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**INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION**  
(of UNESCO)

**Forty-ninth Session of the Executive Council**

Paris, 7-10 June 2016

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Part 3**

(Agenda items 4.3.3, 4.4, 5–8)



#### 4. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

##### 4.4 IOC ROLE IN SUPPORT OF THE GENERAL BATHYMETRIC CHART OF THE OCEANS (GEBCO) PROJECT, STATE OF PROGRESS IN THE ASSOCIATED REVIEW

1. The chair of the review group with regard to IOC's roles and involvement in the GEBCO project, Dr Alexander Postnov (Russian Federation), Vice-chair, introduced this item. He presented the objectives of the group and informed the Executive Council of the results of the review process conducted during the intersessional period. As per Decision IOC-XXVIII, 6.2(II), the group had been requested to:

- (i) Generally, consider IOC's role and involvement in the GEBCO project, and specifically identify the user needs in bathymetry from the relevant IOC programmes and regional subsidiary bodies in relation to the GEBCO bathymetric dataset and products;
- (ii) Consider IOC's role and involvement in the GEBCO project, based upon needs identified under (i) above;
- (iii) Recommend key elements for future governing mechanism of the GEBCO project in relation to IOC's role and involvement.

2. In accordance with its terms of reference, the review group was comprised of representatives of IOC Member States (IOC Circular Letter, 2589) and one expert each from the GEBCO Guiding Committee, and relevant IOC technical and regional subsidiary bodies (namely, GOOS, GLOSS, JCOMM, IODE, TOWS-WG, IOCAFRICA, IOCARIBE and WESTPAC).

3. The Review Group received 16 answers to the questionnaire survey carried out to collect inputs concerning potential and existing user needs for GEBCO datasets and products. The review group evaluated the results of the survey in IOC/EC-XLIX/2 Annex 8 and Addendum, focusing on the relevance of the existing GEBCO products to relevant IOC activities, user's needs for GEBCO datasets and products, relevant capacity development needs, and possible cooperation among GEBCO and IOC technical and regional subsidiary bodies.

4. The Review Group concluded that the majority of the IOC technical and regional subsidiary bodies were interested in the GEBCO products and found them useful for their relevant activities. In this light, the Review Group recommended that IOC should continue its involvement in the GEBCO project and collect and integrate the IOC user requirements to GEBCO products, on a regular basis.

5. The Executive Council stressed the significance of IOC's enhanced involvement in the GEBCO project, which produces bathymetric data and products indispensable to activities promoted by IOC and its Member States. The Executive Council further stressed the importance of contributions made by IOC and Member States to GEBCO activities.

6. The Executive Council expressed the concern that the level of active involvement by IOC in the GEBCO project has diminished and noted that the project relies mainly on support from IHO. The Executive Council appreciated the need to reinforce IOC's support. The Executive Council also emphasized the need to increase visibility of the GEBCO project within IOC such as through creating IOC's web page dedicated to the GEBCO project with a link to the GEBCO website. The statement of the IHO Director is included in Annex \_\_\_\_).

7. The representatives of 15 Member States and three organizations took the floor. The following Member States and organizations chose to provide records of their plenary

intervention on this agenda item for the informational annex to the meeting report: Canada, China, Japan, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Turkey, GEBCO, IODE and WMO.

8. The Executive Council adopted Decision EC-XLIX/4.4 below.

**IOC Role in Support of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO)  
Project, State of Progress in the Associated Review**

The Executive Council,

Having examined documents IOC/EC-XLIX/2 Annex 8 and Addendum,

Recalling decision IOC-XXVIII/6.2(II) on the review of IOC's role and involvement in the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO),

Noting the finding of the Review that GEBCO's "traditional" and "shallow water" products are indispensable to IOC activities,

Further noting the conclusion of the review group with regard to IOC's role and involvement in the GEBCO Project,

Decides to:

- (i) Enhance the IOC involvement in the GEBCO project;
- (ii) Establish a regular working group tasked to collect, integrate and assess the user requirements to GEBCO products; and
- (iii) Address ways of potential contributions to GEBCO data and products;

Encourages Member States to:

- (i) Cooperate to advance basin-scale, campaign mapping and accelerate the delivery of GEBCO objectives and general knowledge of the ocean; and
- (ii) Facilitate GEBCO capacity development including training opportunities;

Requests the Executive Secretary to:

- (i) Convey this decision to the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the GEBCO Guiding Committee;
- (ii) Establish the working group in accordance with the terms of reference of the working group contained in the Annex to this decision, in consultation with IHO and GEBCO Guiding Committee; and
- (iii) Explore the possibility of seeking additional funds to GEBCO, including extrabudgetary sources.

Annex to IOC/EC-XLIX, Dec.4.4

**Terms of Reference of the IOC Working Group on user requirements  
and contributions to GEBCO products**

**Mandate**

The Working Group shall:

- (i) Collect, integrate and assess the user needs and requirements to GEBCO data and products.
- (ii) Facilitate and guide the use of GEBCO datasets and products through the user communities that represent relevant IOC technical and regional subsidiary bodies.
- (iii) Identify potential contributions to GEBCO data and products.

The Working Group shall take into account:

- (i) The goals of the IHO-IOC GEBCO Project;
- (ii) Capacity-development needs in relation to GEBCO products;
- (iii) Possible ways to strengthen cooperation between GEBCO and IOC technical and regional subsidiary bodies and GOOS Regional Alliances;
- (iv) Possible mechanism to identify user needs in GEBCO datasets and products and provide input to GEBCO Guiding Committee.
- (v) Possible contributions of data from Member States to GEBCO.

#### **Modus operandi**

The bulk of the Working Group's work will be done by correspondence, co-ordinated by the Executive Secretary IOC.

The Working Group should work, where appropriate, in close cooperation with GEBCO Guiding Committee.

The Working Group will produce a document assessing and summarizing the needs and requirements and potential contributions of the IOC community in bathymetric data and products.

The assessment will be conducted every two years, unless otherwise decided.

The document reporting the assessment is reviewed and finalized by IOC governing bodies and forwarded by the Executive Secretary to the Secretariat of the International Hydrographic Organization and GEBCO Guiding Committee.

#### **Membership**

The Working Group shall consist of:

- (i) Experts nominated by chairs of relevant IOC technical and regional subsidiary bodies and GOOS Regional Alliances.
- (ii) Experts nominated by the chair of GEBCO Guiding Committee.
- (iii) Experts nominated by interested IOC Member States.

The Chair shall be elected by the Working Group members.

The representative of the International Hydrographic Organization / other partners and stakeholders may participate in activities of the Working Group on a specific item, if deemed appropriate.