



IHB Report to GGC XXXI, 13 June 2014

Status of Approval of New Member States of the IHO

1. Montenegro became the newest member state of the IHO when the government of Monaco received their instruments of accession to the Convention. IHO membership now stands at 82.
2. Bulgaria, Haiti, Mauritania and Sierra Leone have all received the required number of votes to be accepted as a Member State of the IHO. However, the Government of Monaco has yet to receive their instruments of accession from these countries which will formalise their membership.
3. Viet Nam, Brunei Darussalam and Georgia have applied for membership of the IHO. By June 2014, the status of approvals was as follows:

State	Voting Status
Viet Nam	44 of 52 required
Brunei Darussalam	42 of 52 required
Georgia	40 of 54 required

Suspended Member States

4. Serbia, Congo and the Dominican Republic remain suspended. IHB is working with these states to expedite their return to full membership as soon as possible, as is the case for a number of other Member States who have fallen behind on payments of their annual subscription.

Status of Approval of Amendments to the IHO Convention

5. By June 2014, 40 of the required 48 approvals to the protocol of amendments to the IHO Convention had been received by the Government of Monaco.

IHO GIS Data Base

6. Work has continued on the development of an IHO GIS data base. The GIS database will have two main parts: a country database and a regional database. The country database will contain all relevant information about the coastal States in the world - similar to the information contained in the IHO Year Book. The regional database will contain geospatial information about the coverage and location of charts, surveys and related information. It is expected that there will be an upload capability that will allow States to keep the relevant information up to date. The regional data base is expected to provide the principal resource for managing international chart coordination, ENC coverage, as well as the identification of survey or charting “hotspots”. The countries data base and a beta version of the regional database for Antarctica are now under evaluation.

IHO Publicity

7. World Hydrography Day. The theme for World Hydrography Day 2014 is “Hydrography – much more than just nautical charts”. The purpose of this theme is to

provide Member States and stakeholders with the opportunity to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of hydrography, particularly in economic terms that appeal both to the public and to politicians and administrators. WHD-2014 will be celebrated in Monaco on 18 June and will be enhanced by the visit of the French Navy survey ship “La Pérouse” and by the hosting of the GEBCO SCUFN meeting at the IHB during the week. Additionally, a supplementary WHD-2014 event organised by the Hydrographer of Malaysia will take place at the same time as the FIG International Congress-2014 which will be held from 16 to 21 June in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in order to raise the profile of hydrography and highlight the IHO activities.

8. 5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference. EIHC-5 will take place from 6 to 10 October 2014 in the Auditorium Rainier III in Monaco; full details are in IHO CCL 01. Planning and preparations are progressing; a number of Conference Circular Letters have been published detailing various initial administrative matters. Further documents will be published over the coming months. The parallel Industry Exhibition is nearly full with only three places still available.

9. In addition to discussing progress and proposals related to the three parts of the IHO Work Programme, four special sessions of the EIHC-5 have been allocated to presentations and discussions on topical issues; the selected themes are:

- Theme 1: The place of hydrographic data in a geospatial world
- Theme 2: E-navigation - its impact on the IHO and Member States
- Theme 3: New and emerging technologies (including crowd-sourced bathymetry)
- Theme 4: Capacity Building

10. In addition to the Industry Exhibition, it is intended to hold an IHO Capacity Building Exhibition and poster celebration of ten years of Nippon Foundation IHO-IOC GEBCO scholars. Some of the past scholars and alumni will be invited to provide poster displays of their work projects since graduation; these will be displayed throughout the period of the Conference.

11. International Hydrographic Review. The IHR provides an ideal opportunity to publicise technical and other achievements. An editorial board comprising a representative from each Hydrographic Commission region has been established. GEBCO members are encouraged to submit articles for publication.

12. Papers for consideration for publication in the IHR should be forwarded directly to the IHB (ihreview@iho.int) with a copy to the Editor (ian.halls1@defence.au.gov).

Capacity Building Programme

13. Notwithstanding the contributions and support from Japan (Nippon Foundation) and the Republic of Korea, funding for the IHO Capacity Building programme remains limited and the IHO and the RHCs need to continue to explore alternative mechanisms to fulfil their requirements. In many RHCs, the involvement of the commercial sector has provided mutual benefits.

14. The IHB would like to re-emphasise the importance of GEBCO representation at RHC meetings in order to raise awareness of the programme and to assist in obtaining additional data. The IHB notes the efforts being made by GEBCO members to attend RHC meetings.

IHO/IOC Coordination

15. The proposed revised ToRs and RoPs of the GGC were presented and endorsed by IRCC6 in Paris last month; these will now be circulated to IHO Member States for IHO approval and the IOC Executive Council for IOC approval.

16. Work on IHO Publication B-7, GEBCO Guidelines, has not progressed as quickly as planned. The IHB seeks advice on the future of this publication and how it should be taken forward, noting that a draft was passed to the secretary in 2012. Clearly it is for the GGC to decide.

17. IHO Publication B-11, GEBCO Cookbook, is considered a valuable and useful reference. The IHB particularly acknowledges the considerable contribution and on-going efforts of Dr Karen Marks and other contributors, who continue to edit and maintain this publication.

Funding

18. The IHB anticipates the transfer of IHO-IOC GEBCO funds to the IHB for administration in the very near future. The IHB will be the custodian of the funds, as is already the case for the inter-organizational body ABLOS, and the multi-donor IHO Capacity Building programme. The GGC will continue to exercise its long-standing role of deciding on how funds will be spent, in conformance with its established procedures and work programme.

Crowd-Sourced Bathymetry (CSB)

19. The IHB is conducting a proof of concept data gathering trial with the support of the NGIO - Professional Yachting Association. A concept paper was provided to TSCOM last year for comment. It is intended that the IHO DCDB will eventually serve as the depository for the data, via automated upload portals. The initiative will be explained to Member States at the EIHC-5. France and USA have also submitted to the Conference a Proposal (PRO 4) on developing guidelines for the use of CSB data.

Role of GEBCO in global programmes related with Earth observation and monitoring

20. Through international initiatives, such as the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) and the United Nations initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), there is a growing acknowledgement and awareness of the relevance and the potential contribution of hydrographic information in the context of global geospatial data infrastructures. This emphasises the importance of GEBCO as a fundamental part of the global geospatial information infrastructure.

21. In particular, GEO is coordinating efforts to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) in order to exploit the growing potential of Earth observations to support decision making in an increasingly complex and environmentally stressed world. The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) developed under the auspices of the IOC is meant to be the oceanographic component of GEOSS. Many functions of GOOS depend on the availability of accurate bathymetry. Yet, the IHB is not aware of any formal connection between GOOS and GEBCO.

22. Moreover, there are a number of alternative bathymetric products or services from academia and from the private sector (e.g. ESRI Ocean Base Map, Google Ocean) which may be seen as “competing” with GEBCO.

23. The IHB invites the GGC to consider ways and means to improve the recognition of GEBCO as the “the most authoritative publicly-available bathymetry of the world’s oceans”¹ in particular in relation with other global programmes related with Earth observation and monitoring.

Action Requested of the GGC

24. The GGC is invited to:

- **Note** this report;
- **Participate** in EIHC-5;
- **Consider** submitting articles to the IHR;
- **Continue** to attend and support the RHC meetings;
- **Progress** the revision of B-7, GEBCO Guidelines;
- **Arrange** the transfer and subsequent administration of IHO-IOC GEBCO funds to the IHB;
- **Consider** ways and means to improve the recognition of GEBCO as “the most authoritative publicly-available bathymetry of the world’s oceans” in particular in relation with other global programmes related with Earth observation and monitoring; and
- **Take any other actions** as considered appropriate.

¹ http://www.gebco.net/about_us/overview/