IOC Circular Letter No. 2545
(Available in English, French, Spanish and Russian)  

To: IOC Member States (Official National Coordinating Body for liaison with the IOC)
Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States

cc: The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission
Officers of Major IOC Subsidiary Bodies (Scientific, Technical and Regional)

Subject: Revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for the GEBCO Guiding Committee

At its 47th session (Paris, 1–4 July 2014), the Executive Council examined the proposal for the revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Joint IHO-IOC General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Guiding Committee, which was proposed by the GEBCO Guiding Committee in accordance with clause 8 of the Committee’s current Rules of Procedure.

However, since the documentation related to the proposed revision was made available only a week prior to the Executive Council, some Member States expressed concern that they had not had sufficient time to consider the proposed revisions while it included procedural and organizational changes in addition to editorial changes, some of which were considered unclear by Member States. A sessional working group met three times to collect opinions and additional inputs from Executive Council Member States as reflected in document IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Annex 4 Rev.2.

In its decision EC-XLVII,Dec.3.1(II), the Executive Council recognized the necessity for IOC Member States to further review the proposed revision (IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Annex 4 Rev.2) with sufficient time prior to re-examination at the 28th session of the Assembly in June 2015.

In the attached document IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Annex 4 Rev.2 the revised text proposed by the GEBCO Guiding Committee prior to the Executive Council appear in black “struck-out and underlined” text, while additional revisions made by the sessional working group are indicated in track changes and in colour in the attached electronic document.

.../...
The background to the proposed revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for the GEBCO Guiding Committee is the following. The current version of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the GEBCO Guiding Committee was last approved by the IOC Executive Council at its 41st session (Paris, 24 June–1 July 2008). Since that time, the activities of GEBCO have evolved reflecting greater interest in mapping the seafloor by national and international organizations, governments and academia. The methods, procedures and technology to map the seafloor have greatly changed over the last five years, involving both shipboard methods and satellite remote sensing. The GEBCO Guiding Committee perceives that a revision to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure is warranted in order to better involve the IOC and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) in GEBCO activities. At its 30th meeting (Venice, 11 October 2013), the GEBCO Guiding Committee started the revision process, and its revision work was continued by a task team under the direction of the chairperson of the GEBCO Guiding Committee. At its 31st meeting (Monaco, 13–15 June 2014), the GEBCO Guiding Committee finalized a proposal of the revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure by including into the proposal suggestions of IHO Secretariat for editorial changes and an amendment to clause 1.4 of the proposed revision, as described in detail in appendix to document IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Annex 4 Rev.2.

I would appreciate receiving your inputs on the document no later than 17 December 2014 to IOC Secretariat (o.miyaki@unesco.org) in order to prepare a document on the subject for the Assembly at its 28th session. For the purpose of consultation, inputs preferably in English or French will be most appreciated.

The relevant documentation is available online at the website of the 47th session of the Executive Council at: http://www.ioc-unesco.org/ec47.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Wendy Watson-Wright
Executive Secretary, IOC

Enclosures: (2):
- EC-XLVII, Dec.3.1 (part II)
- Document IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Annex 4 Rev.2
II.
Revised Terms of reference of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Guiding Committee

Having examined document IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Annex 4 Rev.2,

Recognizing the importance of cooperation between IOC and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) in the field of bathymetry,

Encourages Member States to voluntarily contribute to the improvement of global bathymetric data sets and data products of the IHO-IOC GEBCO Project;

Requests the Joint IHO–IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee to continue to use the current terms of reference and rules of procedure in order to allow IOC Member States sufficient time to review the proposed changes;

Requests also the Executive Secretary to circulate the draft of the terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Joint IHO–IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee as contained in IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Annex 4 rev.2, supported by background information;

Decides to have an item on the draft terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Joint IHO–IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee on the agenda of the 28th session of the IOC Assembly.
Item 3.1 of the Revised Provisional Agenda

REVISION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE JOINT IHO–IOC GENERAL BATHYMETRIC CHART OF THE OCEANS (GEBCO) GUIDING COMMITTEE

Summary

As required by the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Joint International Hydrographic Office (IHO)-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Guiding Committee, which was adopted by the Executive Council at its 41st Session (Paris, 24 June–1 July 2008), the Guiding Committee is proposing the revision of its Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure. The revision shall enter in force after being endorsed by both IOC and IHO.

In a letter dated 16 June 2014, the Permanent Secretary of GEBCO informed the IOC Secretariat of additional corrections to the initial text made by IHO during their approval process and explained the spirit of the latest amendments. This revised version of the document includes all amendments.

Purpose of the document: The Executive Council is invited to consider the endorsement of the revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for Joint IHO–IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee.

Financial and administrative implications: There are no financial and administrative implications.

The proposed decision(s) is referenced EC-XLVII/Dec.3.1(II) in the Action Paper (document IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Prov.)
The comparison of the proposed revision with the current Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure (TOR-ROP) of the GEBCO Guiding Committee

Please note that the revised parts in the texts are indicated in the column of the proposed revision of the TOR-ROP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The current TOR-ROP</th>
<th>Proposed revision of the TOR-ROP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL BATHYMETRIC CHART OF THE OCEAN PROJECT (GEBCO)</strong></td>
<td><strong>GENERAL BATHYMETRIC CHART OF THE OCEAN PROJECT (GEBCO)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JOINT IHO–IOC GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE</strong></td>
<td><strong>JOINT IHO–IOC GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE</strong></td>
<td><strong>TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREAMBLE</strong></td>
<td><strong>PREAMBLE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 recognizing 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
The GEBCO Guiding Committee will inform IHO and IOC.

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. 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.

7. Investigate and develop logistical and financial arrangements necessary for the furtherance of the GEBCO Project with the assistance of the IHB and IOC Secretariats.

8. Integrate into its products the geographical names of undersea features that appear in the IHO/IOC GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names.

As required, establish subordinate bodies (sub-committees and working groups) to fulfill the Committee Work Program 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 inform IHO and IOC.
propose to IHO and IOC the creation or termination of Sub-Committees, and create, maintain and terminate Working Groups as deemed necessary.

9. Direct and monitor the work of the GEBCO Sub-Committees and Working Groups as deemed necessary and report to IHO and IOC as appropriate; propose to IHO and IOC the creation or termination of Sub-Committees, and create, maintain and terminate Working Groups as deemed necessary.

10. 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.

11. Build capacity by encouraging and enabling the training and scientific education of new generations of ocean mapping operational experts (bathymetrists) globally.

12. 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.

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.

14. The GEBCO Guiding Committee shall report Report annually to the IHO, through the Inter Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC), and to the IOC, through its their respective governing bodies 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.

15. Prepare an annual GEBCO Work Plan and budget and propose it to each meeting of the IHO IRCC and the IOC, through its their respective governing bodies. The Guiding Committee should consider and submit to
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. The Committee Chairperson 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 the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB), shall also be Members of the Committee. Where one of these Members of the Committee mentioned under paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 above is also the Chair of a subordinate body, they shall have only one vote on the Committee.

1.4 In addition, the Committee may have one Expert Contributing Observer as a non-voting Member who is a graduate alumni of a GEBCO ocean mapping course, such as 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.

16. 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.
1.3 Appointed members of the Guiding Committee represent their parent organization as experts 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. (please refer to section 1.3)

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. (please refer to section 1.6)

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. (please refer to section 1.6)

1.7 Appointed members of the Guiding Committee represent their parent organization as experts in their personal capacity rather than as representatives of their organization and/or country and no substitution shall be allowed. (please refer to section 1.7)

1.8 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. No substitution shall be allowed at meetings.

1.9 Business shall be conducted by correspondence between meetings by appropriate communication systems. E-mail communication will be the normal method.

1.10 The Committee’s Minutes of meetings and decisions of the Committee and Sub-Committees and other relevant documents the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Postgraduate Certificate Course in Ocean Bathymetry. The Expert Contributing Observer will be appointed as a non-voting Member for a five-year term. The expert will be elected by the Chairperson, through an election organised by the Committee Chair.

1.5 Representatives of the Secretariats of the IHO and the 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.

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.

(Please refer to section 7)

2. **Office Bearers**

2.1 The Chairperson Chair and Vice-Chairperson Vice-Chair shall be elected by the Committee from among the members voting Members appointed by the IHO and IOC of the Committee and normally should be from different parent organizations, and normally should be from different parent organizations. The Chairperson Chair and Vice-Chairperson 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 years term by the Committee. The Chairperson Chair, 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, secretarial support a secretary shall may be provided by IHO and IOC either the Secretariat of the IHO or the IOC. The function of the Secretary shall be defined by the Guiding Committee. 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.

3. **Meetings**

3.1 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 shall be posted on the GEBCO web site linked to the IHO and IOC web sites.
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.

(please refer to section 5)

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 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

meetings without voting rights.

3.2 Meetings shall be held at least every two years. The venue and date of the next 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 7 Committee Members, two more than half of the Members of the Committee.

3.4 An extraordinary meeting can be called by the Chairperson 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 Chairperson shall have the casting vote if there is a tie.

(please refer to section 2.2)
endorsed by both IHO and IOC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Amendment and Revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 The These Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure should shall be endorsed 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 changes shall enter in force after being endorsed by the approval of both IHO and IOC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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.
APPENDIX

G E B C O
GENERAL BATHYMETRIC CHART OF THE OCEANS

June 16, 2014

Dr. Osamu Miyaki
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
7 Place Fontenoy
75732 Paris cedex 15, France

Dear Dr. Miyaki

Attached is a revised version of the of IHO-IOC General Bathymetric Chart of Oceans Project Guiding Committee Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure that I had previously sent you last month.

This finalized version contains editorial changes that have been included by the IHO secretariat after the review and endorsement by the IHO IRCC of the proposed amendment a few weeks ago. These editorial changes remove references to the IHB, which will cease to exist as a term in the near future and an editorial adjustment in the RoPs clause 2.1 changing "act as" to "assume" to bring the text in line with recommendations made by the IRCC to remove ambiguity in the event that the current Chair of an IHO or Inter-Organizational body reporting to IRCC resigns or is otherwise absent for a prolonged period.

In addition, there is an amendment to clause 1.4, not seen by IRCC. This amendment has not been reviewed by the IRCC because its cause has only arisen very recently and after IRCC met. The amended text is intended to avoid a No vote from some IHO Member States that have very recently indicated their concern to the IHO secretariat. Several IHO Member States have expressed concern to the Secretariat of the IHO that the membership of a graduate such as a Nippon Scholar as a full voting member of a body appointed by inter-governmental organizations is inappropriate. Accordingly, the Secretariat of the IHO provided the GGC with alternative wording that the GGC has accepted and considers should now be presented to IHO and IOC for adoption.

It is the view of the secretariat of the IHO that the original intention of clause 1.4 to provide a platform and an obligation for alumni of the GEBCO capacity building programme to actively contribute to the ongoing GEBCO project and at the same time provide a mechanism for long-term succession planning on the Committee through familiarization and participation in the work of the Guiding Committee has not been compromised or substantively changed by the amended
text. Accordingly, the IHO secretariat proposes to submit the amended text attached to this email to IHO Member States immediately and without further reference to IRCC.

Sincerely

David M. Clark
Permanent Secretary, GEBCO

cc: Shin Tani, Chair, GEBCO
Robert Ward, President, IHO

Attachments:
IHO-IOC GEBCO Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, June 15 2014