

Paper for Consideration by SCUFN

SCUFN Business Continuity after SCUFN-33 and Preparation of SCUFN-34

Submitted by:	SCUFN Chair and IHO Secretariat (as SCUFN Secretary)
Executive Summary:	This document makes a proposal for the possibility of holding additional SCUFN VTC meetings to ensure business continuity during the pandemic, noting the number of submission proposals already received, which will not be considered at SCUFN-33.
Related Documents:	
Related Projects:	N/A

Introduction / Background

1. The number of submitted proposals for undersea feature names (UFN) is increasing every year. If the pandemic and trend on UFN proposals continue, SCUFN will not be able to review all submitted proposals during the plenary meetings held once a year as it is now, in particular through a single VTC meeting only. At the date this paper was drafted, the IHO Secretariat estimates that 10 sets of proposals representing already about 160 submissions for new and/or pending UFN are already in the queue for being reviewed at SCUFN-34 in November 2021.

2. The objective of this paper is to propose pragmatic options to progress between plenary sessions, being aware that SCUFN Members have also to commit with their own national schedules, activities at sea, and priorities. In short, SCUFN cannot envisage more than one plenary full meeting, once a year.

Analysis/Discussion

3. As agreed in August 2020, SCUFN Members consider technically impossible to discuss efficiently by VTC - *as we proceed usually during face-to-face meetings* - when we compare polygons, data, other geomorphological features in context, scientific references, existing bathymetric maps and nautical charts, using two screens to display various information. This is the case in particular for sensitive UFN or technically complex proposals.

4. However, thanks to the scufnreview online webservices developed by the ROK (KHOA), pre-assessment of every proposal is now possible and fully operational (See Doc. SCUFN33-04B).

5. In August 2020, SCUFN Members also agreed that *exceptional circumstances justify exceptional measures...* with the need to accept waiving some of our Rules of Procedures and Guidelines in a flexible manner, convinced that it is our responsibility to demonstrate our willingness and flexibility to progress some matters despite the pandemic and ensure SCUFN business continuity.

6. The IHO Secretariat experienced the postponement of its 2nd Session of the Assembly (A-2) from April to November 2020, creating a continuum of activities, by correspondence and through remote events, all decisions and actions being attached to A-2. Similar arrangements can certainly be applied to SCUFN.

7. One should keep in mind that decisions in SCUFN are made by consensus in general, and a quorum of 7 SCUFN Members is required to "hold" a meeting (ROP 2.9).

Recommendations

8. In order to progress the review of UFN submissions, it is proposed that:
- i. A **SCUFN-34 VTC01** session¹ is planned **mid-January** during which the only pre-assessed UFN that are “green-flagged” should be confirmed by SCUFN Members present online (minimum 7).
 - ii. The sets of proposals to be considered at SCUFN-34 VTC01 are the 10 sets of proposals already received by the Secretariat before SCUFN-33 and not considered at SCUFN-33.
 - iii. Decisions made on the green-flagged UFN will be effective, published and implemented immediately after SCUFN-34 VTC01 on the SCUFN34 webpage, and then compiled in November 2021 in a cumulative list of decisions attached to the SCUFN-34 summary report.
 - iv. Decisions will be made by consensus only (assessment by a minimum of 7 Members is required). All UFN proposals receiving a single “yellow” or “red” mark during the pre-assessment, will be postponed for discussion and final decision at SCUFN-34 plenary in November 2021.
 - v. A **SCUFN-34 VTC02** session is planned **mid-June**, and will follow the same process. The sets of proposals to be considered at this session will be those received before mid-April (deadline 60 days before the meeting in accordance with SCUFN ROP 2.8).
 - vi. A SCUFN Letter will be issued announcing these events, deadlines for VTC submissions and the deadline for submission to SCUFN-34 which would be early Sept 2021 (60 days before the meeting).

Action required of SCUFN

9. SCUFN is invited to:
- a. note this paper
 - b. approve the proposals made in section 8.

¹ 3 hours.