



IHB File No.S3/2620

**CIRCULAR LETTER 111/2007
05 December 2007**

**GEBCO
NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURES**

Dear Hydrographer,

1 In accordance with the decision made at the last International Hydrographic Conference, the IHB requested the GEBCO Guiding Committee Chairman to review the text of the new Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures for the GEBCO Guiding Committee and its two Sub-Committees; the Sub-Committee on Undersea Features Names (SCUFN) and the Technical Sub-Committee on Ocean Mapping (TSCOM). These were submitted as part of the report of GEBCO to the Conference.

2 The GEBCO Guiding Committee established a drafting group to review and harmonize, as much as possible, the text based on the comments provided by Member States at the Conference. During the GEBCO Guiding Committee meeting held at the IOC headquarters in Paris, in early November, the subject was discussed in detail and the final draft texts have now been provided to the IHB.

3 The IHB has reviewed the text provided and would like to offer the following comments:

- .1 The original text of the RoP for the Joint IHO-IOC Guiding Committee has been amended to improve the wording as regard to the composition of the Committee. The Chairpersons of the Sub-Committees and the Director of the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry have been considered as ex-officio Members of the Committee. The term of service has been set at 5 years and renewal can take place at the recommendation of the Committee, subject to the approval of the parent organizations.
- .2 The original text of the RoP for the Sub-Committee on Undersea Features Names (SCUFN) has been amended to improve the wording with regard to the composition of the Sub-Committee. The endorsement by the GGC was deleted. The term of service was standardized at 5 years and a second term can be approved by the parent organizations if proposed by the Sub-Committee through the GGC.
- .3 The original text of the RoP for the Technical Sub-Committee on Ocean Mapping (TSCOM) was amended to harmonize its text with the RoP of SCUFN, wherever possible.

4 The IHB considers that the final text, attached as Annex A (Version 03DEC07), has taken account of the recommendations made by the Conference and constitutes a text that will modernize the actual structure of GEBCO. The IHB and the IOC Secretariat have been working hard at improving the structure of GEBCO, to make it more relevant to today's requirements. This final text also has the strong support of all the members of the Joint IHO-IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee.

5 We would also like to inform you that the last GGC meeting agreed, with the concurrence of representatives of IHB and IOC Secretariats, on the following steps ahead:

- GGC to finalize the text and provide it to the IHB (Done).
- IHB to issue a Circular Letter informing Member States of the work done and providing the final text for information and approval. (This Circular Letter).
- IHO Member States requested to approve the new text by 31 January 2008.
- IHB to coordinate with IOC the introduction of this matter in the agenda of the IOC Executive Council. (15 February 2008).
- IHO Member States to brief their national representatives to the IOC on the importance of approving at the IOC Executive Council meeting, the new terms of reference and rules of procedures for GEBCO and its Sub-Committees. (February/May 2008)
- IHO and IOC Secretariats to explain the proposal at the IOC Executive Council and seek approval of the new text. (June 2008).
- GGC consider the text approved and to adopt at the next GGC the measures needed to implement the new structure by 01 January 2009.
- New ToR and RoP enter in force. (01 January 2009).

6 Your timely contribution would be deeply appreciated and we invite you to complete the attached Voting Paper (Annex B) and return it to the IHB no later than 31 January 2008, in order to ensure that the steps are completed in a timely manner. Without your approval it will not be possible to take this important initiative forward.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Gorziglia', written in a cursive style.

Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA
Director

Annex A: Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure
Annex B: Voting Form

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
AND
RULES OF PROCEDURES**

**GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE (GGC)
+
SUB-COMMITTEE ON UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES (SCUFN)
+
TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON OCEAN MAPPING (TSCOM)**

JOINT IHO-IOC GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

PREAMBLE

GEBCO was proposed in 1899 and became a reality in April 1903 when HSH Prince Albert I of Monaco offered to organize and finance the production of a new chart series designated: "The General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans" (GEBCO), under the Prince's Scientific Cabinet. In 1922 the responsibility for GEBCO was passed to the Director of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and in 1929 was transferred to the International Hydrographic Bureau (today the IHO). Since 1973, GEBCO has been a joint project of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

The goals of the IHO-IOC GEBCO Project are to:

- 1) Develop and constantly improve the authoritative description of global ocean depths;
- 2) Act as the designated international authority for undersea feature names;
- 3) Advance the development and application of sea floor mapping technology;
- 4) Encourage and facilitate scientific cooperation leading to the exchange and preservation of bathymetric data and associated metadata;
- 5) Foster collaboration among individuals and organizations with established and developing expertise so as to assist local and regional mapping efforts to attain a global standard of quality;
- 6) Identify oceanic areas that are insufficiently surveyed and recommend to surveying and/or ocean-going organizations and institutions that such areas are mapped;
- 7) Promote education and training in ocean mapping;
- 8) Bring together ocean mappers and users of bathymetry thereby leading to products that are more widely used in science and education.

GEBCO is an IHO and IOC project that is open to all those interested in mapping the ocean floor. It relies largely on the voluntary efforts of an international collaborating community of scientists and hydrographers with the support of the IHO and the IOC.

GEBCO is led by the Joint IHO-IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee.

Terms of Reference

The GEBCO Guiding Committee shall:

1. Guide the GEBCO Project, under the general governance of IHO and IOC while recognising and following IHO and IOC policies, where they are concordant.
2. Prepare and disseminate maps, grids, data files and other appropriate depictions of the ocean floor.
3. Identify the needs of the various user communities of the bathymetry of the world's oceans, study the ways and means whereby these needs can be met and, where appropriate, implement actions or propose to IOC and IHO actions, within their purview, which meet these needs.

4. Stimulate the flow of data relevant to the GEBCO Project by actively identifying sources of new data and encouraging and promoting the release of data to appropriate data banks, with the objective of ensuring that maximum available data are provided to the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB).
5. Supervise the development, maintenance and routine updating of GEBCO products. Activities are to include but are not restricted to:
 - (1) Study and set out procedures for new compilations of bathymetry.
 - (2) Develop standards and methodologies for the production of bathymetric maps and grids and recommend their adoption to the IHO and IOC and to the seafloor mapping community.
 - (3) Supervise the development, production and updating of a worldwide grid of digital bathymetric data.
 - (4) Supervise the preparation and maintenance, in association with national and international bodies, of an authoritative IHO/IOC GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names (Gazetteer of Geographical Names of Undersea Features).
 - (5) Study and implement the best distribution mechanism for the effective use of GEBCO products by all users.
6. Investigate and develop logistical and financial arrangements necessary for the furtherance of the GEBCO Project with the assistance of the IHB and IOC Secretariats.
7. Integrate into its products the geographical names of undersea features that appear in the IHO/IOC GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names.
8. Direct and monitor the work of the GEBCO Sub-Committees and Working Groups; propose to IHO and IOC the creation or termination of Sub-Committees, and create, maintain and terminate Working Groups as deemed necessary.
9. Cooperate, through the Consultative Group on Ocean Mapping (CGOM), with regional International Bathymetric Chart (IBC) projects on the specifications and preparation of regional bathymetric charts, to ensure their compatibility with, and eventual inclusion in, GEBCO products.
10. Build capacity by encouraging and enabling the training and scientific education of new generations of ocean mapping operational experts (bathymetrists) worldwide.
11. Pursue policies that facilitate the suitability of GEBCO products not only for scientific users but also, where appropriate, for educational and socio-economic purposes in the broadest sense.
12. Take all practical opportunities to advocate the scientific and societal benefits of mapping the seafloor.
13. The GEBCO Guiding Committee shall report to the IHO and IOC annually and should also propose activities to be considered in the IHO's and IOC's work programs, identifying and requesting, where necessary, the required funding support.

Rules of Procedure

1. Membership:
 - 1.1 The Committee shall consist of five members appointed by IHO, five members appointed by the IOC and, ex-officio, the Chairpersons of the Sub-Committees and the Director of the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB). In close consultation, IHO and IOC will ensure that all the appointed members are, as far as possible, from different regions taking care of a balanced geographical representation.
 - 1.2 Appointed Committee Members shall serve for a term of five years, renewable by a majority recommendation of the Committee for one additional five-year term and with the approval of the corresponding parent organization.
 - 1.3 Appointed members of the Guiding Committee represent their parent organization as experts¹ and no substitution shall be allowed.
 - 1.4 Additionally, the Committee may invite other suitably qualified individuals to take part in their meeting, without voting rights.
 - 1.5 Members are expected to attend every meeting of the Committee. Appointed Members who are absent from meetings over two consecutive years will normally be considered to have resigned and new nominations shall be sought.
 - 1.6 Business shall be conducted by correspondence between meetings. E-mail communication will be the normal method. The Committee's Minutes and other relevant documents shall be posted on the GEBCO web site linked to the IHO and IOC web sites.
2. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the Committee from among the members appointed by the IHO and IOC, and normally should be from different parent organizations. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are each elected for a five-year term, but not exceeding their current membership of the Committee. They can be re-elected for one additional five-year term by the Committee. The Chairperson, or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairperson, shall conduct the business of the Committee.
3. The IHB and IOC Secretariats, as well as representatives from Member States of IHO and IOC, may participate as observers in Committee meetings without voting rights.
4. Meetings shall be held at least every two years. The venue and date of the meeting will normally be decided at the previous meeting, in order to facilitate participants' travel arrangements.
5. The quorum to hold a meeting shall be 7 Committee Members. An extraordinary meeting can be called by the Chairperson or any Committee Member, with the agreement of the simple majority of all members of the Committee. The working language of the Committee shall be English.
6. The Committee shall strive to make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be taken by simple majority vote. The Chairperson shall have the casting vote if there is a tie.
7. The Committee shall appoint a Secretary for a five-year term which can be renewed by the Committee. At the Committee's request secretarial support shall be provided by IHO and IOC. The Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that the necessary GEBCO Project

¹ So far as IOC is concerned, the Guiding Committee is classed as a Joint Group of Experts under the IOC guidelines for subsidiary bodies.

coordination is made in accordance with the decisions of the Committee, and that meeting arrangements, invitations, documentation and agenda are prepared. The Secretary shall act as Rapporteur and prepare the draft Summary Report of the meeting which shall be distributed to the Members of the Committee, preferably within one month of the meeting. Member's comments should be returned within one month of distribution of the draft report. The final Summary Report shall be forwarded to the IHO and IOC. The Secretary shall act as secretary between meetings.

8. The Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure should be endorsed by the IHO and IOC according to their current procedures. The Committee may propose to IHO and IOC changes to these Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure with the approval of two thirds of the Committee. Any change shall enter in force after being endorsed by both IHO and IOC.

SUB-COMMITTEE ON UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES (SCUFN)

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

Revised 9 July 07 and 29 Nov 07

1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1 The Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names reports to the Joint IOC-IHO GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) as its designated authority for all matters concerning undersea feature names.
- 1.2 It is the function of the Sub-Committee to select those names of undersea features in the world ocean appropriate for use on GEBCO graphical and digital products, on the IHO small-scale International chart series, and on the regional IBC series.
- 1.3 The Sub-Committee shall:
 - 1.3.1 Select undersea feature names from:
 - a) names provided by national and international organizations concerned with nomenclature;
 - b) names submitted to the Sub-Committee by individuals, agencies and organizations involved in marine research, hydrography, etc.;
 - c) names appearing in scientific journals or on appropriate charts and maps;
 - d) names submitted to the Sub-Committee by the Chairpersons or Chief Editors of IBC projects, in relation to the work on these projects.

All selected names shall adhere to the principles contained in IHO-IOC Publication B-6 "Standardization of Undersea Feature Names" and be supported by valid evidence. Such names shall be reviewed before they are added to the Gazetteer.

- 1.3.2 Define, where appropriate, the extent of named features.
- 1.3.3 Provide advice to individuals and appropriate authorities on the selection of undersea feature names in international waters and, on request, in waters under national jurisdiction.
- 1.3.4 Encourage the establishment of national boards on undersea feature names where such boards do not exist.
- 1.3.5 Prepare and maintain an international and worldwide IHO-IOC GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names.
- 1.3.6 Encourage the use of undersea feature names included in the IHO-IOC GEBCO Gazetteer, on any maps, charts, scientific publications and documents by promulgating these names widely.
- 1.3.7 Prepare and maintain internationally agreed guidelines for the standardization of undersea feature names and encourage their use.
- 1.3.8 Review and address the need for revised or additional terms and definitions for submarine topographic features.
- 1.3.9 Maintain close liaison with the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the focal point of which shall be invitations to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee, and with international or national authorities concerned with the naming of undersea features.

- 1.3.10 Provide, where feasible, historical information regarding the origin of pre-existing published names and historical variant names. This research will include discovery ship and/or organization, information regarding the individual or vessel being commemorated or geographic feature with which the name is associated, origin of variant names if required and source material regarding naming information.

2. Rules of Procedure

- 2.1 Membership of the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names is covered by the following rules:
- 2.1.1 The Sub-Committee shall normally consist of 12 members, preferably 6 members being appointed by IHO and 6 by IOC acting in close consultation.
- 2.1.2 Appointed Members of the Sub-Committee represent their parent organization as experts² and no substitution shall be allowed.
- 2.1.3 Members of the Sub-Committee shall be appointed for a five-year period, renewable for one additional five-year term by the corresponding parent organization if so recommended by the Sub-Committee through the GGC. The Sub-Committee Chairperson shall inform the relevant parent organization of any foreseeable vacancy in a timely manner.
- 2.2 The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the Sub-Committee subject to endorsement by the GGC. They should normally come from different Parent Organizations.
- 2.3 The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are elected for a five-year period but not exceeding their current membership of the Sub-Committee. The Chairperson will normally be succeeded by the Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson may be re-elected by the Sub-Committee for one additional five-year period. Should the Chairperson step down before the end of his/her term, the Vice-Chairperson shall take over as Chair till the end of the current term.
- 2.4 The Chairperson, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall conduct the business of the Sub-Committee. Meetings will usually be held every year, ideally before the GGC meeting. In the intervening period the Sub-Committee shall conduct its business by correspondence (preferably electronic mail).
- 2.5 Members are expected to attend every meeting of the Sub-Committee. Sub-Committee Members who are absent from meetings over two consecutive years will normally be considered to have resigned and new nominations shall be sought from the relevant parent organization.
- 2.6 Representatives of non-governmental entities / organizations, or individuals, that can provide a relevant and constructive contribution to the work of the Sub-Committee may attend meetings with observer status. In the event that a large number of observers seeks to attend a meeting, the Chairperson may restrict attendance by inviting them to act through one or more collective representatives.
- 2.7 Observers from IHO and/or IOC Member States may attend meetings. Attendance shall normally be limited to one observer per Member State.
- 2.8 Proposals which are to be considered at SCUFN meetings must be submitted 30 days before meetings if in electronic form, or 60 days if in analogue form.

² So far as IOC is concerned, the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names is classed as a Joint Group of Experts under the IOC guidelines for subsidiary bodies.

- 2.9 The quorum necessary to hold a meeting shall be 7 Committee members. The Sub-Committee should strive to decide by consensus. If a vote is necessary the majority required for acceptance is a simple majority of the total number of members. Only members present may cast a vote. This option will be used exceptionally if no consensus can be reached and a decision has to be made.
- 2.10 The Sub-Committee will not consider undersea feature name proposals that are politically sensitive.
- 2.11 Recommendations of the Sub-Committee shall be submitted to the GGC for consideration and decision.
- 2.12 The Chairperson is to submit an annual report to the Chairperson of the GGC.
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TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON OCEAN MAPPING (TSCOM) (*former SCDB*)

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

Preamble

In May 1977, at GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) IV, the Guiding Committee decided to form a small Sub-Committee on Digital Bathymetry (SCDB) to 'investigate... the question: Is there an advantage [in] having digital bathymetric data?' This led to a very positive report being submitted to the Guiding Committee in May 1983, the formation of a larger and more representative Sub-Committee, with revised Terms of Reference, and a recommendation leading to the establishment of the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry.

Over the years the annual meetings of this Sub-Committee have gained increasing recognition as being of growing importance to the scientific community. From a meeting of five experts in 1984, the group had grown to thirty-six experts from twenty-five groups in thirteen countries by June 1999.

By 2006 it was recognized that all GEBCO products and nearly all cartographic activities are "digital", and after the SCDB XXII meeting in Bremerhaven, Germany it is proposed that, as part of the revision of the GEBCO structure, the sub-committee be renamed the "Technical Sub-Committee on Ocean Mapping" (TSCOM).

1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1 The Sub-Committee reports to the Joint IOC-IHO GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) as its designated authority for all technical matters relevant to the goals of GEBCO as set out in the Guiding Committee Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee shall:
 - 1.2.1 Maintain and improve GEBCO products and supporting data such as, but not limited to:
 - a) A global bathymetric grid;
 - b) The GEBCO Digital Atlas;
 - c) Databases of soundings, shorelines, land elevations, remotely sensed and other data, generalized to a useful working scale, as may facilitate update of GEBCO products and maintenance of product quality.
 - 1.2.2 Monitor developments in data availability and relevant technology as may impact GEBCO activities, and recommend to the GC actions that will maintain the excellence of GEBCO products.
 - 1.2.3 Provide advice to individuals and appropriate authorities on the scientific and technical aspects of bathymetric mapping, as requested.
 - 1.2.4 Encourage and facilitate the location, acquisition and exchange of sounding, shoreline, remotely sensed and other data supporting bathymetric mapping.
 - 1.2.5 Investigate the application of GEBCO products, beyond the cartographic sciences, with the aim of producing products that are easily applied to other ocean sciences.
 - 1.2.6 Establish, nurture, and/or disband working groups, as needed, to carry out specific tasks or product developments that relate to the technical advance of the GEBCO project.
 - 1.2.7 Work with SCUFN on matters of joint interest, such as, but not limited to, the shapes or outlines of named features and the automatic placement of feature names.

2. Rules of Procedure

- 2.1 Membership of the Sub-Committee is covered by the following rules:
- 2.1.1 The Sub-Committee shall normally consist of up to 10 members appointed by the Joint IOC/IHO GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC). They shall be appointed according to their individual technical expertise and their ability to complement the overall technical breadth of the Sub-Committee as a whole.
 - 2.1.2 Members of the Sub-Committee are experts acting exclusively for the benefit of the Joint IHO-IOC GEBCO project ³.
 - 2.1.3 Members of the Sub-Committee shall be appointed for a five-year period, renewable for a further five-year term by majority recommendation of the Sub-Committee and with the approval of the GGC.
 - 2.1.4 Members are expected to attend every meeting of the Sub-Committee. Sub-Committee Members who are absent from meetings over two consecutive years will normally be considered to have resigned and new nominations shall be sought.
 - 2.1.5 The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the Sub-Committee subject to endorsement by the GGC.
 - 2.1.6 The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairman are elected for a five-year period but not exceeding their current membership of the Committee. The Chairperson will normally be succeeded by the Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson may be re-elected by the Sub-Committee for one additional five-year period.
- 2.2 The Chairperson, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall conduct the business of the Sub-Committee. Meetings will usually be held every year. In the intervening period the Sub-Committee shall conduct its business by correspondence (preferably electronic mail).
- 2.3 Individuals who can provide a relevant and constructive contribution to the work of the Sub-Committee may attend meetings as Scientific Advisors with observer status, at the discretion of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson.
- 2.4 Entities and organisations that can provide a relevant and constructive contribution to the work of the Sub-Committee may be represented at meetings with observer status.
- 2.5 The quorum to hold a meeting shall be 6 Committee Members. The Committee shall strive to make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be taken by simple majority vote. The Chairman shall have the casting vote if there is a tie.
- 2.6 Recommendations of the Sub-Committee shall be submitted to the GGC for consideration and decision.
- 2.7 The Chairperson shall submit an annual report to the Chairperson of the GGC.

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³ So far as IOC is concerned, the Sub-Committee is classed as a Joint Group of Experts under the IOC guidelines for subsidiary bodies.

**ADOPTION OF NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURES
FOR GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE (GGC),
SUB-COMMITTEE ON UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES (SCUFN) AND
TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON OCEAN MAPPING (TSCOM)**

VOTING FORM

(to be returned to the IHB by 31 January 2008

E-mail: info@ihb.mc - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)

Member State:

Do you approve the New Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for the GEBCO Guiding Committee?

YES NO

Comments (if any):

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Do you approve the New Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for the GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names?

YES NO

Comments (if any):

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Do you approve the New Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for the Technical Sub-Committee on Ocean Mapping (TSCOM)?

YES NO

Comments (if any):

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.....
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Name / Signature

Date: