



**THIS CIRCULAR LETTER REQUIRES YOU TO VOTE**

IHO File No. S3/2649

**CIRCULAR LETTER 11/2019**  
**25 January 2019**

**CALL FOR APPROVAL OF EDITION 2.0.0  
OF IHO PUBLICATION B-12  
*CROWDSOURCED BATHYMETRY GUIDANCE DOCUMENT***

Reference: IHO CL 49/2017 dated 29 August 2017 – *Call for comments on the draft Edition 1.0.0 of new IHO Publication B-12 – Crowdsourced Bathymetry Guidance Document.*

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The 5<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC5) recognized the need to examine how best to incorporate, manage and use bathymetric data acquired by non-conventional means, such as through crowdsourcing into the framework of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Project. It was agreed that there was a compelling need to develop appropriate principles and guidelines to enable the consistent collection and use of crowdsourced 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 7<sup>th</sup> meeting in Mexico City in 2015, established a Crowdsourced Bathymetry Working Group (CSBWG). In accordance with the CSBWG Terms of Reference, which were endorsed by the IRCC, the CSBWG developed a draft guidance document on Crowdsourced Bathymetry that provides general advice and technical information for those that may be considering collecting or using crowdsourced bathymetry. The guidance document is not intended to be either prescriptive or authoritative, but rather to enable effective conduct of CSB activities along the full process chain.

3. The Chair of the IRCC requested the IHO Secretariat to circulate the first draft Edition 1.0.0 of B-12 - *IHO Guidance Document on Crowdsourced Bathymetry* - seeking comments from Member States, observer organizations and stakeholders. This was undertaken under the reference with the feedback and comments received being considered by the CSBWG at its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting (CSBWG6 – Monaco, 5-6 December 2017), after which the document was submitted for endorsement by the IRCC at its 10<sup>th</sup> meeting (Goa, India, 4-6 June 2018) and the IHO Council at its 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting (London, UK, 9-11 October 2018).

4. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting concerns were raised which the Chair of Council and the Secretary-General agreed should be addressed before the B-12 could be considered by Member States for approval. One of the items was a need to highlight a statement that these guidelines do not supersede any national or international law and/or regulations on the conduct of depth data gathering in the respective areas of jurisdiction. The following text was agreed by the Council and has been inserted into the IHO Statement on Crowdsourced Bathymetry at the foreword of the document:

**“This document provides technical guidelines only that in no way supersede national or international laws and regulations”**

5. The second relevant outcome of the Council's discussion on B-12 was the inclusion of a flow diagram depicting the treatment of incoming CSB data to be incorporated into the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB) database. This flow diagram is designed to show the filter processes, including a geographical location checking process and any subsequent masking actions to be applied to any incoming CSB data before ingestion into the DCDB data base.

6. The two concerns explained under paragraph 4 and 5 of this Circular Letter have now been addressed in the draft Edition 2.0.0 of B-12, which is available (*in English only*) on the IHO website at:

[www.iho.int](http://www.iho.int) → Standards & Publications → Download → Draft Publications Awaiting Approval by Member States.

7. The Guidance Document B-12, once approved, will deliver sound technical guidance and encouragement for all stakeholders who are interested in contributing to the CSB process, while respecting Coastal States national positions. As a matter of principle, no incoming CSB data set will be rejected except for technical reasons (e.g. incompleteness or non-readability), but its incorporation into the DCDB data base and subsequent dissemination, will be subject to the categorization of the respective data set through the aforementioned filter process. CSB data, identified through the geographical location process as belonging to the high seas (according to UNCLOS "the area"), will be ingested into the DCDB data base without restrictions on its further reuse.

8. The calibration of the filter process for CSB activities, potentially undertaken in waters of national jurisdiction, requires explicit approval by the affected Coastal State. Annex B contains a Template Form to be completed to indicate general consent and any potential caveats to be respected.

9. The filter calibration information to be received through the completion of Annex B will form the basis for a list of Coastal States that support CSB activities within their respective national waters of jurisdiction as well as highlighting any caveats articulated. This list will be maintained by the IHO Secretariat and, depending on the individual consent of the particular Member State, published on the IHO website.

10. If and when compliant with the caveats articulated by each Coastal State, incoming CSB data will be ingested into the DCDB to become part of the downloadable public domain datasets through the DCDB web portal. If required, the affected Coastal State will be notified that new CSB data sets and metadata likely to cover their waters of national jurisdiction have been received at the DCDB and that a copy can be forwarded, before ingestion, for review and a release decision.

11. Member States are requested to take into account the endorsement of the IRCC and the IHO Council and consider approving the Edition 2.0.0 of B-12 and to indicate their decision by returning the Voting Form, provided in Annex A, **no later than 5 April 2019**.

12. Separately and unconnected to the approval of Edition 2.0.0 of B-12, Member States are also requested to indicate whether they support the activity within their waters of national jurisdiction, including any caveats they wish to apply by returning the Template Form, provided in Annex B, **no later than 20 May 2019**.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Mathias JONAS  
Secretary-General

Annex A: Voting Form

Annex B: Template Form

**APPROVAL OF EDITION 2.0.0 OF NEW IHO PUBLICATION B-12**  
***CROWDSOURCED BATHYMETRY GUIDANCE DOCUMENT***

**VOTING FORM**

(to be returned to the IHO Secretariat **no later than 5 April 2019**)

E-mail: [cl-lc@iho.int](mailto:cl-lc@iho.int) - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)

**Member  
State:**

**Contact:**

**E-mail:**

**Do you approve the Edition 2.0.0 of new IHO Publication B-12?**

Please tick  the appropriate box:

YES

NO

If you answer 'NO', please explain in the comment section below.

Comments (if required)

**ACCEPTANCE OF CROWDSOURCED BATHYMETRY ACTIVITIES  
IN NATIONAL WATERS OF JURISTRICITION –  
SETTINGS FOR FILTER ALGORITHMS**

**TEMPLATE FORM**

(to be returned to the IHO Secretariat **no later than 20 May 2019**)

E-mail: cl-lc@iho.int - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)

Please tick  the appropriate boxes:

**Question 1: Do you support CSB activity in your waters of national jurisdiction?**

(Note that for the purpose of this template the term “waters of national jurisdiction” addresses “territorial waters” and “EEZ” as nationally claimed and registered by recognized UN instruments. In the case of disputed areas for both categories possibly covered by incoming CSB data, those datasets will be masked through the filtering algorithm and not made publically available.)

YES

NO

If the answer to question 1 is NO, please stop here to go no further. If the answer to question 1 is YES:

**Question 2: Do you support CSB activity unrestricted in all your waters of national jurisdiction?**

YES

NO

If the answer to question 2 is YES, please skip questions 3 and 4. If the answer to question 2 is NO:

**Question 3: Do you support CSB activity unrestricted within your EEZ and with caveats within territorial waters?**

YES

NO

If the answer to question 3 is YES, please skip question 4. If the answer to question 3 is NO:

**Question 4: Do you support CSB activity unrestricted within the EEZ only but not within territorial waters?**

YES

NO

If the answers to questions 1 and 2 or the answers to questions 1 and 3 or the answers to questions 1 and 4 are YES:

**Question 5: Do you wish to be informed about the receipt of new CSB data sets covering your waters of national jurisdiction?**

YES

NO

If the answer to question 5 is NO, please skip question 6. If the answer to question 5 is YES:

**Question 6: Do you wish to review all incoming new CSB data sets covering your waters of national jurisdiction before ingestion into the DCDB data base?**

YES

NO

**Question 7: After ingestion of new CSB data sets covering your waters of national jurisdiction into the DCDB database, do you wish to put caveats on the further dissemination of the data?**

For use in GEBCO grids only to be provided by the DCDB web portal:

For download via the DCDB web portal as gridded data sets only:

For download as raw data:

**Question 8: Do you agree that the IHO Secretariat aggregates an entry into a public list based on the information given to question 1 to 7:**

Coastal State	IHO Member State	General support of CSB activity waters of national jurisdiction	No restrictions in all waters of national jurisdiction	Restrictions in territorial waters only	Seeking information about arrival of new CSB data sets	Review of incoming new CSB data sets prior to ingestion into the DCDB data base	Caveats on the further dissemination of the ingested data

YES

NO

Additional comments (if required)

Name : .....

Title/Position : .....

Member State : .....

Signature : .....

Date : .....