ACCSEAS, an EU-funded project to support improved maritime access to the North Sea Region through minimising navigational risk, welcomed over more than 80 regional and international shipping experts to Edinburgh for its second Annual Conference, held in March.

This event presented an array of e-Navigation test-bed solutions, all of which are aimed at increasing accessibility and improving navigational safety in the increasingly busy shipping waters of the North Sea Region.

Spanning three days, the Conference included demonstrations of potential e-Navigation solutions including the Vessel Operations Co-ordination Tool, the Dynamic Predictor, the Multi-Source Positioning Service and No-Go Area. The Conference also hosted a number of lively panel discussions and workshops that looked at the future training needs for e-Navigation, the implementation of future e-Navigation services and the critical issue of the impact of e-Navigation on the wider logistics chain.

The ACCSEAS Conference was officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal, (pictured) in her capacity as Master of Trinity House, London, and Patron of the Northern Lighthouse Board. In her remarks she commended the success of the ACCSEAS project and the progress already made by its partner organisations, “It is a huge achievement that this number of countries have come together to achieve this and are driving maritime innovation forward. It is important that technical innovations happen within the maritime industry and this is the first time that such solutions are being brought to fruition in this way.”

Rear-Admiral Nick Lambert, former Hydrographer of the Navy chaired the conference and commented, “The second annual ACCSEAS Conference convincingly corroborated the vision and value of this project’s unique approach to testing potential e-navigation solutions that are of practical use to mariners going about their daily business. Lively discussion, great ideas and active engagement by articulate, focused and realistic international delegates endorsed the project’s approach and encouraged further development over the next twelve months.”

Impressed by the value of conclusions reached, Michael Card, Deputy Secretary-General of IALA remarked that his organisation will draw on the excellent results of the ACCSEAS project in its current work of creating e-Navigation technical guidance for aids to navigation authorities.
Reaching beyond its focus of the North Sea Region, the ACCSEAS Project also caught the attention of representatives in the Asia-Pacific region, who were present at the Conference.

Mick Kinley, Deputy Chief Executive, Australian Maritime Safety Authority added, “The excellent speakers and the presentations that were made at the Conference not only gave me an understanding for the first time of what e-Navigation actually is, but also showed that projects such as ACCSEAS are going to make e-Navigation a reality that the shipping industry needs to start preparing for today.”

In conclusion Alwyn Williams, ACCSEAS Project Manager commented, “The ACCSEAS conference proved to be a great opportunity for the stakeholders in the North Sea Region and beyond to come together to discuss the issues and potential solutions for improved accessibility for maritime transport in the region. I thank all the participants for their invaluable input into the discussions as it certainly helps to shape a better future for the users of the North Sea.”

The third and final ACCSEAS Annual Conference will take place next year from 17th to 19th February.

ACCSEAS Conference photos and presentations can be found at: www.accseas.eu