

**CIRCULAR LETTER 10/2004**  
**06 February 2004**

**Nippon Foundation - GEBCO Training Project**

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The Centenary Commemoration of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO), jointly organized by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) was an occasion for the GEBCO Project to reflect on its past and to plan the way forward into the next century. Despite the recent successful release of the Centenary Edition of the GEBCO Digital Atlas, the deep ocean floors have not yet been mapped to any level of acceptable detail, and many tasks lie ahead.
2. While looking ahead, it has to be recognized that GEBCO's human resources are ageing, and some of the bathymetrists who produced the Fifth Edition and the GDA have retired. It has become increasingly difficult to find younger hydrographers with the necessary skills to produce ocean bathymetric maps, grids and data sets that will satisfy the users' diverse needs. Therefore, a project aiming at preparing new people was considered a priority by the IHO-IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee.
3. In seeking ways to overcome this problem, the first response came from representatives of the Japanese HO who arranged for communication between the Nippon Foundation and GEBCO. Nippon Foundation is a Japanese philanthropic organisation, which includes among its objectives Overseas Co-operative Assistance in the form of Human Resources Development.
4. As a result of recent negotiations it has proven possible, under tight time constraints and procedures imposed by the Nippon Foundation for the GEBCO Guiding Committee to design a project "The Nippon Foundation - GEBCO Training Project".
5. This is a unique opportunity for the GEBCO Project to educate a new generation of bathymetrists, to experience a step change in the technical capability of this joint IHO-IOC project and to better serve the world-wide scientific community. This Project will help the IHO to advance its commitment to Capacity Building and its Strategic Objective of improving global coverage, availability, quality and access to hydrographic data and its related oceanographic information, products and services and the IOC to further enhance the International Bathymetric Chart (IBC) Projects.
6. In acting as the IHO's and IOC's ocean bathymetric group, the GEBCO Guiding Committee worked very quickly to design the project and have it approved by the Nippon Foundation.

Until the creation and negotiation stages were completed and a contract was in place, Nippon Foundation requested that the project be kept confidential.

7. In brief the Project consists of:

*Training Programme:* Training will take place over 3 years (7 students per year) at a university already active in the field of deep ocean bathymetry. Students will undertake an intensive 12-month training course comprising lectures, practical laboratory-based projects, and secondments to relevant laboratories and cruises on research or survey ships. (Value US\$ 1,826,235)

*Work Packages:* To assist some of the holders of the Post-graduate Diploma in Ocean Bathymetry (PDOB) when they return to their place of full-time employment, funded Work Packages, lasting from 1 to 2 years, will be undertaken. (Value US\$ 457,300)

*Project Fellowships:* Five 1 to 2-year Project Fellowships specifically to solve selected technical problems in ocean bathymetry will be open to all suitably qualified candidates, including PDOB holders. (Value US\$ 636,350)

Combined, the above three approaches aim at improving the skill level in developing countries and produce the knowledgeable personnel needed to form the nucleus of continuing the IHO's and IOC's oceanic bathymetric capability through the joint GEBSCO Project. The Project will run through fiscal years 04/05 to 09/10 and has a total value of US\$ 2,919,885.

8. The Project has recently received approval by the Nippon Foundation, and in order to be briefed on the status of the project and to discuss the details of the progress made so far, a meeting was held at the IHB on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2004. This was attended by the IHB, a representative of IOC Secretariat, the GEBSCO Guiding Committee Chairman and the Permanent Secretary of GEBSCO.
9. At this meeting, for the benefit of the Project, IOC and IHO representatives accepted the procedure followed until now but strongly requested that full details of the Project be provided to MS as soon as possible. Some of the major concerns discussed related to: the pressure imposed by the Nippon Foundation to start the Project as soon as possible, the procedures to be followed in signing the Agreement, the financial management of the Project, the selection of the Training Institution and the selection of Students.
10. IOC and IHO representatives expressed that it was up to the representatives of IOC (IOC Executive Secretary) and IHO (President of the IHB Directing Committee) to sign any agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. As an alternative, the Chairman of the GEBSCO Guiding Committee could sign the documents provided that Member States of both Organizations so agree. With regard to the financial management, IOC and IHO representatives indicated that the management should be made by either or both of the GEBSCO Project parent organization, or if so decided by MS the Guiding Committee of GEBSCO could be tasked so to do. These two points were to be considered and clarified in the meeting with the Nippon Foundation programmed for the following day in London, UK. As regard to the selection of the Training Institution and Students, both IOC and IHO representatives requested to have parent organizations involved in the procedure. Moreover it was agreed to ask IHO and IOC MS to identify candidates.
11. At the London Meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2004, the Nippon Foundation representative declared that the Nippon Foundation would deal only with GEBSCO and not with its parent organizations. Therefore the Chairman of the IHO-IOC GEBSCO Guiding Committee, with the organization name entered as GEBSCO, signed the Grant Agreement Form with the Nippon Foundation, assuming, as requested by the donor, the responsibility of managing the funds to be allocated. As regard to the Training Organisations, selection

process, an *ad hoc* Project Management Group has been formed comprising members of the GEBCO Guiding Committee, who represent the IOC and IHB. Universities and related institutions have been invited to apply to offer the training program. Selection criteria have been developed and a selection group unconnected with the candidate Teaching Organisations has been established. At the time of writing, five universities have applied and the selection process will begin on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2004.

12. The Nippon Foundation requires that the training program begins in 2004. September/October is therefore the latest start date for university programs in the Northern Hemisphere. This imposes very tight time constraints, particularly since obtaining student visas could take some time. Before visa applications can be made, final selection of the host university must be made, followed by advertising for and selection of, the seven students for the 2004 program.

**Member States are requested** to consider nominating suitable candidates for the Post-graduate Diploma in Ocean Bathymetry course from among their nationals. Nomination decisions should include consideration of the following, which will be used by the selection committee: Level of and subject of degree(s) held by nominee, experience in ocean bathymetry, future opportunities to work on bathymetric projects, likelihood of candidate continuing to work in the field and personal motivation.

The course will be advertised in April 2004, and in Annex 1 to this CL an early draft description of the diploma is provided. The selection process will begin with an evaluation of the nominees' paper qualifications followed by interviews in May/June, probably in regional centres. The Interview Board will consist of at least one representative from the Nippon Foundation, representative(s) of IHO and/or IOC, one from GEBCO, one from the teaching institution and an appropriate local expert to advise the Board. The Board's decisions will be recorded in writing and are subject to final approval by IHO, IOC and the Nippon Foundation.

**Member States are invited to provide names and CVs of nominees to reach the IHB by Tuesday 06<sup>th</sup> April 2004.**

Note: Because time is not so constrained as it is with the Training Program, the Fellowships and Work Packages will be addressed in a later CL.

On behalf of the Directing Committee

Yours sincerely,

*(original signed)*

Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA  
Director

Annex 1: "Post-doctoral Diploma in Ocean Bathymetry"

**“Post-doctoral Diploma in Ocean Bathymetry”**

Length of course: 12 months. Three courses to be run over three successive years.

Entry qualifications: formal internationally recognised qualification in the English language (written and spoken), a minimum of a Masters degree in a relevant subject (PhD preferred) with evidence of a suitable level of IT skills.

Advertising the course: The course will be advertised in March/April six months in advance of its commencement through all suitable means such as national Hydrographic Offices (via the IHO), the International Bathymetric Chart Editorial Boards and other international marine contacts (via the IOC) as well as directly through the GEBCO web site, Directors of national oceanographic laboratories and members of the GEBCO community.

Selection and number of students: Seven students will be trained per year. Initially candidates will be sought on a regional basis [equally from Coastal States of 1) Atlantic Ocean north of the Equator (excluding N America and Europe), 2) Atlantic Ocean south of the Equator, 3) Indian Ocean, 4) Japan, 5) Oceania (including SE Asia except Japan), 6) SE Pacific Ocean and 7) rest of Pacific Ocean (N America, Australia and New Zealand)]but if suitable candidates do not present themselves from any one region then other suitably qualified candidates will be chosen instead. Students will be chosen by interview in May/June, probably in regional centres, four months before the course starts. The Interview Board will consist of at least one representative from the Nippon Foundation, one from GEBCO and one from the teaching institution. In many cases it will be appropriate to invite a local expert to advise the Board. The Board's decisions will be recorded in writing and a copy lodged with the Nippon Foundation.

Location of course: a research institution or department within a well recognised university, subject to negotiation and confirmation. Probably located within North America or Europe.

Supervision of course: the course will be supervised and reviewed externally on an annual basis by representatives of GEBCO and the Nippon Foundation.

Exit qualification: successful students (judged by an appropriate combination of examination, course work and written project reports) will be awarded a Post-doctoral Diploma in Ocean Bathymetry by the host university.

Design of course: the course will be designed by members of GEBCO in collaboration with staff of the host institution.

Content of course: the course will be taught, and written and spoken coursework will be conducted, in English. The course will consist of formal lectures for up to 6 months, practical exercises, project work and secondments to one other laboratory and to a research/survey cruise, if convenient.

Amount of payment and schedule: each student will receive an award of USD 35,000 per annum. Students will be paid monthly, with funds donated by the Nippon Foundation, either directly from Japan or through the host institution's financial framework. We have not budgeted for the cost of any accompanying family members nor for medical and health insurance.