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CIRCULAR LETTER 42/2015
18 June 2015

**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IHO CROWD-SOURCED BATHYMETRY
WORKING GROUP (CSBWG)**

- References:
- A. EIHC5 Decision 8 - Establishment of a CSBWG
 - B. IRCC Decisions 7/38 and 7/39 - Establishment of the CSBWG and appointment of the Chair

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The 5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC5) recognized the need to examine how best to incorporate, manage and use bathymetric data acquired by other than conventional means, such as through crowd-sourcing. It was agreed that there was a need to develop appropriate principles and guidelines to enable the appropriate collection and use of crowd-sourced bathymetry for the benefit of all stakeholders interested in knowing the shape and nature of the seafloor and its depths. As a result, Decision 8 of EIHC5 instructed the Inter Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) to:

... establish a Working Group to prepare a new IHO publication on policy for trusted crowd-sourced bathymetry, taking into account EIHC5 PRO4 and the comments during the Conference. The WG should comprise IHO MS and invited expert contributors, including members of IHO-IOC TSCOM. The WG should seek advice and input from relevant HSSC Working Groups as required.

2. As instructed by EIHC5, the IRCC, at its 7th meeting in Mexico City, established a Crowd-Sourced Bathymetry Working Group (CSBWG) under the Terms of Reference shown in the Annex A to this Circular Letter. The IRCC appointed Ms Lisa Taylor, Director of the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry as its first Chair. Assistant Director David Wyatt will be the Secretary for the working group until such time as a suitable volunteer is identified.

3. In accordance with established IHO procedures, participation in the working group is open to representatives from all Member States of the IHO, representatives of recognised IHO Observer organizations, and invited expert contributors.

4. In accordance with the instructions of EIHC5 and as reflected in the Terms of Reference of the CSBWG, the Chair will invite expert contributors to participate in order to obtain a wide cross-section of experience and knowledge in the execution of the work of the working group. This will include all the relevant and interested members of the subsidiary bodies of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) project.

5. Noting the very strong linkages between the work, aims and experience associated with the GEBCO project and the tasks of the CSBWG, it is planned that the inaugural meeting of the CSBWG will take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during the week of GEBCO meetings from 5 to 9 October.

6. Member States are invited to nominate representatives to participate in the CSBWG, in particular, those that can provide an active input to its work based on their current experience. Nominations for membership of the CSBWG by Member States may be made to the Secretary (adso@iho.int) and the Chair (lisa.a.taylor@noaa.gov) at any time.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Robert WARD
President

Annex A: Crowd-Sourced Bathymetry Working Group - Terms of Reference

CROWD-SOURCED BATHYMETRY WORKING GROUP (CSBWG)

Terms of Reference

(as adopted by IRCC-7, June 2015)

1. Preamble

The 5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC-5) considered Proposal 4 on Crowd Sourced Bathymetry (CSB) and decided by Decision 8 to task the IRCC to establish a Working Group (WG) to prepare a new IHO publication on policy for trusted crowd-sourced bathymetry, taking into account EIHC-5 Proposal 4 and the comments made during the Conference.

2. Objectives

- a. Prepare a draft IHO publication on policy for trusted crowd-sourced bathymetry for consideration and endorsement by the 8th meeting of the IRCC in 2016.
- b. The draft IHO publication on policy for trusted crowd-sourced bathymetry should provide guidelines on the collection and assessment of CSB data, not only for potential use for charting purposes but also for its wider use in non-navigational applications. The WG should:
 - (1) take into account EIHC-5 Proposal 4 and the comments made during the Conference;
 - (2) take into account the ongoing work to enhance the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB) as a data discovery and upload/download portal for Crowd-Sourced Bathymetry;
 - (3) take into account the lessons learned and specifications created during the IHO CSB pilot project involving the Professional Yachting Association, Sea-ID and the DCDB, together with any other relevant CSB trials or operational services;
 - (4) actively seek input from other international organizations, industry and invited Expert Contributors on their methods and use of crowd-sourced information;
 - (5) seek advice and input from relevant HSSC Working Groups as required;
 - (6) identify the nature and minimum level of metadata required to accompany any crowd-sourced bathymetry data;
 - (7) identify methods for assessing and designating the uncertainty of crowd-sourced bathymetry, both as individual observations from a single observer and as repeat or duplicate observations from the same or different observers;
 - (8) identify preferred formats for the submission, exchange and preservation of crowd-sourced bathymetry data, taking into account the relevant international standards and existing industry or community practices; and
 - (9) base its recommendations, wherever possible, on established and accepted crowd-sourced data gathering principles.
- c. The WG should provide IRCC with general advice on any relevant liability or legal issues associated with the collection or use of crowd-sourced data.

3. Authority

- a. The WG is a subsidiary of the Inter Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) and its work is subject to IRCC approval.
- b. The need for the WG to continue shall be confirmed at each meeting of the IRCC.

4. Composition and Chairmanship

- a. The WG shall comprise representatives of IHO Member States, invited Expert Contributors, including members of IHO-IOC Technical Sub Committee on Ocean mapping (TSCOM) and Observers from accredited NGIO, all of whom have expressed their willingness to participate, and a representative of the IHB ("IHB" to be replaced by "IHO Secretariat" when the IHO Secretariat is established).
- b. Member States, invited Expert Contributors and Observers may indicate their willingness to participate at any time. A membership list shall be maintained, posted on the IHO website and confirmed annually.
- c. Invited Expert Contributor membership is open to entities and organizations that can provide a relevant and constructive contribution to the work of the WG.
- d. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be a representative of a Member State. Unless already decided by the IRCC, the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair should be decided at the first meeting following each ordinary session of the Conference ("Conference" to be replaced by "Assembly" when the revised IHO Convention enters into force) and, in such case, shall be determined by vote of the Member States present and voting.
- e. If a secretary is required it should normally be drawn from a member of the WG.
- f. If the Chair is unable to carry out the duties of the office, the Vice-Chair shall assume the Chair with the same powers and duties.
- g. Invited Expert Contributors shall seek approval of membership from the Chair.
- h. Invited Expert Contributor membership may be withdrawn in the event that a majority of the MS represented in the WG agree that an Expert Contributor's continued participation is irrelevant or unconstructive to the work of the WG.
- i. All members shall inform the Chair in advance of their intention to attend meetings of the WG.
- j. In the event that a large number of Invited Expert Contributor members seek to attend a meeting, the Chair may restrict attendance by inviting the Invited Expert Contributors to act through one or more collective representatives.

5. Procedures

- a. The WG should work primarily by correspondence.
- b. The WG should attempt to meet annually, and wherever possible, with another convenient forum.
- c. The WG should seek advice and input from relevant HSSC WGs as required.

- d. Decisions should generally be made by consensus. If voting is required on issues or to endorse proposals presented to the WG, only IHO Member States may cast a vote. Votes at meetings shall be on the basis of one vote per MS represented at the meeting. Votes by correspondence shall be on the basis of one vote per MS represented in the WG. In all cases of voting, a majority shall be determined based on the number of Member States casting a vote.