



**THIS CIRCULAR LETTER REQUIRES YOU TO VOTE**

IHB File No. S3/2620

**CIRCULAR LETTER 49/2015**  
**9 July 2015**

**GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE**

**REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

References:

- A. IHO CL 24/2008 dated 5 March - *GEBCO New Terms of Reference and Terms of Procedure*
- B. IHO CL 59/2008 dated 9 July - *GEBCO Guiding Committee and its Sub-Committees – Final approval of new Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure*
- C. IOC-XXVIII/3 prov. Pt.2 Rev. dated 26 June 2015 - *Provisional Summary Report of the IOC Assembly-28, Part 2 (Decision 6.2)*
- D. IOC letter IOC/VR/15.167/OM/ic dated 9 July 2015

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) is a joint Project of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO. The GEBCO Project is led by the Joint IHO-IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC).
2. The current version of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure (TOR-ROP) of the GGC was last approved by the IHO Member States and the IOC Executive Council in 2008 (References A and B). Since that time, the activities in which the GEBCO Project has been involved have evolved to reflect the greater interest in mapping the seafloor by national and international organizations, governments and academia. Discussions between the IHO and IOC Secretariats during 2013 also indicated that a revision to the TOR-ROP of the GGC would be timely, as it was recognized that there was a need for improved oversight of the GEBCO project.
3. The proposed revisions were prepared to tighten governance and increase engagement by the IHO and the IOC, as co-owners of the GEBCO Project and the GGC, as well as to align the administrative arrangements of the GGC and its subordinate bodies with other similar bodies operating under the auspices of the IHO and IOC. The need to confirm the status of the Secretariats of the IHO and IOC in relation to the GGC and its subordinate bodies and to clarify the de facto ex-officio observer status of both the IHO and IOC Secretariats on the GGC and subordinate bodies was identified.
4. The GEBCO Guiding Committee started the revision process at its 30<sup>th</sup> meeting (GGC30) in Venice, Italy, in October 2013. The proposed revised TOR-ROP, which had been agreed previously by the GGC through correspondence, were endorsed by the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) at its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Paris in May 2014. Subsequently, some minor editorial amendments were made as a result of further consideration and review at the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the GGC (GGC31) held in Monaco in June 2014. The proposed revised TOR-ROP were then proposed to the IOC Executive Council at its 47<sup>th</sup> session (Paris, 1–4 July 2014). The IOC Executive Council examined the proposal; however, no consensus was reached on the proposed revision during the limited time available. It was agreed that the IOC Member States would review the proposed revision during the inter-sessional period and that the outcome would be re-examined by the IOC Assembly at its 28<sup>th</sup> session (Paris, 18-25 June 2015).

5. Taking into account the potential difficulties in developing a text which could be agreed by both parent organizations, the IHO Secretariat co-operated closely with the IOC Secretariat and was directly involved in the IOC approval process in order to minimize the number of iterations required. The IHO and IOC Secretariats conducted a careful joint examination of the proposed amendments and comments received from IOC Member States while preparing a consolidated revised proposal for consideration by the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the IOC Assembly. The IHO Secretariat actively participated in the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the IOC Assembly, on behalf of the IHO Member States.

6. The 28<sup>th</sup> session of the IOC Assembly adopted the revised TOR-ROP of the GGC in plenary session on 22 June 2015 by consensus (References C and D). The revised TOR-ROP still require the approval of the IHO Member States before they can enter into force. It is hoped that this can be achieved before the next GEBCO Guiding Committee meeting (GGC32), which is scheduled in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in October 2015.

7. The final revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the GEBCO Guiding Committee adopted by the IOC Assembly are provided in Annexes A and B in track change and clean versions respectively.

8. Member States are requested to take into account the continuous involvement of the IHB and the IRCC in the process so far and to review and consider adopting the revised TOR-ROP of the GGC, and to indicate their decision by returning the Voting Form, provided in Annex C, **no later than 10 September 2015**.

On behalf of the Directing Committee

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mustafa IPTES', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mustafa IPTES  
Director

Annexes:

- A. Revised TOR-ROP of the GGC– ‘Track Change’ version.
- B. Revised TOR-ROP of the GGC– Clean version.
- C. Voting Form - Adoption of Revised TOR-ROP of the GGC.



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Intergovernmental  
Oceanographic  
Commission

## GENERAL BATHYMETRIC CHARTS OF THE OCEAN (GEBCO) PROJECT (GEBCO)

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

#### 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-portrayal~~ 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 ocean mapping~~ 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-mapped~~ and recommend to ~~surveying and/or appropriate~~ ocean-going organizations and institutions that such areas are ~~mapped~~ ~~surveyed~~;
- 7) Promote education and training in ocean mapping ~~through high level courses in Ocean Bathymetry acknowledged by the IHO and IOC~~;
- 8) Bring together ~~the ocean mappers community~~ and users of bathymetry thereby leading to products that are more widely used ~~in science and education~~.

As approved by IHO CL24/200815 ~~06-March-2008-2015~~ and IOC ~~Executive Council~~ ~~Assembly 28-XLI~~ June 200815

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 IHO-IOC 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. Identify the necessary resources, both human and financial, for its undertakings and make appropriate recommendations to its parent organizationsa.
- ~~45.~~ 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).
- ~~56.~~ 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.
- ~~67.~~ Investigate and develop logistical and financial arrangements necessary for the furtherance of the GEBCO Project, recognising and taking into account the relevant IHO and IOC policies, and seeking —with— the assistance of the Secretariats of the IHO~~HB~~ and IOC as appropriateSecretariats.

As approved by IHO CL24/200815 ~~06-March-2008-2015~~ and IOC ~~Executive Council~~Assembly 28-XLI June 200815

78. Integrate into its products the geographical names of undersea features that appear in the IHO/IOC GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names.
- ~~89. 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. As required, establish subordinate bodies (sub-committees and working groups) to fulfil the Committee Work Programme and approve the Terms of reference and Rules of Procedure of those bodies, reviewing annually the continuing need for each subordinate body. The GEBCO Guiding Committee will report annually, and intersessionally if necessary, to the IHO and IOC for endorsement on the status of subordinate bodies and encompass their comments before stabling, reviewing, modifying, and/or terminating subordinate bodies; actions which must be included as GGC agenda items to allow sufficient prior consideration by the IHO and IOC secretariats and member states.~~
- ~~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. Direct and monitor the work of its subordinate bodies.
11. Engage with regional mapping projects to encourage their compatibility with, and eventual inclusion in, GEBCO products.
- ~~1012.~~ Build capacity by encouraging and enabling the training and scientific education of new generations of ocean mapping operational experts (~~bathymetrists~~) worldwide.
- ~~1413.~~ Pursue, in dialogue with the IHO and IOC, 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.
- ~~1214.~~ Take all practical opportunities to advocate the scientific and societal benefits of mapping the seafloor.
- ~~1315.~~ The GEBCO Guiding Committee shall reportReport annually to the IHO and to the IOC, through their respective governing bodies and -annually and should also propose activities to be considered in the IHO's and IOC's work programmes, identifying and requesting, where necessary, the required funding support.
16. Prepare an annual GEBCO Work Plan and budget and propose it to each meeting of the IHO and IOC, through their respective governing bodies. The Guiding Committee should consider and submit to the IHO and IOC governing bodies proposals for new work items under the GEBCO Work Plan, taking into account the financial, administrative and wider stakeholder consequences.
17. Monitor the execution of the GEBCO Work Plan and receive reports from its subordinate bodies, including an evaluation of performance and progress achieved against agreed objectives.

## Rules of Procedure

### 1. Membership:

As approved by IHO CL24/200815 ~~06 March 2008~~ 2015 and IOC ~~Executive Council~~Assembly 28-XLI June 200815

- 1.1 The Committee shall consist of five members appointed by IHO, five members appointed by the IOC. ~~The Secretariats of the IHO and IOC, in close and, ex officio, the Chairpersons of the Sub-Committees and the Director of the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB). In close consultation with the Committee Chair, will seek, IHO and IOC will ensure to strive that all appointed Members that all the appointed members~~ are, as far as possible, from different regions ~~so as to achieve taking care of~~ a balanced ~~and diverse 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. The ~~Committee~~ Chairperson shall inform the relevant parent organization of any foreseeable vacancy in a timely manner.
- 1.3 ~~Appointed members of the Guiding Committee represent their parent organization as experts<sup>1</sup> and no substitution shall be allowed. The Chairs of GEBCO Sub-Committees established under Article 9 of the Terms of Reference and the Director of their IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB) shall also be voting Members of the Committee. If a Member of the Committee mentioned under paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 above is also the Chair of a subordinate body, that Member shall have only one vote on the Committee.~~
- 1.4 ~~Representatives of the Secretariats of the IHO and IOC shall be permanent Observers in the Committee. The Secretariats of the IHO and IOC will also be recognised as permanent Observers in all subordinate bodies established by the Committee.~~
- 1.4-5 ~~Additionally, the~~The Committee may invite other suitably qualified individuals to take part in ~~their meeting, without voting rights. specific meetings as Expert Contributors.~~
- 1.6 ~~Members of the Guiding Committee serve as experts<sup>2</sup> in their personal capacity rather than as representatives of their organization and/or country.~~
- 1.5-7 ~~Members are expected to attend every meeting of the Committee. Appointed Members who are absent from meetings overfor two consecutive yearsmeetings will normally be considered to have resigned and new nominations shall be sought. No substitution shall be allowed at meetings.~~
- 1.8 ~~Business shall may be conducted between meetings by appropriate communication systems, 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.~~
- 1.9 ~~All documents related to meetings and decisions of the Committee and Sub-Committees and other relevant documents will be posted on the GEBCO web site linked to the IHO and IOC web sites.~~

## 2. Office Bearers

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

<sup>2</sup> ~~So far as the IOC is concerned the Guiding Committee is classed as a Joint Group of Experts under IOC guidelines for subsidiary bodies.~~

2.1 The Chair~~person~~ and Vice-Chair~~person~~ shall be elected by the Committee from ~~among~~ the voting Members of the Committee and normally should be from different parent organizations. ~~appointed by the IHO and IOC, and normally should be from different parent organizations.~~ The Chair~~person~~ and Vice-Chair~~person~~ are each elected for up to 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 Chair~~person, or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairperson,~~ shall conduct the business of the Committee. 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.

2.2 The Committee shall appoint a Secretary for a five-year term which can be renewed by the Committee. If resources permit and at the Committee's request, a secretary may be provided by either the Secretariat of the IHO or the IOC. The function of the secretary shall be defined by the Guiding Committee.

### 3. Meetings

3.1 ~~The IHO and IOC Secretariats representatives, as well as r~~Representatives ~~from Member States of IHO and IOC,~~ may participate as observers in Committee meetings, ~~without voting rights.~~

43.2. 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.

3.35. The quorum to hold a meeting shall be two more than half of the voting Members of the Committee. ~~7 Committee Members.~~

3.4 An extraordinary meeting can be called by the Chair~~person~~ or any Committee Member, with the agreement of the simple majority of all voting members of the Committee.

3.5 The working language of the Committee shall be English.

3.6. The Committee shall strive to make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be taken by simple majority vote of the Members entitled to vote. The Chair~~person~~ 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 would be considered to be provided by IHB/IOC Secretariat. The Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that the necessary GEBCO Project 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.~~

### 4. Amendment and Revision

4.18. These Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure shall ~~ould~~ be endorsed and approved 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 and approved by both IHO and IOC.

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As approved by IHO CL /2015 dated .. .... 2015 and the IOC Assembly-28 in June 2015

## Annex B to IHO CL49/2015

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.
4. Identify the necessary resources, both human and financial, for its undertakings and make appropriate recommendations to its parent organizations.
5. 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).
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  - (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.
  - (5) Study and implement the best distribution mechanism for the effective use of GEBCO products by all users.
7. Investigate and develop logistical and financial arrangements necessary for the furtherance of the GEBCO Project, recognising and taking into account the relevant IHO and IOC policies, and seeking the assistance of the Secretariats of the IHO and IOC as appropriate.
8. Integrate into its products the geographical names of undersea features that appear in the IHO/IOC GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names.
9. As required, establish subordinate bodies (sub-committees and working groups) to fulfil the Committee Work Programme and approve the Terms of reference and Rules of Procedure of those bodies, reviewing annually the continuing need for each subordinate body. The GEBCO Guiding Committee will report annually, and intersessionally if necessary, to the IHO and IOC for endorsement on the status of subordinate bodies and encompass their comments before stabling, reviewing, modifying, and/or terminating subordinate bodies; actions which must be included as GGC agenda items to allow sufficient prior consideration by the IHO and IOC secretariats and member states.
10. Direct and monitor the work of its subordinate bodies.
11. Engage with regional mapping projects to encourage their compatibility with, and eventual inclusion in, GEBCO products.

As approved by IHO CL /2015 dated .. .... 2015 and the IOC Assembly-28 in June 2015

## **Annex B to IHO CL49/2015**

12. Build capacity by encouraging and enabling the training and scientific education of new generations of ocean mapping operational experts worldwide.
13. Pursue, in dialogue with the IHO and IOC, 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.
14. Take all practical opportunities to advocate the scientific and societal benefits of mapping the seafloor.
15. Report annually to the IHO and to the IOC, through their respective governing bodies and should also propose activities to be considered in the IHO's and IOC's work programmes, identifying and requesting, where necessary, the required funding support.
16. Prepare an annual GEBCO Work Plan and budget and propose it to each meeting of the IHO and IOC, through their respective governing bodies. The Guiding Committee should consider and submit to the IHO and IOC governing bodies proposals for new work items under the GEBCO Work Plan, taking into account the financial, administrative and wider stakeholder consequences.
17. Monitor the execution of the GEBCO Work Plan and receive reports from its subordinate bodies, including an evaluation of performance and progress achieved against agreed objectives.

### **Rules of Procedure**

#### **1. Membership**

- 1.1 The Committee shall consist of five members appointed by IHO, five members appointed by the IOC. The Secretariats of the IHO and IOC, in close consultation with the Committee Chair, will seek to strive that all appointed Members are, as far as possible, from different regions so as to achieve a balanced and diverse representation.
- 1.2 Appointed 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. The Chair shall inform the relevant parent organization of any foreseeable vacancy in a timely manner.
- 1.3 The Chairs of GEBCO Sub-Committees established under Article 9 of the Terms of Reference and the Director of their IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB) shall also be voting Members of the Committee. If a Member of the Committee mentioned under paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 above is also the Chair of a subordinate body, that Member shall have only one vote on the Committee.
- 1.4 Representatives of the Secretariats of the IHO and IOC shall be permanent Observers in the Committee. The Secretariats of the IHO and IOC will also be recognised as permanent Observers in all subordinate bodies established by the Committee.
- 1.5 The Committee may invite other suitably qualified individuals to take part in specific meetings as Expert Contributors.

## **Annex B to IHO CL49/2015**

- 1.6 Members of the Guiding Committee serve as experts<sup>1</sup> in their personal capacity rather than as representatives of their organization and/or country.
- 1.7 Members are expected to attend every meeting of the Committee. Members who are absent for two consecutive meetings will normally be considered to have resigned and new nominations shall be sought. No substitution shall be allowed at meetings.
- 1.8 Business may be conducted between meetings by appropriate communication systems.
- 1.9 All documents related to meetings and decisions of the Committee and Sub-Committees and other relevant documents will be posted on the GEBCO web site linked to the IHO and IOC web sites.

### **2. Office Bearers**

- 2.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected by the Committee from the voting Members of the Committee and normally should be from different parent organizations. The Chair and Vice-Chair are each elected for up to 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 Chair shall conduct the business of the Committee. 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.
- 2.2 The Committee shall appoint a Secretary for a five-year term which can be renewed by the Committee. If resources permit and at the Committee's request, a secretary may be provided by either the Secretariat of the IHO or the IOC. The function of the secretary shall be defined by the Guiding Committee.

### **3. Meetings**

- 3.1 Representatives from Member States of IHO and IOC may participate as observers in Committee meetings.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 The quorum to hold a meeting shall be two more than half of the voting Members of the Committee.
- 3.4 An extraordinary meeting can be called by the Chair or any Committee Member, with the agreement of the simple majority of all voting members of the Committee.
- 3.5 The working language of the Committee shall be English.
- 3.6 The Committee shall strive to make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be taken by simple majority vote of the Members entitled to vote. The Chair shall have the casting vote if there is a tie.

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

**4. Amendment and Revision**

- 4.1. These Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure shall be endorsed and approved 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 and approved by both IHO and IOC.
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**VOTING FORM**  
**(to be returned to the IHB no later than 10 September 2015**  
**E-mail: info@iho.int - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)**

Date:

Member State:

Contact:

E-mail:

*ADOPTION OF REVISED TOR AND ROP of the GGC*

1. Do you approve the adoption of the revised *TOR and ROP of the GGC*?

YES

NO

2. Comments (if required)