IFAN calls on owners to pay their way on navigation dues
Arabian Gulf / Persian Gulf

The board of the International Foundation for Aids to Navigation (IFAN) has met in London and highlighted the issue of non-payment of navigational dues as critical to the ongoing modernisation and provision of aids to navigation in the Gulf region.

The Middle East Navigation Aids Service (MENAS, a subsidiary of IFAN) has been providing these services since 1911 as no state owns the aids to navigation in the joint waters of the Gulf. This service is funded exclusively by payment of navigation dues, and the sustainability of the existing service, on which the shipping industry depends, is totally dependent on receipt of these dues.

The board, which is made up of the senior executives of some of the world’s largest ship owners, confirmed that plans to recapitalise DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System) services in the Gulf will be funded from these navigational dues from ship owners.

Alan Marsh, newly elected Chairman of IFAN, said the Foundation and its sister organisation the MENAS, were committed to providing world class aids to navigation, including maritime safety broadcasts to seafarers in the region.

He stressed it was essential that users fully contributed to the running cost of the services provided by MENAS.

Peter Stanley, CEO of IFAN, commented: ‘MENAS will continue to provide services but sadly shipowners may not even know that these are provided by MENAS and some question the need to pay Nav Dues whilst transiting these highly important and congested waters.

‘Nav Dues are essential to ensure MENAS can continue to provide Aids to Navigation in the region while there is no alternative service provider or navigational system providing as accurate a service. All ships in the area share the benefit of these well-maintained nav aids.’

MENAS is currently the Gulf region’s leading innovator in the development, fabrication, supply and maintenance of aids to navigation. Operating from its main base in Bahrain and a support base in Abu Dhabi, MENAS owns and maintains an extensive network of buoys, lighthouses and DGPS transmitters.
It also provides essential information and advice such as the issue of Notices to Mariners, advising on hazards to shipping and co-ordinating additions to navigation charts for the Gulf.

Each month over 2,000 vessels rely upon MENAS equipment and services.

MENAS is an associate member of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) which has agreed to partner MENAS in the provision of training port authority personnel to the regions starting in the Third Quarter of this year.

Background
For over 100 years MENAS has played a major role in the safety of shipping in the Gulf and in the development of Aids to Navigation (AtoN) infrastructure throughout the Gulf States. Formerly named the Persian Gulf Lighting Service, it was established to be the responsible authority for aids to navigation in the region.

Aids to Navigation (AtoN)
MENAS owns and maintains an extensive network of navigation beacons, buoys and lighthouses across the Gulf and its approaches. It also provides maintenance services and quality management practices for AtoNs considered essential for international shipping and owned by governmental and port authorities throughout the Gulf.

DGPS and AIS
Since 1997 MENAS established and continues to operate a free-to-air differential global positioning system (DGPS) for the region.

An upgraded service as well as complimentary terrestrial-based services are being developed, the latter still dependent on international protocols being developed and agreed.

The company has deployed Automatic Identification System (AIS) equipment across its equipment network to both enhance the service to mariners and improve performance monitoring of AtoNs: The MENAS Operations Centre in Bahrain records status, performance and reliability of AtoNs using the AIS system and satellite-based Vega Web monitoring.
Navtex
MENAS is the Acting Sub-Area Co-ordinator for NAVAREA IX (the Arabian Gulf and its Approaches) co-ordinating a NAVTEX service within the framework of the WWNWS system established jointly by the IHO and IMO. NAVTEX is an international automated direct-printing service for promulgation of navigational and meteorological warnings and urgent information to ships. The system fulfils an integral role in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Notices to Mariners
Notices to Mariners provide essential, up to date information and advice to mariners navigating within the Gulf. Subjects include (but are not limited to) notification of works and events, which may impact on navigation of a permanent or semi-permanent nature. Each Notice specifies the original source of the information and refers to the British Admiralty Chart(s) affected by the Notice. MENAS also issues a monthly Summary of its Notices to Mariners, which ensures dissemination of information to all major hydrographic offices worldwide.

Picture captions
*Alan Marsh, Chairman of IFAN.*

*Peter Stanley, CEO of IFAN.*

*The MENAS service craft Relume*

*Installation and maintenance by MENAS.*