

**Actions and Decisions from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Remote VTC meeting  
of the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC)**  
Submitted by IHO Secretariat

**SUMMARY**

Executive Summary: This document provides the details of actions and decisions agreed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Remote VTC meeting of the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC).

Action to be taken: Paragraph 7

Related documents: Seabed 2030 Year 3 Report; Seabed 20303 Year 4 Budget; Seabed 2030 Year 4 Work Plan; Seabed 2030 Ocean Frontier Mapping Plan

1. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Remote VTC meeting of the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) was held on 26 October 2020 under the Chairmanship of Shin Tani (**ST**), Chair of the GGC, with 19 participants, see Annex A for list of participants. The GGC Chair gave a brief welcome and introduction, which was followed by a short introduction by Luigi Sinapi, Director Coordination at the IHO Secretariat.
2. The Director of the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project (Seabed 2030), Jamie McMichael-Phillips (**JMcMP**), provided a presentation covering an introduction and the agenda, after which he outlined the objectives and goals for the VTC meeting session.
3. The meeting commenced with a review of the Seabed 2030 Year 3 activities and progress. **JMcMP** noted that the Year 3 report would be addressed and approved at the GGC37 meeting in January 2021 and had been circulated in draft form in preparation. He highlighted where the main focus had been during the Year 3 and where the funding support had been directed. This was followed by an update on the Seabed 2030 Year 4 budget allocation, and he provided a brief description of the budget processes. He highlighted the role of the Mapping Committee, part of which was to formulate the Ocean Frontier Mapping plan and then make adjustments as necessary to reflect changes in externally controlled mission programmes:
  - a. Johnathan Kool (**JK**) asked whether the focus on social media communications would reach the desired target audience, and recognised the need to refresh the website to focus more on data contributors and to be less technical;
  - b. **ST** highlighted the importance of the IHO DCDB to the GEBCO Project and therefore to Seabed 2030. He provided brief details on the importance of the NF-UNH Alumni and the background to the on-going funding support;
  - c. Evert Flier (**EF**) requested clarification on the reasons for not having the full allocation of XPrize funds provided for the Project to manage rather than having to request funding for each voyage proposal on a bid basis; he also asked what considerations were being put in place for fund raising;

- d. David Millar (**DM**) requested clarification on the use of unspent travel funds and unallocated Deputy Director funds for 2020 and what considerations had been given for the reduced travel requirements for the Project in 2021. **JMcMP** noted that the majority of surplus funds were used to increase communications and outreach and to obtain data loggers; he noted that new NF financial rules do not allow carrying forward of surplus funds into the next year. **DM** asked how the Alumni Coordinator post would be funded and what assumptions on travel had been made. **JMcMP** provided additional details on some considerations for the Alumni Coordinator position and the level of allocated funding. **JMcMP** noted that flexing between budget lines requires approval of the NF. **JMcMP** noted that the level of funds for communications and outreach was lower than the original proposal and he would monitor this activity to determine whether there was a need to request any subsequent flexing into this budget line;
- e. **ST** noted that the increasing demands on the DCDB would use up the NOAA funding allocation and therefore had this been considered between Seabed 2030 and DCDB? **JMcMP** noted that regular communication was maintained with Director DCDB and both were conscious of the situation, however at the moment it was not flagged an issue that needed to be addressed. ; and
- f. Karolina Zwolak (**KZ**) asked for clarification on the relationship between the Seabed 2030 Alumni Coordinator and the Map the Gaps organization. **JMcMP** provided details of the NF position and proposals regarding the two bodies, and suggested that there needs to be a MoU established between the two bodies.

4. The Director provided an overview of the planned Seabed 2030 Year 4 activities, including the updated Work Plan, an overview of the Ocean Frontier Mapping plans, Crowdsourced Bathymetry (CSB) activities/collaboration with the IHO CSGWG and an update on the recruitment of the NF-UNH Alumni Coordinator. **JMcMP** noted that the GGC may wish to make adjustments to the annual Work Plan in light of the current global environment and the changing circumstances. He noted that, following user/contributor feedback, a dynamic planning tool was a high priority to better manage short notice data gathering opportunities:

- a. **JMcMP** asked whether the GGC wished to make adjustments to the Year 4 Work Plan during this remote meeting or at a later stage. **ST** noted there needed to be clarity on the plan proposals to obtain more of the embargoed data in relation to the  $X+Y+Z=100\%$  equation. **JMcMP** noted that a blend of traditional and autonomous solutions might indicated that broad order data costs lie between \$2.6 and \$4.3 billion, or around \$260-\$430 million per year. He noted there have been discussions surrounding this, most recently at the Sponsor's Meeting and quoted from the NF statement in the minutes that: "the [NF] are professionals within this field" and it was acknowledged that "we do need to seek funding to support the mapping activities" and "if we were to receive any donations, this money should come through [NF] and then we could fund the activities. There are various ways in which [NF] could do this." **EF** noted that this was a key issue for discussion in this intersessional meeting;
- b. **DM** indicated that the application process for new mapping projects should be open and transparent, and that we should be careful not to exclude commercial stakeholders as these potential partners are often in a position to provide valuable assets and capability. **JMcMP** stated care must be taken to ensure: firstly that Ocean Frontier Mapping work is not perceived as a replacement for national capabilities; and secondly that limited Seabed 2030 funding is not used for activities that would otherwise be funded externally as part of coastal states' SOLAS obligations. Commercial stakeholders are not excluded from the process. The selection criteria (included as an appendix to the Year 3 Report) makes provision for considering industry bids on an exceptional basis whilst avoiding a situation where Seabed 2030 is seen to be directly subsidising client projects that are otherwise part of a standard commercial arrangement (between client and company). The implementation of the process will indeed be open and transparent and will include consideration of valid industry and pan-national opportunities. The Mapping Committee consists of the Director, the Center Heads and 2 external advisers. The Center Heads

will use their extensive networks to solicit bids for consideration. **JMcMP** also noted that he would ensure that the process criteria was reviewed to ensure that this is made clearer. (**Action 1 - JMcMP**). **DM** noted that it was not an ocean basin programme but an opportunity to leverage current operations to extend the activities by a limited amount to obtain data in a target area; and

- c. Jennifer Jencks (**JJ**) noted that if GEBCO/Seabed 2030 is paying for collection then data must be made freely available to DCDB. She also asked if there was an agreement detailing protocols and requirements for these data gathering activities for the GGC to review and propose amendments. **JMcMP** agreed that some form of agreement needed to be developed; he noted that these activities were part-funded and that the Mapping Committee's role was to take into account a number of wider considerations for any bid beyond the pure funding aspects, and to prioritise accordingly (**Action 2 - JMcMP**).

5. The Director provided a brief presentation covering the longer term outlook and activities for Seabed 2030, which included efforts to accelerate data collection, ways to address the issue of embargoed data, aspirations for engagement with IHO and IOC Member States and what actions are needed by the GGC to increase the support for Seabed 2030 amongst coastal states. IHO provided a short update on progress with the IHO initiative to encourage coastal states to place data into the public domain. **JMcMP**, in response to previous GGC questions on fund raising, provided some perspective on the GGC Fundraising Strategy White Paper and asked whether the GGC planned to consider progression of White Paper proposals or instead whether for GGC wished to give firm direction for the Director to continue the dialogue with the NF:

- a. **EF** noted that Seabed 2030 should not be seen as the only route to achieving the GEBCO goal and that other ways should be considered for GEBCO to approach the issue. He had a general concern that the GGC had reduced influence in regard to their overseeing role and that fund raising decisions were being taken without consultation and input from the GGC;
- b. Sam Harper (**SH**) questioned whether focusing on extending existing ocean basin campaign activities would achieve the goal and whether there was a need to reconsider the approach to data gathering;
- c. Martin Jakobsson (**MJ**) indicated that GEBCO and Seabed 2030 already had the necessary authority to actively fundraise and to investigate potential opportunities. **DM** considered that the funding issue was a fundamental and priority activity for GEBCO and Seabed 2030, hence the reason for establishing the Working Group to develop a funding strategy; he also highlighted that coordination was needed with the UN Decade funding strategy to avoid duplication of activities. He noted his concerns which were raised as a result of the rejection of the funding proposal submitted to progress the strategy; **DM** proposed a review of the strategy in light of the UN Decade and associated activities;
- d. **JMcMP** requested guidance on a way forward for the GEBCO Fundraising Strategy. **EF** noted that there were issues to consider regarding ways to generate additional external funding, and queried who had the mandate to amend the Seabed 2030 Strategy and Roadmap in light of the launching of the UN Decade, which was not a consideration originally. **JMcMP** agreed that maximum advantage needed to be made of the wider impacts of the UN Decade and therefore some revision of the Seabed 2030 Roadmap might be appropriate for consideration by the GGC (**Action 3 - JMcMP**); and
- e. **DM** suggested standing down the Fundraising Strategy Working Group until the issue of fundraising had been resolved; it was proposed that the Chair should seek clarification from the NF (**Action 4 - Chair**). In the meantime the GGC gave clear direction to the Director to accelerate fundraising activities to follow the proposed GEBCO Fundraising Strategy (**Action 5 - JMcMP**). Chairs of SCRUM, Vicki Ferrini (**VF**), and TSCOM, Thierry Schmitt (**TS**), volunteered to review their GEBCO funding allocations to see if funds could be transferred in

order to allow the GEBCO Fundraising Working Group to seek professional advice from an external expert (**Action 6 - VF/TS**).

6. The IOC provided an overview of the UN Decade for Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (UN Decade), which included details of the recent first Call to Action made on 15 October 2020, elements of which are of direct relevance to GEBCO and Seabed 2030. The Director noted the NF position that Seabed 2030 Project was conceived before the UN Decade. Seabed 2030's goals complement those of the Decade however it should be seen as a project in its own right. He then asked GGC for their perspective on how GEBCO and Seabed 2030 should engage with the UN Decade, in particular which body should take the lead to coordinate engagement and associated activities:

- a. In support of the recent UN Decade Call for Action, GGC agreed that that the Director should prepare a draft submission for GGC (**Action 7 - JMcMP**). GGC would review the draft paperwork and, with the agreement of the NF, direct that a final version to be submitted to the Decade Team (**Action 8 - Chair**); and
- b. It was agreed that Seabed 2030 would act as the lead and focal point for engagement of GEBCO and Seabed 2030 with the UN Decade (**Action 9 - JMcMP**).

7. The Guiding Committee is invited to note the information provided and take action as appropriate.

Annex:

A List of Participants

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Country	Name	Organization	E-mail
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<i>Expert Contributor</i>			
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<i>Observers</i>			
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-	Alison Clausen	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC)	a.clausen@unesco.org

-	Toshikiko Chiba	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC)	t.chiba@unesco.org
-	Jennifer Cheveaux	Seabed 2030 Project Administrator	admin@seabed2030.org

**Bold names – GGC**

