

Marnis moves into phase two

European e-navigation project aims for better reporting procedures

Craig Eason

PLANS are being developed for the next phase of a European project that will link up maritime administrations' vessel management and search and rescue services into one complete network.

The first phase of the Marnis project was finalised at the beginning of March this year, and has been seen as a glimpse of what e-navigation could look like in the future.

E-navigation is a proposed safe navigation concept by the International Maritime Organization and the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities, which integrates shore-based and vessel bridge operations using all the tracking, navigation and information technologies being implemented into the industry.

The basic concept of Marnis is to enhance the reporting procedures

between ships and the authorities and to simplify it into one transmission — through a so-called 'single window'. The required data is then sent between administrations, rather than having to be resent by the vessel repeatedly.

This information, along with the mandatory tracking technologies that are now onboard ships and information databases, will also allow administrations to better assess vessels from a safety and security perspective.

The original project was co-ordinated by Cas Willems at the Netherlands Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management and included participants from around Europe.

"We are in the stage of completion [of the first phase] and IALA is very positive and wants to take it as an example of e-navigation," he said. "But there is also a development in Europe called e-Maritime, which this fits partly into as well."

The next move will be to bring together all the communication concepts that are currently shaping e-navigation, e-Maritime and Marnis into one idea.

"We are now preparing the proposal to combine them and we are in the stage of

having pilot implementations in different regions in Europe to create a platform of responsibility."

The project team hopes to be able to put forward a new proposal next month for the first step of an implementation plan for the next two years, but Mr Willems recognises that a big issue is to get the commitment of the European member states and their responsible organisations to implement the e-Maritime and Marnis concepts on a larger scale.

"We have had positive response, based on the discussions in the current project as different authorities were involved," he said. However, he pointed out that having a few hundred people actively involved in the original project was different to getting to work inside European administrations' maritime bodies.

"In the next phase we want to analyse the situation in the member states, not only for the maritime agencies, but also possible combinations with customs, immigration and fisheries, and this takes time."

However, this level of harmonisation of maritime administration operations could lead to political stumbling blocks. Mr Wil-

lems said that the successes of the current projects goals, along with the increase in understanding of what e-navigation and e-Maritime are all about will help ease some of the fears.

The first Marnis project led to the idea of maritime operational service centres, which if not physically co-located, can virtually bring together such operations as

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vessel traffic management, search and rescue and environmental monitoring.

Marnis also developed a more fluid risk approach to vessels as they sail through European waters. With lessons learnt from *Erica* and *Prestige*, the idea is to assess actively each vessel's risk factor in relation to traffic volumes, weather and emergency tug positioning.

While current risk levels are assessed on ship type and safety criteria, the Marnis approach is to assess this risk in connection with prevailing weather conditions and traffic volumes.

Traffic management teams can then better assess a situation in coastal waters using this dynamic approach, allowing MOS centres to act more quickly to potential problems, Mr Willems said.

Marnis has also developed a stronger monitoring net to assess environmental and security risks by utilising the European satellite deployment within Safeseanet.

"We see that Safeseanet offers advantages, adding more functionality with the national single windows, making it more attractive to the member states," Mr Willems added.

Red Nose Day QM2 gets spruced up for summer season



CUNARD Line's *Queen Mary 2* had 6,000 sq m of hull blasted and recoated with a fluoropolymer foul-release coating from International Paint. The cruiseship recently completed a spruce-up at Blohm+Voss in Hamburg, ahead of the coming cruise season.

News in Brief

Life-saving equipment fraud

SHIPOWNERS are being urged to check the hydrostatic releases on shipborne life-saving equipment after a number of fake systems have been detected, writes Craig Eason.

Norwegian manufacturer Hammar said that it had become aware of fake copies of its H20 release mechanism for liferafts and emergency beacons.

It warned that after testing these fake mechanisms it found that none of them work in accordance with Safety of Life at Sea regulations. "There can be a number of ships at sea that are sailing with fake hydrostatic release units. If any of these ships were to sink, there will definitely be no life rafts or epirbs [emergency position indicating radio beacons] that will help to rescue the seafarers in danger," it said on its website.

Owners and manager are advised to check the company's website, www.cmhammar.com, to get help in checking their equipment's authenticity.

AIDA Cruises signs up MCP

MARITIME Communication Partners has secured a deal to provide onboard communications with Germany's AIDA Cruises, writes Craig Eason.

The contract is for the supply of GSM, GPRS and messaging services along with network design, equipment supply and integration. Three of the cruise operator's newbuildings, due to be delivered between 2010 and 2012, will have the MCP systems installed.

MCP, based in Arendal, Norway, has previously won contracts with other cruise operators including Princess, Cunard and P&O for the deployment of its wireless mobile systems for passenger use. The company focuses on providing shipborne cellular services for the passenger vessel sector that link vessels with public land-based networks via satellite.

Approval for Oceansaver

OCEANSAVER, the Norwegian ballast water technology manufacturer, has received type approval for its system, writes Craig Eason.

Type approval is the final step in ensuring treatment technologies meet the criteria and standards set by the International Maritime Organization, and was issued by Det Norske Veritas on behalf of the Norwegian Maritime Administration.

This is only the fourth treatment system to have received type approval and can therefore be installed onboard vessels that wish to meet the requirements of the IMO's ballast water convention.

Oceansaver will now target its system on oil and chemical tankers and gas carriers, as it does not have any limitations relating to explosion risk. Managing director Stein Foss said its system was scalable for other ship types.

Oceansaver is owned by a consortium that includes Norwegian state oil company StatoilHydro, Sumitomo and Norwegian shipowner Leif Höegh.

Azipod propulsion pact

ABB and Shanghai-based ZPMC have signed an agreement for the production of propulsion solutions for deepsea offshore vessels, writes Craig Eason. The two companies will jointly develop solutions for vessels that demand deepsea operating draughts, such as heavy carriers and drilling platforms. ABB sees this as an opportunity to tap into a new market for its Azipod podded propulsion system. The new systems will specifically use the company's compact Azipod technology to give added efficiency.

UKHO brings Chinese data into digital charts

THE UK Hydrographic Office has begun incorporating Chinese chart data into its vector chart services, writes Craig Eason.

The UKHO and China signed a bilateral agreement earlier in the year for the use of electronic chart information that gives the UK agency the opportunity to use Chinese data on its Admiralty Vector Chart Service.

The addition of the new data means that AVCS users will be able to take advantage of official electronic charts when

sailing to and from Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland, while receiving full benefit from remaining within a single official vector solution for their passage through the waters of southeast Asia.

AVCS data and key bilateral agreements, for example with China, are seen as key tools for the UKHO in achieving its goal of having all major sea routes and ports available by the time electronic chart display and information systems become mandatory within 10 years.

Since the launch, the admiralty vector charts have been constantly upgraded in response to user feedback. To date the service offers 9,500 electronic charts covering routes to over 1,700 of the world's major ports.

The UKHO has set itself the target of achieving full coverage by next year, two years ahead of the first deadline for mandatory Ecdis.

Inmarsat buys Stratos amid new partner deals

INMARSAT, the UK-based satellite company, has completed the acquisition of Stratos Global, one of its distribution partners, writes Craig Eason.

It has also announced new distribution agreements with its major partners.

US-based communication specialist Stratos will retain its current management structure, reporting directly to Inmarsat at a corporate level.

As a distribution partner Stratos also offers services through other carriers such as Iridium, Globalstar and VSat.

Inmarsat said it has implemented a "fair channel management policy by a segregation of its wholesale and Stratos operating divisions" as it remained committed to primarily indirect distribution through its existing channels to market.

In December 2007, all outstanding and ordinary shares of Stratos were acquired by CIP Canada Investment, which was indirectly financed by Inmarsat. Through

this Inmarsat held a purchase option on these shares, which it declared once it had gained full regulatory approval.

Stratos, and Inmarsat's other distribution partners, have signed new contracts with the carrier. They cover issues such as the Space Service Access Agreement for provision of traditional Inmarsat services as well as the newly developed broadband services which are relayed through the company's new generation I4 satellites.

Meanwhile, maritime communication provider NSSL has announced its status as a new distribution partner for Inmarsat for its BGAN and Fleetbroadband services.

The deal offers the UK-based provider the chance to utilise Inmarsat's satellite services better to provide a wider range of airtime packages to customers.

Inmarsat has been actively pushing its new maritime broadband services. It positioned the third of its I4 satellites earlier this year to provide full global coverage.

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