS that had concerns as well.

As a compromise to this situation, a two solution option was proposed by NOAA and it seemed generally agreeable to the MS present as well as the MACHC Chair. MS that had concerns about protecting their data could still make it available for these potential non-navigation uses via the password protected MEIP Viewer. Additionally, MS that wanted to make this data available to a wider audience could do so via the open MEIP Viewer via the open MEIP viewer which is in effect a WMS not suitable for navigation. With the two solution option the MEIP can now potentially start getting feedback from other non-navigation users beyond our anticipated traditional user community.

The MACHC Chair has also asked that the MEIP put together a strategy for going forward in the coming years. This will be one of the tasks that the MEIPWG will need to work through in the coming year in addition to improving the MEIP Viewer. This effort will require the support of the various MACHC MS and Industry that have volunteered to work on the MEIP to help move forward.

MACHC 16 agreed the following actions for the MEIPWG:
1. Work with NOAA and ESRI to establish the non-password protected viewer
2. Retain the current password protected viewer
3. Ask MS to confirm if they wish to include their data in the non-password protected viewer
4. Encourage MS who have not already contributed ENC to the Viewer to consider doing so whether it is to the password protected version or the open version.
5. Hold meetings with PAIGH to see if efficiencies can be made by amalgamating the MEIP project with the PAIGH project
6. Subject to available resource, review other SDI projects to see if there are benefits in joining with them
7. Put together a MEIP strategy "Think Piece" to set out the purpose and direction of the MEIP.

Constructive feedback for the MEIP will help us build a better strategy for moving the MEIP forward. The MEIP Chair and Vice Chair encourage everyone to provide feedback on both the overall strategy for moving forward as well as the MEIP Viewer.

I look forward to hearing from you

Best wishes

Chris Thorne

MEIP Chair