

1st September 2022

The NIPPON FOUNDATION-GEBCO SEABED 2030 PROJECT - WIND IN THE SAILS (WITS) SUPPORTING PROJECT

Issue

As The Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project (Seabed 2030) commences year 6 there is a pressing need to markedly reduce the outstanding (75%) uncharted global seabed within the remaining years¹ of the project. Wind in the Sails (WITS) has gathered a rich evidence set of international community requirements across government, academia and industry sectors. This is being used to develop a global SB2030 survey priority list designed to maximise environmental, social and economic benefits as cost efficiently as possible. It will thereafter support business cases to justify the significant funding required to comprehensively chart the world's seas and oceans to the project's defined resolution standard.

Key Points

To date, the Seabed 2030 has been successful in:

- **Establishing a brand and attracting global visibility.**
- **Establishing regional data centres that are receiving and collating data.**
- **Encouraging and building relationships with across all sectors to contribute data to the project.**
- **Gathering a global evidence base to identify blue economy and maritime user needs and priorities for seabed mapping.**

This provides a sound platform from which to progress but there is still much to do. To deliver its stated objectives, Seabed 2030 needs to develop a comprehensive strategy that clearly articulates the environmental and socio-economic benefits of mapping the world's oceans and seabed in an era of climate change. The WITS project was instigated to support Seabed 2030 by providing the evidence, needs and requirements that will contribute significantly to a longer-term mapping strategy. The aim of the four-phase WITS project is to unite the global hydrographic community around a worldwide seabed mapping priority list that is underpinned by a robust evidence base collected across all sectors and actors within the blue economy and maritime domain. This will provide a substantiated and corroborated evidence base that articulates the true value of mapping the seabed.

Recommendations

The success of the online surveys provides a comprehensive dataset of evidence and a consolidated global view of the environmental, social and economic requirements for mapping the seabed. Set in the context of the remaining Seabed 2030 timeline it is recommended that:

- **drafting of the critical documentation and evidence to inform Seabed 2030 business case development commences forthwith and**
- **In conjunction, establish and implement a tailored seabed mapping prioritisation methodology, which will demonstrate value and benefit of mapping the seabed.**

Phase 3 of WITS (September 2022 – March 2023) is designed to fulfill this through:

- Production of Seabed 2030 benefits documentation; Value Chain, Executive Fact Sheet, Value Proposition and development of Use Case Evidence.
- Develop a mapping prioritisation approach and methodology and implement a prioritisation platform toolkit/portal (**currently unfunded and deferred to Year 7 (Phase 3 Objective 7)**).



- Creating a global prioritisation list based on the survey results, quantitative analysis report for review and endorsement by the world's hydrographic offices and other appropriate agencies.
- Seabed 2030 will receive full benefits qualitative assessment and a publication document pack that could be used for:
 - a. Seabed 2030 business case evidencing, Seabed 2030 funder business case evidencing.
 - b. Economic analysis and an economic value assessment project (quantitative study).

Furthermore, it is recommended that **that the currently unfunded Seabed 2030 mapping toolkit/portal development be implemented as soon as possible to avoid any delay to the Seabed 2030 mission should additional or surplus funding become available in Year 6 (i.e., Phase 3 Objective 7).**

Conclusion

Seabed 2030 is at a critical juncture in its work to inspire the global community in efforts to increase the percentage of mapped seabed across the world's oceans to 100% by 2030. As a supporting initiative for Seabed 2030, we deem the WITS project to be successful hitherto. Nonetheless there is more to be done to bring this support work to fruition. We conclude that the recommendations (as above) will provide the tools that will enable Seabed 2030 to accelerate progress over the next 7 years.

Background

Work completed in the WITS project to date is as follows:

- A rapid evidence review of the extant national, and regional ocean mapping strategies and programmes gathering seabed data outside, but contributing to, Seabed 2030.
- Identification of survey models being used by governments and other agencies (including academia and industry) that may aid the development of a global model for Seabed 2030.
- An initial online survey to acquire a global cross-sectional understanding of the requirements, priorities of users/actors in the maritime domain for bathymetric data (443 responses from 65 nations) resulted in:
 - A data report identifying 93 potential data sources for Seabed 2030.
 - A survey prioritisation review based on the findings of the first online survey.
- Two articles were published promoting Seabed 2030: one from a Blue Economy perspective and a second covering crowd sourcing data opportunities and techniques.
- A technology review to determine the use of technology to increase the rate of bathymetric data collection.
- Based on the success of the first survey a second mirrored online survey was issued, and the combined responses of both surveys total 796 responses across 90 countries. From this survey:
 - A second data report identifies another 55 potential sources of data for Seabed 2030.
 - A survey findings report reviews the combined responses of both surveys.
- A detailed quantitative analysis report on the online survey findings identifying specific regional seabed mapping needs.
- A comprehensive report cataloguing premium models for seabed mapping benefits analysis.
- A detailed report proposing a potential model for Seabed 2030 to implement based on seabed mapping benefits analysis and prioritisation.

ⁱ Seabed 2030 is about to commence year 6 of the current 10-year funded programme.