

Capacity Building and the Economic Benefits of Hydrography

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SUMMARY

The requirement of hydrographic is becoming more critical in the constantly changing maritime environment. Maritime based activities such as Navigation, exploration and exploitation of oil, gas and mineral resources, dredging and reclamation, coastal engineering works, underwater oil pipelines and telecommunication cables, environmental monitoring, aqua culture, oceanographic research etc., all depend on accurate and reliable hydrographic survey data and charts to effectively deliver their products and services. Flowing from above, the training curriculum of hydrographic surveyors is very robust and constantly changing to accommodate these dynamics and the associated technological changes and innovations. The curriculum is regularly monitored and reviewed to match the latest advancements in survey technology/techniques and also to conform to the specifications of the IHO/FIG International Advisory Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors. This has made the modern day hydrographer to regularly seek to update and improve his or her knowledge (CPD-Continuous professional Development) in the bid to catch up with modern trends in the industry. Since hydrography support a host of viable strategic, economic, social and commercial enterprises, it is therefore given that it will derive maximum benefit or at least be compensated in terms of return on investment (ROI) (i.e. human capital, equipment, vessels etc.) and services rendered to these economic sectors. Also, maritime commerce is conservatively projected to grow by 50% within the next decade or two; the concomitant effect to this will be a continual expansion of the frequency, size and draft of vessels on our waterways. This will directly impact positively the responsibilities of the hydrographer in terms of providing reliable data for safe, efficient and environmentally friendly navigable channel and marine transportation. This will translate into adequate and regular Charting of these waterways and access channels which will in turn translate to economic benefit for the hydrographic practitioner and the Nation at large. The economic benefits derivable from the development of a viable and sustainable Hydrographic surveying practice are quite enormous and varied. It ranges from economic gains from maritime shipping, exploration and exploitation of mineral resources, fishing, and effective coastal zone management. Other benefits are derived from tourism development (through beach creation, nourishment etc), education/training, marine scientific research and development etc. In order to fully appropriate the full benefits and potentials of Hydrographic survey, it is imperative to develop a National policy framework that will harness these potentials and articulate the objectives to be achieved for sustainable development.

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