



U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System

2009 YEAR-END ACCOMPLISHMENT SUMMARIES

- 1) Navigation Technology IAT
- 2) Research and Development IAT
- 3) MTS Assessment IAT
- 4) Emerging Marine Transportation Issues in the Arctic Task Team
- 5) MTS National Strategy Implementation Plan IAT

ACCOMPLISHMENT

MTS NATIONAL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN INTEGRATED ACTION TEAM

Summary

The CMTS Coordinating Board approved the proposed framework for the implementation of the MTS National Strategy on June 18, 2009. The framework identified eleven specific activities that were deemed most critical and addressed each of the five priority areas from the National Strategy. The implementation plan is meant to be a living document and will be updated as new initiatives or changes in priorities are identified.

Background:

- The National Strategy recommended 34 actions in the five priority areas of capacity; safety and security; environmental stewardship; resilience and reliability; and finance and economics. Though all recommendations were important, the CB felt a need to prioritize in order to accomplish meaningful actions within a reasonable time, given the available resources.
- The Implementation Plan IAT developed a prioritization methodology and recommended that the CMTS start/continue work on 11 specific activities that were most critical and had the greatest probability of quick completion and success. These were further grouped into three tiers:
 - Ongoing/Existing Work,
 - New Work, and
 - Policy Implications.
- The CB adopted the Ongoing/Existing Work and New Work initiatives at its June 18, 2009 meeting. The consensus on the Policy task was that it should be deferred and started at a later date when all the senior and political leadership at the different CMTS agencies was appointed and in place.
- Member agencies were requested to support the 10 activities by either leading an activity or supporting with staff members and subject matter experts.
- The Task Team will continue to monitor the ongoing activities and work with member agencies to develop other activities addressing the remaining recommended actions of the National Strategy.

Status:

- 7 of the 10 activities have been started and are ongoing. These include:
 - Task 1: Identify impediments or bottlenecks to domestic and intermodal freight flows
 - Task 2: Standardize MTS definitions and terminology
 - Task 3: Transmit Physical and Oceanographic Real Time system (PORTS) data using AIS
 - Task 4: Identify R & D projects for MTS planning
 - Task 7: Examining the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund
 - Task 9: Expand PORTS installation to 175 ports
 - Task 10: Develop Interagency Coordination for system resiliency

Benefits to the MTS:

- The Implementation Plan is an initial step in moving forward to address the challenges identified in the National Strategy and developing specific activities to execute its recommended actions.
- It provides direction and focus to the work of the CMTS agencies and provides a forum for coordination between the agencies in addressing the five critical areas of the MTS – Capacity, Safety and Security, Environmental Stewardship, Resilience and Reliability, and Finance and Economics.

ACCOMPLISHMENT
ASSESSMENT OF THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (MTS)
INTEGRATED ACTION TEAM

Summary

An Assessment of the MTS is expected to be completed by December 2009*. The CMTS, through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, sponsored an assessment of the Marine Transportation System (MTS) conducted by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center. The MTS Assessment project began in February 2008 and has had very active involvement from all the MTS agencies. The scope of the study includes a baseline evaluation and challenges for the MTS in the areas of the environment, safety, security, and infrastructure.

Background:

- The Needs Assessment IAT was formed to conduct an overall assessment of the state of the MTS. At the initial July 2005 CMTS meeting, the members articulated the need for the assessment as a high-priority requirement, recommending that a comprehensive analysis be conducted to assess “current state and the future needs of each Federal and non-Federal component modes of the MTS.”
- Further, it was determined that a full scope of the MTS condition be conducted, including an analysis of the system’s operational and infrastructure requirements, identification of the gaps and potential solutions, and a set of recommendations to be presented as part of a Report to Congress.
- The initial cost for a full MTS assessment was estimated at \$1.5 million. Funding was not available to complete this type of study. The current study represents a scaled-down version, and covers the critical areas of the MTS and addresses a risk-based and resiliency framework.
- The Assessment contains information addressing the following critical areas of the MTS:
 - Infrastructure Needs
 - Economic and Productivity Challenges
 - Environmental Challenges
 - Safety Challenges
 - National Security Challenges
 - Institutional Challenges

Status:

- The final report will be completed in December 2009 and the report will be presented at the next Coordinating Board meeting for review and approval.

Benefits to the MTS:

- Assist in validating the MTS National Strategy and aligning future MTS policies and programs within the Federal government.
- Identify the risks and the vulnerabilities of the complex infrastructure system within the MTS and provide insights into building a resilient system.
- Assist in prioritizing the expenditure of limited recourses and government funding on the critical economic and infrastructure needs of the MTS.

* The Assessment is now expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2010.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

EMERGING MARINE TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE ARCTIC

Summary

It is expected that in the coming years as the Arctic ice melts, marine traffic, both destinational and transpolar, will increase in the Arctic regions. The CMTS formed a team to address emerging requirements of Arctic marine transportation and define the role of the CMTS member agencies. The end state of the proposed team and CMTS actions will be to coordinate the efforts of the various MTS agencies that have an interest and role to play in facilitating and regulating navigation and marine transportation in the Arctic regions.*

Background:

- At the September 10, 2009, Coordinating Board meeting, a proposal was made by NOAA recommending the CMTS member agencies examine their responsibilities in Arctic transportation and determine if there was a role for the CMTS to play in the development of Arctic marine transportation.
- A follow-on meeting was held on October 7, 2009, that included 11 member agencies. Agencies were asked to review the 17 recommendations in the Arctic Council's "Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment" (AMSA), as well as other Arctic-related information they may be familiar with, to help describe an appropriate interagency role, if any, for the CMTS.
- At the meeting it was determined that a white paper will be drafted by the CMTS Executive Secretariat. The purpose of the paper is to develop background information on current Federal Arctic marine transportation activities and the possible CMTS course of interagency action.

Status:

- Agencies are reviewing the Arctic Council's "Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment" (AMSA) and providing feedback on their role on Arctic transportation.
- The CMTS Executive Secretariat will collect this feedback and articulate the interagency and CMTS coordinating role. The white paper is expected to be ready for presentation to the Coordinating Board in January 2010.

Benefits to the MTS:

- The coordination and alignment of arctic navigation and transportation issues among agencies will provide for an integrated approach to deal with the safety, security, and environmental stewardship of the Arctic.
- Coordination among agencies will ensure that limited funding and resources are spent wisely to position the nation to meet the challenges of an ice-free Arctic.
- The CMTS and its member agencies will be better aligned and able to respond to the final requirements and policies developed by the Presidential Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force.

* The CMTS Coordinating Board approved the development of a CMTS Arctic Marine Transportation Integrated Action Team at the meeting held January 14, 2010.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

NAVIGATION TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATED ACTION TEAM

Summary

The Navigation Technology IAT has coordinated multi-agency efforts on 11 projects focused on improving navigational safety and efficiency in three ways:

- Improved delivery of navigational information,
- Improved accuracy of navigational products, and
- Improved efficiency by enabling agencies to better share information of navigational value.

As these projects are completed Mariners can expect significant improvements to navigational safety information especially in and around ports.

Background:

- The Navigation Technology IAT was established October 2006 to assist CMTS agencies in the integration of their technologies, data, and services to enhance navigational safety and efficiency.
- All CMTS members were requested to identify candidate technologies, data, or services that could benefit from inter-agency coordination. 11 projects were selected for CMTS action.

Status:

- All 11 projects have commenced and are making substantial progress:
 - Project #1: Distribution of NOAA PORTS data through USCG AIS
 - Project #2: Distribution of USACE lock current meter information via USCG AIS
 - Project #3: Develop a Coast and River Information System (CHRIS)
 - Project #4: Collaborate on precise positions for Aids to Navigation and the development of an associated database
 - Project #5: Collaborate on the development and charting of precise channel limits and controlling depths
 - Project #6: USACE to provide digital depth survey data in standard data exchange format
 - Project #7: USACE to adopt a common standard for water level datums
 - Project #8: Collaborate on making wave data available to mariners via PORTS displays
 - Project #9: Set standards for the measurement of tides and currents
 - Project #10: Collaborate on the development of VDatum
 - Project #11: USACE/NOAA/and Navy to develop and implement standards for bathymetric and topographic data
- Two emerging areas of relevance to navigational safety have emerged requiring significant coordination between CMTS Agencies; these are progressing as the team's "Next Steps":
 - Navigational Information for the waters of the U.S. in the Arctic Ocean and Bering Sea
 - Implementation of e-Navigation concepts

Benefits to the MTS:

Maritime safety will be improved as mariners will have access to:

- More accurate and timely weather and navigational information in ports and critical channels.
- Real-time environmental information (e.g. tides, currents, waves, winds, salinity, and bridge height)
- Real-time information with respect to opening and closing of locks in the inland waters system.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT INTEGRATED ACTION TEAM

Summary

The Research and Development IAT is in the process of re-establishing previous MTS R&D collaborative activities within the Federal government and developing a robust research agenda in support of the MTS. The IAT is committed to identifying needs, existing programs, and future actions across the marine transportation community that may be leveraged to improve system performance and meet future needs.

Background:

- The creation of the team was approved by Coordinating Board in March 2009 to provide the CMTS with a strategic capability to identify, develop, and implement innovative research and technology to address the pressing challenges identified in the National Strategy.
- The IAT is tasked with developing the R&D Strategic Plan which will be built on collaboration, leveraging multiagency programs, and execution of multi-party studies, projects and demonstrations.

Status:

- The IAT approved Terms of Reference in July 2009.
- The IAT has completed a walk-through of the 34 action items described in the National Strategic Plan to align and identify research and development needs.
- The IAT is conducting a project inventory of all ongoing R&D activities within each CMTS agency.
- The R&D IAT is in the process of developing the R&D Strategic Plan to support the MTS Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- The IAT has developed a Communications Strategy to disseminate information about their work.
- The R&D IAT and Navigation Technology IAT have formed a joint subgroup to address e-Navigation, an emerging global concept to improve safety and efficiency of the MTS.
- A national conference titled, “Transforming the Marine Transportation System: a Vision for Research and Development” is scheduled for June 29-July 1, 2010 at the Beckman Center, Irvine, CA. The conference will include federal partners, external stakeholders, academics and international participants. It will contain invited panels as well as technical sessions aligned with the National Strategy themes. In addition, it will be used as a venue to receive comment and feedback on the development of the Research and Development Strategic Plan.

Benefits to the MTS:

- The R&D IAT projects will benefit the MTS by identifying and addressing imminent and future R&D needs to make the US MTS a more robust, safe, secure, and environmentally sound system.
- The R&D IAT also works with other CMTS IATs to identify and support their R&D needs and help their projects come to fruition.