Visit to the 18th course of the IHO-Nippon Foundation GEOMAC project

UK Hydrographic Office, Taunton, UK, 20 October 2026

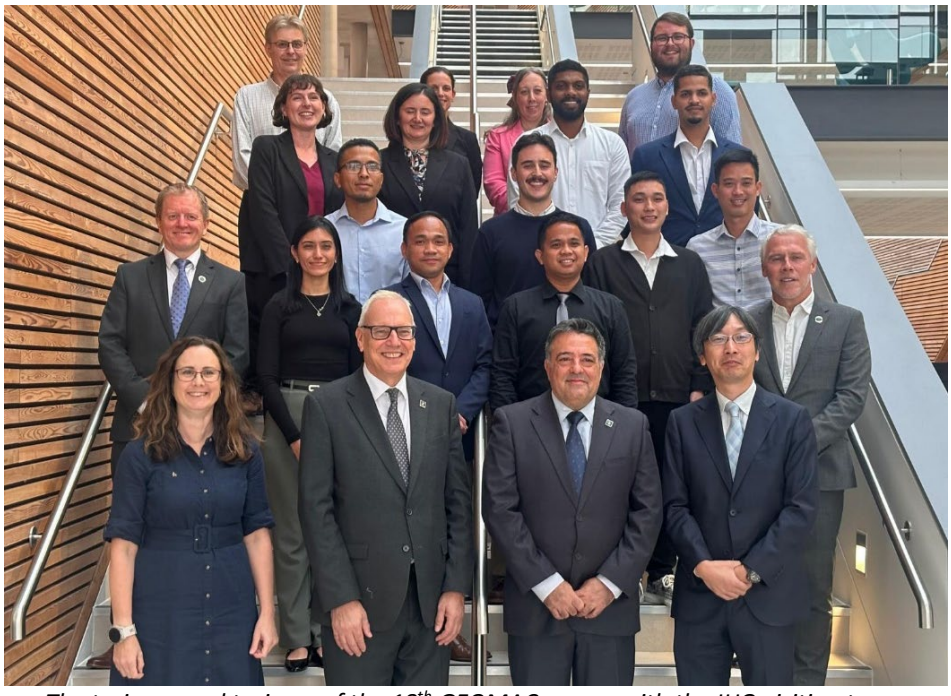
Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2026	
Task 3.3.9.2	Maintain relations with Nippon Foundation for the management of GEOMAC program at the UKHO.

High level summary

- The IHO delegation visited the UKHO to meet with training staff and deliver presentations to the students on the 18th GEOMAC course, recognised as a Category "B" programme for nautical cartographers.
- The following topics were discussed with UKHO staff: the 18th GEOMAC course; the expected basic plans for the 19th course; the resubmission for IBSC recognition; the grant application for the next project cycle; the Alumni Seminar; and other initiatives related to the IBSC and the IHO Capacity Development Work Programme.
- The IHO delegation gave presentations on global hydrography, capacity development initiatives, and the GEOMAC project's 18-year history, as well as the expected global contribution of the alumni.
- At the end of the 18th GEOMAC course, the alumni network will have grown to 119 members, who are expected play an important role in the S-100 transition.

Details:

IHO Director Adam GREENLAND, Assistant Director Leonel MANTEIGAS and Project Officer of Japan Masanao SUMIYOSHI visited the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) on 20 October 2026. The visit included a meeting with UKHO training staff and presentations to students attending the 18th course of the IHO - Nippon Foundation Geospatial Marine Analysis and Cartography (GEOMAC) project. The presentations aimed to enhance the students understanding of the IHO's roles and responsibilities, its international activities, and the background and objectives of the GEOMAC Project.



The trainees and trainers of the 18th GEOMAC course with the IHO visiting team.

The GEOMAC project and its predecessors have been providing training courses for nautical cartographers for 18 years, continuously funded by the Nippon Foundation of Japan. These training courses, delivered by the UKHO, are recognised by the FIG-IHO-ICA International Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers (IBSC) as a Category "B" programme for nautical cartographers.

Following the successful renewal of the GEOMAC project's grant for a new two-year cycle, the training programme has been upgraded, beginning with this year's 18th course. The current programme consists of eight modules, each lasting between one and four weeks, as well as a comprehensive final cartographic project, all of which are essential for current and future nautical cartography and geospatial data management, with a focus on the transition to the new digital S-100 products.

The 18th course runs from 9 July to 11 December 2026 and includes twenty weeks of on-site training and two weeks of supervised remote learning. Eleven students are attending the course, including seven students funded by the GEOMAC project from the Dominican Republic, Panama, Portugal, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

During the meeting with the UKHO training staff, discussions included the syllabus of the 18th GEOMAC course, including the newly introduced elements of supervised remote learning and the Marine Innovation Module. UKHO also confirmed the schedule and plan for the 19th GEOMAC course, including the expected timeline for the call for applications. Other key topics included the future of the GEOMAC Project, such as the submission of the GEOMAC training programme to IBSC for recognition, the grant application for the next project cycle beginning in 2028, and the Alumni Seminar planned to take place in Tokyo in March 2028. Further initiatives related to the IBSC and the IHO Capacity Development Work Programme were also discussed.

The IHO visiting team delivered presentations providing an overview of international activities in hydrography. IHO Director GREENLAND emphasised the importance of hydrography and the significance of the IHO's roles and structure, as well as current and future challenges. IHO Assistant Director MANTEIGAS emphasised the objectives, activities, and partnerships of the IHO capacity development initiatives, highlighting the significant contribution and impact of the GEOMAC project within the IHO Capacity Development Work Programme. IHO Project Officer of Japan SUMIYOSHI described the history and evolution of the JCBP/CHART/GEOMAC project over the last 18 years, as well as the importance of the alumni network and their expected future contributions at the international, regional and national levels.

The students expressed their sincere thanks to the Nippon Foundation, the IHO and the UKHO for providing them with this valuable opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in nautical cartography and marine geospatial information. At the end of the 18th course, the number of alumni will reach 119. This global community of nautical cartographers is expected to play a key role in global Maritime Digital Transformation, ensuring a successful transition to the S-100 data model.

Photo:



Presentations by the IHO visiting team.

Upcoming meetings:

The next 19th GEOMAC course visit is expected to be held at the UKHO headquarters in 2027.