News from the General Lighthouse Authorities  
United Kingdom and Ireland

Radio Navigation Plan
On 29th May the General Lighthouse Authorities (GLAs) of the United Kingdom and Ireland launched their GLA Radio Navigation Plan (GRNP) that sets out how the GLAs are going to deliver the radionavigation aspects of their Marine Aids to Navigation Strategy, 2020. The Vision in support of the emerging e-navigation concept.

The GLAs are proud of their track record of success providing radionavigation services and the GRNP builds upon this as 2020 approaches. The document describes how the authorities will adapt in the face of a rapidly changing environment, and thereby optimise their service provision in terms of cost, risk and service level. The GRNP presents the GLAs’ plan in respect of the Global Positioning System (GPS), GALILEO, Radiobeacon DGNSS, Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), enhanced Loran (eLoran) and radar beacons (racons).

Dr Stuart Ruttle, Chief Executive of the Commissioners of Irish Lights commented, “We, the GLAs, are proud of our shared heritage, providing and optimising radio navigation services for over sixty years. Our GRNP describes how we will take advantage of ongoing radionavigation improvements to deliver a flexible service that meets the needs of all users. We will always retain a physical aids to navigation backbone.”

Rear-Admiral Roger Lockwood, Chief Executive of the Northern Lighthouse Board, added, “Delivering the GRNP is the only way that we can maintain service levels in the context of a rapidly changing and unpredictable service provision environment. We will deploy our radionavigation services around the United Kingdom and Ireland in a way that balances cost, risk and service levels.”

Rear-Admiral Jeremy de Halpert, Executive Chairman of Trinity House, said, “The GRNP is all about the GLAs taking ownership of their future in a period of great change as radionavigation systems become much more predominant in the service mix of aids to navigation that we provide. The GRNP together with the decisions we are taking today will enable the emerging e-Navigation concept that is being developed by the IMO and the IALA.”
When the GRNP is realised, it will individually and collectively influence the provision of all aids to navigation and the level of service provided: to deliver a reliable, efficient and cost-effective aids to navigation service for the benefit and safety of all mariners.

**eLoran Contract**

On 31\textsuperscript{st} May the General Lighthouse Authorities announced the award of a prestigious 15 year contract to VT Communications (part of VT Group plc) for the provision of a state-of-the-art enhanced Loran (eLoran) radionavigation service to improve the safety of mariners in the UK and Ireland.

The first development phase of this contract, until 2010, will build on existing successes and provide a focus for a European agreement on eLoran service provision. This would then trigger the start of the operational phase from 2010 onwards.

The UK Department for Transport is sharing the costs during the development phase having recognised the broader potential of Loran to improve the resilience of critical transport infrastructure.

eLoran is intended to assist mariners navigating the complex and crowded waters around British and Irish shores and those of their northern European neighbours. It complements Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) such as GPS and is entirely independent, allowing users to retain the benefits of electronic positioning, navigation and timing when satellite signals are disrupted.

This contract will see VT Communications develop a new Loran station at its radio communications facility in Cumbria in the north of England. The first signals from the Cumbrian eLoran station will be transmitted on 1\textsuperscript{st} October 2007 with a trial service launched in November. The existing trial service will be suspended by the end of July.

VT Communications’ Managing Director, Doug Umbers commented, “**VT Communications is proud to be working with the GLAs to deliver this critical service to their user community. This contract demonstrates VT Communications’ unrivalled expertise in delivery of the LF infrastructure and service provision projects, providing the GLAs with a radically improved service.**”

Dr Sally Basker, the GLAs’ Director of Research and Radionavigation reflected, “**We chose VT Communications because of its commitment to**
service provision and its flexible approach to partnership. Over the last decade we have worked hard to reduce the overall cost of service provision by 50% in real terms. e-Navigation is the maritime sector’s future: berth-to-berth navigation in the digital world with its associated safety, security, environmental and economic benefits. As we press ahead with e-Navigation, eLoran provides the only way of maintaining our service levels until 2020 without undue increases in cost or risk. eLoran will help us to deliver a reliable, efficient and cost-effective aids to navigation service for the benefit and safety of all mariners.”

The General Lighthouse Authorities
The General Lighthouse Authorities (GLAs) of the United Kingdom and Ireland are Trinity House, the Northern Lighthouse Board and the Commissioners of Irish Lights. Together, they have the statutory responsibility for the provision of marine aids to navigation around the British Isles and Ireland. The GLAs operate in a user pays cost-recovery environment based on Light Dues charged on various classes of shipping calling at ports in the UK and Ireland. The UK Secretary of State for Transport sets the level of light dues to be charged.

eLoran
Enhanced Loran (eLoran) is an internationally standardised positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) service for use by many modes of transport and in other applications. It is the latest in the long-standing and proven series of low-frequency, LOng-RAnge Navigation (LORAN) systems, one that takes full advantage of 21st century technology.

The system meets the accuracy, availability, integrity, and continuity performance requirements for aviation non-precision instrument approaches, maritime harbour entrance and approach manoeuvres, land-mobile vehicle navigation, and location-based services, and is a precise source of time and frequency for applications such as telecommunications. It is an independent, dissimilar, complement to Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS). It allows GNSS users to retain the safety, security, and economic benefits of GNSS, even when their satellite services are disrupted.

About VT Communications
Part of VT Group plc, the company is a leading specialist communications services company, providing innovative technical solutions and systems integration across the RF spectrum from Very Low Frequency (VLF) to Super High Frequency (SHF) from 29 locations around the world. VT Communications designs, builds, operates,
maintains and supports mission critical infrastructure for some of the most demanding organisations among them defence organisations, national governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), broadcasters and space agencies.

The company has extensive expertise in developing everything from principal infrastructure to delivering unique customised technical solutions. Its core capabilities include: Radio Frequency Engineering; ICT; Specialist Vehicle and Container Engineering; and Power Generation and Distribution, providing all technical support services, communications facilities management and project management. Currently, VT Communications provides such services for a broad range of customers including the UK Ministry of Defence, the Swedish Navy, European Space Agency and global relief organisations.

Global broadcast infrastructure owned and operated by VT Communications transmits over 1,000 hours of both short and medium wave broadcasts every day for customers including the BBC World Service, NHK (Radio Japan), Radio Canada International, Radio Netherlands, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Voice of America. VT Communications is a founder member of Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM), a consortium of broadcast related organisations working to bring digital AM radio to the market place.