

**PROPOSAL FOR A NEW IHO/IOC OCEAN MAPPING
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

Reference: CL 27/2004 dated 23 April.

Dear Hydrographer,

The IHB would like to remind you that in the referenced CL the IHB reported on the work conducted in conjunction with IOC's Secretariat aiming to improve the existing Ocean Mapping Programme, to make it more efficient and effective, and submitted a proposal for a New IHO/IOC Ocean Mapping Programme Structure, inviting comments from Member States on this initiative.

Member States were invited to provide comments by the 31st October, until now the IHB has received only two comments (Canada and Chile) and a note from Japan informing us that their comments will be soon available.

This low response from Member States can be interpreted by the IHB as an expression of agreement with the IHB and IOC Secretariat proposal, but also as an indication that Ocean Mapping matters, including GEBCO, are not part of the Member States' agenda and therefore no particular interest exists in allocating some time to examine the way to improve this programme.

In order to help MS understand better the rationality of the initiative put forward, a set of facts and statements compiled from different documents and meetings, respectively, are provided:

- a) The Joint IOC/IHO GEBCO Guiding Committee Terms of Reference do not make any reference to liaising with IBC Projects, and on the other hand the Terms of Reference of the IOC Consultative Group on Ocean Mapping do not mention the existence of GEBCO.
- b) At the 3rd session of the IOC-IHO GEBCO Strategic Planning Committee held in 2002, two major issues were addressed, one of them being "*The relationship with various International Bathymetric Charts (IBCs) of the IOC at the regional level.*" After thoughtful discussion, it was observed that "*there were clear advantages in GEBCO and the IBCs working more closely together, the problem was how to achieve this collaboration*". Moreover, when identifying the strategic steps to strengthen GEBCO's relationship with the IHO and IOC, and other international

bodies it was indicated that both, IHO and IOC Member States are concerned that: *“Participation (of HOs) in GEBCO and even more so in a GEBCO combined with IBCs will allow them to perform their essential services with minimal additional effort. IOC has similar demands; it currently supports both GEBCO at a world scale and IBCs at a regional scale. Combining these can lead to efficiencies and multiplication of effort.”*

- c) At the XXth Meeting IOC-IHO GEBCO Sub Committee on Digital Bathymetry, held in Monaco 2003, it was noted that *“it was imperative that GEBCO and the IBCs interact”*. In this same meeting, it was also highlighted that *“GEBCO must also work to break down the boundaries between itself and the IBCs.”*
- d) At the XIXth IOC/IHO GEBCO Guiding Committee Meeting held in Monaco in 2003, a member of the Guiding Committee, submitted a paper entitled *“A look to the future”*, where he referred to the Combination of GEBCO and IBCs, indicating: *“There would appear to be clear advantages in GEBCO and the IBCs working more closely together”*.
- e) The USA National Geophysical Data Center participates actively in both, GEBCO and IBCs projects, and decisions taken at the GEBCO Sub Committee on Undersea Features Names (SCUFN) are shared with IBCs projects, as well, and this is excellent. But this does not happen when we deal with gridding criteria, coast database adoption, selection criteria, and many other important technical elements, in which it is clear that duplication is present, and should be avoided.

Considering that Resolution 5 adopted at the XXXVII IOC Executive Council Meeting invited IOC MS to *“express by 31st December 2004, their views to the IOC Executive Secretary on the proposal streamlining the ocean mapping support mechanisms by bringing together GEBCO and IBCs under a joint IOC-IHO Ocean Mapping Board”*, the IHB has also decided to extend until the 31st of December 2004 the invitation to IHO MS to provide comments on the proposal.

We will appreciate your comments by the above-mentioned date.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

(original signed)

Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA
IHB Director