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ABSTRACT

The industry of Electronic Navigation Charts is one of the profitable industries in the maritime field. Presently most of the coastal and island nations enjoy the benefits of the Electronic Navigation Charts industry. The countries are given the right to collect hydrographic data and the right to produce, updating and sell the electronic navigation charts under the national jurisdiction, by the maritime law. Therefore, electronic navigation chart production has become one of the biggest industries in the maritime field. For example, countries like Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Thailand get financial benefits from their Electronic Navigation Charts. Though National Hydrographic Office was established 36 years ago and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sri Lanka Navy was signed in 2016 for joined collaboration for the hydrographic affairs, still Sri Lanka is unable to get the financial benefits from the electronic navigation chart industry. The research was conducted to identify the challenges of producing electronic navigation charts in Sri Lankan waters. During the research three independent variables, namely the availability of equipment/platforms, the availability of professionals and the collaboration of Sri Lanka Navy & National Hydrography Office (NHO) in NARA were identified. While conducting the survey, data were collected from the officers and the sailors performing duties in Sri Lanka Navy Hydrographic Service (SLNHS) and the officials of NHO in NARA. A mixed approach was used in the research. Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The equipment/ platforms requirement and the collaboration with the NHO were proved to significantly affect the electronic navigation charts production in Sri Lankan waters. It is recommended to enhance the budgetary allocation for the introduction of new technology and separate platforms for the surveys. It is also recommended to merge NHO and SLNSH as one national body which functions under the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

Key Words: Hydrography, Cartography, Electronic Navigation Charts, Vector Charts, Sri Lanka Navy Hydrographic Service, National Hydrography Office