

## **Functional definitions for the ship's stay in port**

The International Harbour Masters' Association (IHMA) is delighted to have participated in recent progress on the development of functional definitions for port information describing the ship's stay in port.

Accurate and reliable port information will enhance the safety, efficiency and sustainability of ports and shipping across the world and benefit local, national and international economies.

This initiative's priority is to improve communications between ships and ports using clear and authoritative definitions for the various terms used in daily operations. The definitions have been sourced from existing standards within the shipping industry. Only when no applicable definition could be found was a new one introduced and published via the glossary of the UKHO's *Mariners Handbook (NP100)*. These include names given to areas within a port. Then there is the terminology associated with restrictions that might be imposed by an authority on vessel operations related to vessel dimensions, external conditions, manoeuvring and berthing. Event information associated with arrival and departure times is considered along with nautical and vessel service times.

These definitions have been collated in an intermediate document and will be incorporated in the next version of the *Mariners Handbook (NP100)* to be published in August 2018. The Port of Rotterdam will begin using these definitions in 2017.

IHMA's President, Captain Kevin Richardson said: *'Harbour Masters recognise the huge value of agreeing and promulgating definitions that will make the ship's stay in port safer and more efficient. We applaud the efforts of all organisations that have worked co-operatively on this important project which will have long-term value for ports around the world.'*

### **Background information**

In 2006 in order to improve port efficiency and safety, IHMA embarked on the task of supporting Harbour Masters gather reliable port entry information and presenting it in a standardised form readily available to the mariner and other port users.

The maritime world has a history of providing nautical information in printed documents and the success of publications has been built on supplying handbooks, almanacs and charts of a consistent and reliable standard.

Members of IHMA were encouraged to adopt standardised pro-formas for their nautical port information which could be hosted on the port website and updated as required, and a number of ports still use the IHMA port information guide pro-forma. Frequently it is the harbour master's office that is tasked to update its port information guide.

This was certainly a step forward from the hard copy publications that might only be updated annually but despite the best of intentions, and with the proliferation of port websites providing information, it was apparent that no two port websites present their information in the same way. It was clear that a more uniform approach was required that took account of master data: safe berth and safe berth information (depths, restrictions) for optimizing deadweights, speed and port passage planning, and event data around berthing windows (cargo completion, pilot boarding time), for optimising speed, port stay, berth utilization, hinterland connection and port services.

Shipping lines, port and hydrographic offices identified the following needs:

- Global, cross-industry functional definitions.
- Global data definitions and formats to share data.
- An application that allows ports to manage their data using their local language and their own information database, but which also allows them to share data.
- Compliance with SOLAS, alignment with Charter Party clauses.
- To serve the business process of shipping, and also be acceptable to ports.

The project was initiated by:

- IHMA / European Harbour Masters' Committee
- United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO)
- Lloyd's Intelligence
- The Port Call Optimization Taskforce (Shell, Maersk Line, MSC, CMA-CGM, and the ports of Algeciras, Busan, Gothenburg, Houston, Rotterdam, Singapore and Ningbo Zhoushan).

Using existing standards as much as possible to increase implementation speed and decrease implementation costs, the project initially worked on functional definitions concerning measurements and datums in ports. These were developed and included in a new chapter of the UKHO's *Mariner's Handbook* (NP100, 11<sup>th</sup> edition of 2016).

The next step is to agree on data definitions and formats for data sharing.

### **To conclude**

In conclusion, as the ability to collect, store and analyse ever greater quantities of port information has increased, the relatively static port information guide available for reference or download from the port website has failed to meet the shipping industry's expectations.

A recurrent theme of a recent seminar attended by European Harbour Masters was the call for a global, neutral and trusted open communication platform optimising berth-to-berth sailing across the world, involving the coordination of operations and services at ports with information from all stakeholders.

Widespread adoption of definitions associated with the ship's stay in port will bring the ports industry a step closer to realising this ambition, and the UKHO and IHMA's port information project and publication of functional definitions are making an important contribution.