

## Information Paper

### Establishment and future governance of the Nippon Foundation-General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Seabed 2030 Project

<b>Submitted by:</b>	Secretary-General
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	This paper provides details about the establishment phase and the future governance of the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project with particular focus on the involvement of the IHO.
<b>Reference A:</b>	GEBCO Nippon Foundation Seabed 2030 Project Business Plan, V2.1.6, January 2018
<b>Reference B:</b>	NF GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project Reporting, Version: 0.1 10th July 2018 – Draft for Sponsors review

#### Introduction

1. The Nippon Foundation (NF)-GEBCO Seabed 2030 project builds on more than 100 years of GEBCO history; the project has established regional connections to all corners of the World and benefits from the human network of ocean mapping capacity built over 14 years through The Nippon Foundation – University of New Hampshire (UNH) training project. Through Seabed 2030, GEBCO’s role will be recognized and reinforced as the authoritative international initiative for mapping the World Ocean, from the coasts to the deepest trenches. The project will champion, develop and nurture the technical and human capacity to complete this task by 2030.
2. Seabed 2030 has established a network of 4 regional centres. Each centre focuses on discovering, gathering and assembling all available bathymetric data from their region to produce regional datasets and resulting products. A global centre will merge the regional grids to generate the production of the annual GEBCO grid as well as other products. Within this structure, the IHO-Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB) will remain the central GEBCO repository for all raw bathymetric data and all Seabed 2030 project data will be data based there.
3. Complementing the regional centres, the Seabed 2030 Project Team, consisting of the regional centre leads, the global centre lead, Director IHO-DCDB and the Project Director, will engage extensively with international marine, industry and intergovernmental organizations involved in ocean mapping and crowd sourcing initiatives to coordinate a global approach.
4. Having established a definitive view of the state of seabed mapping, Seabed 2030 will identify gaps in data coverage, prioritize and champion future survey operations to ‘map the gaps’. The extensive GEBCO community will provide the expertise to realize this ambitious initiative.

#### Project Governance

5. GEBCO is a time unlimited joint project of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO. GEBCO activities are directed by the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC). As a GEBCO project, the Seabed 2030 Project Team will be accountable to the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC). Prior to execution, the GGC will endorse Annual Work Plans and budgets developed by the Seabed 2030 Project Team. The GGC will also endorse the previous year’s Annual Project Report completed by the Project Team. To ensure robust independent review of the Annual Project Report and Annual Project Work Plan, the GGC will receive

expert guidance on the report and work plan from the Seabed 2030 Review Panel composed of independent experts and funder representatives.

6. The role of the IHO within the Seabed 2030 framework is twofold: first, the IHO Secretariat disburses funds against the approved annual Seabed 2030 budget, on behalf of the Nippon Foundation as benefactor, to regional centres and the global centre following GGC's endorsement of the annual reports and annual work plans. Equally important however, is IHO's oversight of the project through regular consultation and coordination with the Project Director, representatives of the GGC, the Nippon Foundation and IOC.

### **Achievements of the establishment phase**

7. The Nippon Foundation has appointed Mr Satinder Bindra, an experienced journalist and expert in international campaigns and communications, as Project Director. Mr Bindra has already facilitated activities to explore new sources of existing bathymetric data for use under the Seabed 2030 arrangements.

8. Nominations for external experts to serve on the Strategic Advisory Group have been identified and their role will be to provide advice on seabed mapping needs, strategic options and potential initiatives to the Project Director and his team in the daily functions of the project. The composition of the Review Panel remains to be established with a number of highly experienced personalities from related ocean mapping organizations identified as potentially suitable candidates. The role of the Review Panel is to independently review the annual report and work plan to assist the GGC strategically on all aspects of the project, in particular to advise on whether the project is achieving its aims and providing value for money.

9. The Project Team concentrates currently on improvement of the infrastructure of the data centres and acquisition of existing data not yet accessible to the IHO-DCDB. Active engagement in data acquisition will be undertaken at a later state.

10. A revised calculation method had the result that the GEBCO Product 2014 covers only six percent of the seas and oceans in regard to the achievable resolution obtainable with most modern hydro acoustic equipment in identified different depth ranges. This calculation now forms the reference base to measure the progress of the project in terms of increased survey coverage (quantitative approach) and the achievable resolution for the particular water depth in distinct areas (qualitative approach).

Close cooperation with IHO-DCDB was identified as being instrumental for the overall success of the project. All data acquired through Seabed 2030 activities will eventually be included in the IHO-DCDB archives. Likewise all technical developments such as import/export software tools, download and visualization tools will be made available to the IHO-DCDB at no cost. While the Project is providing significant funds to each of the centres, the centres themselves are contributing to various degrees. This host-contribution is not often mentioned but there are myriads of tools that centres have funded themselves to develop and use as part of Seabed 2030.

11. A joint meeting of the project sponsors' representatives, namely the Nippon Foundation, the IOC, the IHO and the GGC with the Project Director was held in London on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018. A series of such sponsors' meetings as part of the general coordination and reporting arrangements was agreed as an appropriate measure to supervise the progress of the project during its lifetime (the paragraph **Reporting arrangements** of this paper refers).

### **Reporting arrangements**

12. There are two reporting obligations of the Project Director:

1) Annual Reporting

Each year the Project team will submit two documents to the GEBCO Guiding Committee:

- An annual report detailing a full overview of project activities, achievements and finances for the previous project year.
- A proposed programme of work and budget for the following year.

The date of submission will be agreed in advance between the GGC and the Project Team and will be such that there is sufficient time for the reports to be fully reviewed before the annual GGC meeting. The reports will be formal GGC meeting documents.

The GEBCO Secretary will distribute the two documents to:

- The Review Panel
- The Nippon Foundation
- IHO
- IOC

The Review Panel will review the two documents and provide independent, informed feedback to the GGC covering appropriateness and value for money of the activities and progress achieved to date from the annual report and the proposed following year's activities from the next year's programme of work.

The Review Panel will provide their feedback within an agreed time line and in sufficient time to be included in the GGC's review of the two documents as well as to be included as a GGC meeting document.

The Nippon Foundation, IHO and IOC will be invited to provide to the GGC their feedback on the two documents.

All members of the GGC will review the two documents and the feedback from:

- The Review Panel
- The Nippon Foundation
- IHO
- IOC

and form a collective position on whether the GGC:

- endorses the two documents
- requests changes and a re-submission of either or both documents
- does not endorse either or both documents

At the annual GGC meeting, the Project Team will present a summary of the two documents. The resulting GGC's decision on the two documents will be formally captured in the report of the GGC meeting, the medium by which the IHO and IOC will be informed. GEBCO's continued support of the Seabed 2030 Project is contingent on the GGC endorsing the two documents.

## 2) Interim Reporting on Sponsors' Meetings

There will be periodic Sponsors' meetings that will be attended by:

- The Project Director
- The Nippon Foundation

- IHO Secretariat
- IOC Secretariat
- GEBCO Guiding Committee members

The purpose of the Sponsors' Meeting is to provide an informal forum for:

- All parties to share relevant information.
- The Project Team to inform the Sponsors of project progress and achievements.
- The Sponsors to provide input and advice to the Project Team.
- Oversight and coordination of high-level governance

As part of informing the Sponsors, the Project Director will provide a presentation on project progress and key future plans. This presentation will be considered an *interim report*, and will also be forwarded to the GGC for information.

It is anticipated that the frequency of the Sponsors' Meetings will be more regular in the early years of the project and decrease over time. In Year 2 of the Project, the occurrence of the Sponsors' Meetings is expected to be 3 to 6 months, depending on needs of the Project and the Sponsors' availability.

#### **Action Required of the Council**

13. The Council is invited to:

- a. **Take note** of this information,
- b. **Discuss how** the Secretariat, the Regional Hydrographic Commissions and the framework of the IRCC Working Groups as well as HSSC's standardization activities may support the Seabed 2030 Project, and
- c. **Take any other actions** that may be required.