

**11th MEETING OF THE IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC11
Genoa, Italy, 3-5 June 2019**

New Edition 4.2.0 of Publication B-6 "Standardization of Undersea Feature Names"

Submitted by:	SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair and IHO Secretariat (as SCUFN Secretariat), for the Chair of GGC
Executive Summary:	After more than 2 years of effort by SCUFN Members, this document proposes a draft new edition of B-6 <i>Standardization of Undersea Feature Names</i> , to better support the work of SCUFN and help the proposers to submit more comprehensive, consistent and robust name proposals.
Related Documents:	Edition 4.1.0 of B-6, September 2013 (updated February 2017) Draft Edition 4.2.0 of B-6, September 2018 ¹ (red line and clean versions) IHO CL 41/2013 dated 27 June and CL 67/2013 dated 21 November: <i>Publication B-6, New Edition 4.1.0</i> Doc. GGC35-5-1.1 and Final Report of GGC35, paragraph 2.6. M-3 IHO Resolution 2/2007 as amended
Related Projects:	N/A

Introduction / Background

1. The current edition 4.1.0 of Publication B-6 was published in September 2013. An updated version was produced in February 2017 to take into account some editorial corrections and the change from International Hydrographic Bureau to IHO Secretariat in accordance with the new IHO convention and.
2. The need to upgrade this publication arose at the last SCUFN meetings to improve its efficiency in support of the SCUFN work and the preparation of name proposals. Reports and proposals from SCUFN Members and ad hoc sub-groups have resulted in a number of improvements and additions to B-6. A draft new edition 4.2.0 has been prepared, approved by SCUFN Members, endorsed with some changes by GGC at its 35th meeting, and is submitted to IRCC for consideration and endorsement with the aim to seek the approval of IHO Member States soon after.

Analysis/Discussion

3. The following changes have been included by SCUFN Members in the draft new edition of B-6, since Edition 4.1.0:

¹ When endorsed by IRCC and approved by MS, the date of Edition 4.2.0 will be updated.

- The list of national authorities (pp. 2-7 and 2-8 in the current edition) has been removed. It has been updated and is now available on the SCUFN page of the IHO website > Miscellaneous > Lists of...Naming Authorities. Thus its maintenance should be facilitated.
- References to the GEBCO website (www.gebco.net) and to www.scufnterm.org, listing all B-6 terms and definitions, and operated by the Korean Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (KHOA), have been inserted.
- Preference for names in relation with marine research, as choice for specific terms, has been emphasized.
- Additional guidance in paragraph II.A.6 depicting the way of grouping specific (term) categories of features is now included.
- Provision of name proposals in digital form and feature geometries as shapefiles are recommended in the proposal form.
- Use of generic terms as recommended by SCUFN only (not obsolete terms) is required.
- Definitions of some generic terms, such as Peak or Pinnacle, have been improved.
- Additional generic terms with genetic implication, such as Reef or Shoal, have been identified and marked.
- A number of historical generic terms, such as Cap, Discordance, Ground, Pass, Plain, Re-entrant or Seabight, sometimes appearing in the current GEBCO Gazetteer², have been included with their definitions in the list of generic terms used for harmonization with other gazetteers (not to be used in new proposals).
- The Users' Guide for Preparation of Name Proposals (Appendix A) has been improved, for example by inviting proposers to provide feature geometries as shapefiles, release and hand over their supporting bathymetric data to the IHO DCDB, or provide better informed supporting bathymetric maps.
- A Fast-Track Procedure for the adoption by SCUFN of names proposed by national geographical naming authorities has been added as new Appendix B.

Note: For practical reasons and greater clarity, please note that the version of the proposed Edition 4.2.0 which is now submitted to the endorsement of IRCC is the same version that was submitted by SCUFN to GGC, for its 35th meeting (GGC35). See Related Documents, page 1 of this paper.

4. All the changes listed above were endorsed by the GGC at its 35th meeting. However, the GGC also considered that the wording used by SCUFN in the proposed Edition, “*encouraging*” proposers to release their bathymetric data to the DCDB was not enforcing enough. The outgoing Chair of SCUFN, supported by an ad hoc drafting group, submitted new additional amendments at the GGC35 meeting that were finally endorsed by the GGC. These amendments are:

- In the proposal form, page 2-6, insertion of a box, requesting the submission of [bathymetric] data, either with the proposal before it is reviewed, or after acceptance
- In appendix A, section 2.1, insertion of a paragraph “*Proposers must release their bathymetric data, along with the associated metadata, to the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB - see www.ngdc.noaa.gov/iho/), in order for the proposed name to be accepted.*”
- In Appendix A, section 2.2, insertion of a paragraph “**Submission of data:** *the proposer needs to check the box either “With the proposal” or “After acceptance”. The minimum grid data resolution should follow depth scheme: the grid cell size for 0-1500 m depth range is 100 x 100 m, 1500-3000 m is 200 x 200 m, 3000-5750 m is 400 x 400 m, and 5750-11000 m is 800 x 800 m.*”

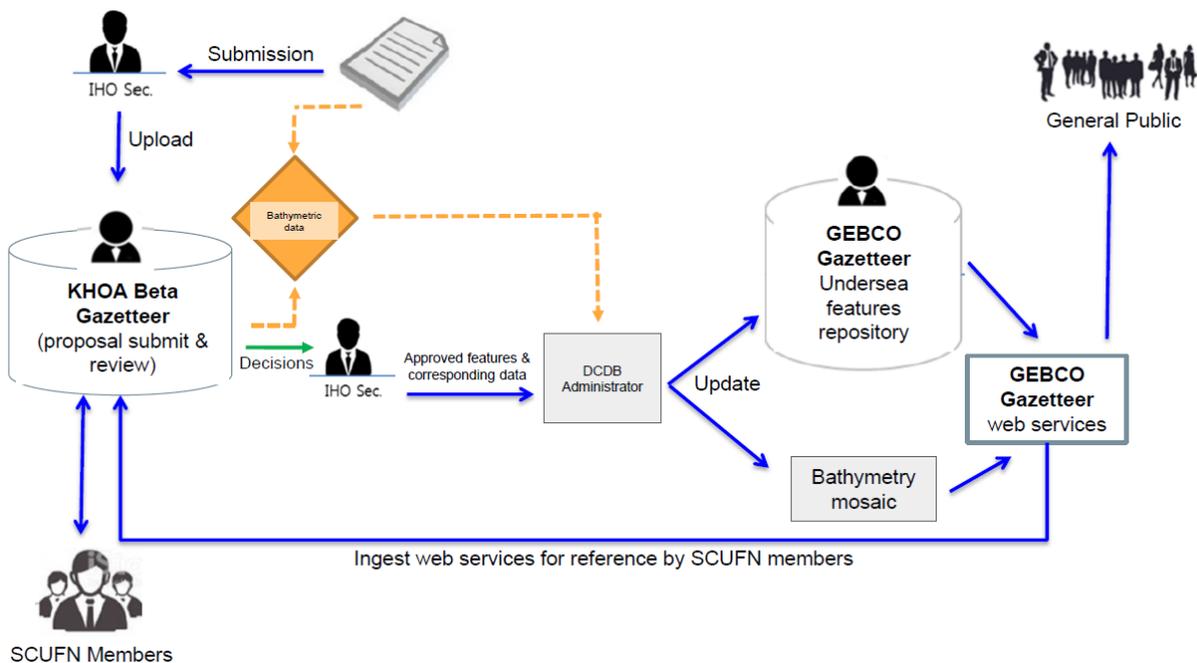
² For instance, « re-entrant » is not in the Gazetteer.

5. Since the GGC35 meeting, the SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair and SCUFN Secretary made a careful analysis of the possible impact of these additional changes and considered the feasibility of their implementation in practice. The following assessment is offered to IRCC:

- First, there is a sort of contradiction between the new wording in Appendix A, paragraph 2.1 and the new box in the proposal form: *“Proposers must release their bathymetric data ... in order for the proposed name to be accepted”*, while the new Proposal Form offers the possibility to tick the box *“After acceptance”*. In short, does it mean that if no box is ticked in the proposal form, SCUFN should not even consider the proposal? Does it mean that if the name is accepted by SCUFN at the meeting, it can only be included and adopted in the GEBCO Gazetteer database under the condition that data have actually been provided? How long should SCUFN wait for the provision of such data?
- In IHO *standards*, in order to reach consensus and to allow some flexibility for their practical implementation, there are only very few exceptions where the word *“must”* is used. Therefore, it seems quite inappropriate to use it in such *Guidelines*, in particular for such sensitive question. In accordance with UNCLOS Maritime Scientific Research procedures and standard practice, data are generally requested by the Coastal States and it is up to them to decide whether or not they wish to release their data to third parties. There are also specific national regulations about bathymetric data that exist. In any case, SCUFN cannot be in a position to enforce such a process, under its current TORs and ROPs. The risk to have to apply the SCUFN ROP Art 2.10 (proposals that are politically sensitive) would become very important.
- In addition, one of the main questions which pops up immediately if such additional amendments are deemed necessary, is their retroactive application to the existing features in the GEBCO Gazetteer database? This task would certainly be out of reach of SCUFN.

6. For these reasons, and considering the risks that SCUFN might face in its routine activities when trying to enforce such provision of bathymetric data as a necessary condition associated to the international recognition of undersea feature names, noting their possible political consequences that SCUFN cannot manage, the SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/Secretary do recommend to stick with the current wording (*“encourage”* only). However, *“encouraging”* does not mean that SCUFN will remain passive. As an example, working on the future integration of SCUFN web and GIS services operated by NOAA, KHOA and the IHO Secretariat at the moment, new developments are already designed as depicted in the diagram below³. This gives an evidence that the question of the provision of bathymetric data to the IHO DCDB is already addressed by SCUFN and considered as part of SCUFN activities. The link --- depicting the *“how-to-provide-data-to-the-IHO-DCDB”* (For instance, email: mb.info@noaa.gov, <https://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/iho/>, and complementary existing instructions such as *“Procedure for Submitting Marine Geophysical Data to NOAA’s National Centers for Environmental Information & the co-located IHO Data Center for Digital Bathymetry”*) can easily be added into the undersea feature names proposal form.

³ Designed by IHO DCDB Director/KHOA/SCUFN Secretary, and to be submitted to SCUFN-32, August 2019, for final approval.



Recommendations

Noting the endorsement by GGC and the IHO Resolution 2/2007 as amended, the procedure used for the approval of Ed. 4.1.0 of B-6 (IHO CL 41/2013 and 67/2013 refer) remains applicable. It is therefore recommended that:

7. IRCC endorses the proposed new edition 4.2.0 of B-6 as available in Related Documents (see Note at the end of paragraph 3 above);
8. The IHO Secretariat issues a CL seeking the approval of IHO Member States, so the new Edition can come into force by the end of 2019 prior to SCUFN-33, with no further delay.

Justification and Impacts

9. The draft new edition contains clarifications, improvements and additions which will reinforce the efficiency of B-6 in support of the SCUFN work and the preparation of name proposals.
10. It can be considered as an extension of the current edition of B-6 and has no impact on those names in the GEBCO Gazetteer which have been approved on the basis of the current edition.
11. It has no impact on the SCUFN Terms of Reference, so the two documents remain consistent.

Action required of IRCC

12. IRCC is invited to:
 - a. note this paper;
 - b. consider the recommendations made in sections 6, 7 and 8.