

## International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)

### Key features

**Type of organisation:** Inter-governmental technical organisation

**Charter/Constitution:** Convention on the International Hydrographic Organization as amended by the Protocol dated 14 April 2005 that entered into force on 8 November 2016:

[www.iho.int/mtg\\_docs/misc\\_docs/basic\\_docs/NEW/New\\_EN/Convention\\_new\\_EN.pdf](http://www.iho.int/mtg_docs/misc_docs/basic_docs/NEW/New_EN/Convention_new_EN.pdf)

### Membership

- Nature: Representatives from governments (National Hydrographic Authorities)
- Number: 87 (2017)

**Year of establishment:** 1921

**Headquarters:** Monaco, Principauté de Monaco

**Country offices:** 15 Regional Hydrographic Commissions with rotating Chairs

**Secretariat staff:** 23 including 3 seconded officers (2017)

**Total budget:** EUR 3, 5 million (2017)

**Type of activity:** policy dialogue, data collection and analysis, information exchange; development of international standards; capacity building; technical cooperation

**Sectors of activity:** hydrography and nautical charting, support of safety of navigation, management, protection and sustainable development of the marine environment

**Website:** [www.iho.int](http://www.iho.int)

### Members

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo\*, Denmark, Dominican Republic\*, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia\*, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam.

\* *Rights of membership suspended.*

### Relationship with non-Members

Membership is open to all Member States of the United Nations. Non-Member countries are invited to attend meetings as observers. Observers include States that are not parties to the Convention; inter-governmental organisations with which an agreement or special arrangement has been made; non-governmental international organisations accredited as observers in accordance with IHO Resolution 5/1957 as amended (see [IHO Publication M-3 - Resolutions of the IHO](#)).

### Mandate

The IHO's main role is to create a global environment in which States provide adequate and timely hydrographic data, products and services and ensure their widest possible use. The IHO's mission is to bring about:

- The coordination of the activities of national hydrographic offices;
- The greatest possible uniformity in nautical charts and documents;
- The adoption of reliable and efficient methods of carrying out and exploiting hydrographic surveys;
- The development of the sciences in the field of hydrography and the techniques employed in descriptive oceanography.

The IHO's vision is to stand as the authoritative worldwide hydrographic body which actively engages all coastal and interested States to advance maritime safety and efficiency and which supports the protection and sustainable use of the marine environment.

## IRC processes taking place within the International Hydrographic Organization



## Categories of legal and policy instruments

	Is it taking place within the IO?	Approximate number
Treaties for ratification by States (excluding the funding one)		
Legally binding decisions		
Recommendations	√	150
Political declarations		
Model treaties or law		
Production of technical standards	√	15
Non-binding guidance/best practices document	√	30

## Interactions with other international organisations active in the field\*

Mechanisms of interaction		Approximate number of IOs involved	Examples
Develop joint instruments	√	5	FIG, ICA ( <a href="#">Standards of Competence</a> ) IMO, WMO ( <a href="#">Manual on Maritime Safety Information</a> ), IOC ( <a href="#">GEBCO programme</a> )
MoU or other agreements		25	ACS, EC, IALA, IFHS, IMO, ISA, ISO, OECS, OGC, SPC, WMO, etc...
Participate in co-ordinating institution	√	1	UN-GGIM (observer status)
Joint meetings that provide forum for co-ordination	√	6	EC, IALA, IMO, ISO, OGC, WMO (at least one meeting per year)
Observe relevant actions of other bodies	√	~10	ATCM, CIRM, GEO, Regional Maritime Forums. The IHO has observer status at the United Nations.
Exchange information	√	~70	All organisations mentioned above and organisations accredited as observers

\*The IHO has a strong association with the IMO in relation to the Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). It is recognized as the competent organisation to establish standards and guidelines related to the hydrographic obligations placed by SOLAS on coastal States.

### IHO History

The International Hydrographic Organization was established in 1921 to support safety of navigation and the protection of the marine environment. In 1919, twenty-four nations met for the 1<sup>st</sup> International Hydrographic Conference, during which it was decided that a permanent body should be created. The resulting International Hydrographic Bureau began its activity in 1921 with eighteen Member States. In 1967, an intergovernmental Convention establishing the International Hydrographic Bureau as an intergovernmental organisation was adopted; it entered into force in 1970, changed the Organization's name and legal status, creating the International Hydrographic Organization. In 2005, a Protocol of Amendments to the IHO Convention modifying the structure and operation of the Organization was adopted, and entered into force in 2016.

Source: Data provided by the IHO to the OECD as part of a data collection exercise, October 2017.