



SeaZone helping Local Government with their Geographic Information Needs in response to the Marine and Coastal Access Act.

Hampshire, UK, 11 January 2010 - SeaZone has published the results of market research undertaken with Local Government Authorities in Wales last year. The research has enabled a deeper understanding of Local Government's existing and future roles in the coastal zone and marine environment.

Increasing public awareness, greater accountability and new legislation, such as the Marine and Coastal Access Act, is changing the way that the coastal zone and marine environment are to be managed, with Local Government and associated stakeholder organisations set to become more involved in marine and coastal planning and regulation.

The market research has revealed limited awareness and little involvement in both legislative and data management initiatives, with many unsure of future marine GI needs. This is understandable given that roles and responsibilities are still to be determined. However, recognition is given to the need for greater collaboration/co-ordination with organisations such as county councils and central government.

An overwhelming 96% of Local Authorities in Wales already work very closely with other stakeholder organisations such as consultants, Sea Fisheries Committees, Wildlife Trusts, Coastal Forums and Estuary Partnerships, placing them in an ideal position to lead on coastal zone matters and develop integrated working relationships. Debate leading up to the Marine and Coastal Access Act identified these organisations as having an essential role in communication and decision making.

The debate also highlighted the importance of fit for purpose data, including marine reference information, together with appropriate tools and expertise to meet these new requirements and responsibilities. It is essential therefore that these organisations have access to this information and it can be used and disseminated easily and efficiently. To achieve this, Local Authorities are ideally placed to take on the responsibility of data procurement and licensing in conjunction with central and devolved Governments.

The research shows that whilst the majority of Local Government Authorities have adopted Ordnance Survey data for its terrestrial base mapping (76%), many respondents (52%) are still using Admiralty Nautical Charts as a primary source of marine information. A large percentage of respondents also undertake data collection (88%) and use externally sourced data. These can be often project specific and incur high costs.

The research indicates low level understanding of the inappropriateness of using navigational charts for non-navigation activities within Local Government, and low

awareness of more cost effective and appropriate 'off the shelf' marine geographic information products now available through SeaZone.

SeaZone is therefore actively engaging with Local Government, their contracting consultants and associated stakeholder organisations to promote the use of consistent base reference information such as Ordnance Survey data for land mapping and SeaZone HydroSpatial for marine mapping to provide more cohesive and consistent decision making.

Alison Smith, SeaZone Marketing Manager explains, "SeaZone is promoting a number of initiatives including SeaZone HydroSpatial Evaluations and Collective Agreements with both Central and Local Government that offer easier management, better co-ordination, more flexible licensing terms and cost savings to Government customers. Our Sales Team are happy to discuss these opportunities further and more information is available on the SeaZone website."

SeaZone HydroSpatial provides reference information comparable with land mapping and is designed for easy access and cost effective use in desktop and web GIS, satisfying the majority of user needs and applications. SeaZone HydroSpatial consists of six topic layers including Bathymetry and Elevation, Natural and Physical Features, Structures and Obstructions, Socio Economic and Marine Use, Conservation and Environmental Protection and Climate and Oceanography.

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Notes to Editors:

SeaZone is a world leader in the field of marine geographic information solutions, including its innovative data product, SeaZone HydroSpatial, the 'first off the shelf' authoritative digital marine map.

SeaZone's knowledge of marine science, data acquisition and use, with expertise in geographic information systems (GIS) and data management, provides customers with innovative solutions that address their data access, processing and management needs. Over 500 organisations across the oil and gas, renewable energy, conservation and public sector use SeaZone data, software and services to help support decision making in the Marine Environment and Coastal Zone.

The company, SeaZone Solutions Limited, is wholly owned by Admiralty Holdings Ltd (AHL), which is owned by the UK Secretary of State for Defence and operated on his behalf by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO).