

Paper for Consideration by IRCC

Empowering Women in Hydrography (EWH)

Submitted by:	Canada
Executive Summary:	Proposed new work item to be adopted to the IHO Work Programme 3 and follow-up actions
Related Documents:	
Related Projects:	

Introduction / Background

1. Currently, there is a large imbalance in the participation of women, compared to men, in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and maritime related domains such as hydrography, at all levels but particularly at the more advanced career echelons and in policy-making related processes.
2. Many maritime related organizations have started this change in narrative. Many symposiums, programs and activities have been organized in the last years in relation with this theme.
3. The goal of this new work item, to be jointly financed and coordinated with Canada, is to initiate, organize and track a series of activities and initiatives which will enable more women to participate equitably in the field of hydrography and to assume more leadership roles within the hydrographic community.

Analysis/Discussion

4. Within the context of The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), this proposed work item is an opportunity for the IHO to show leadership and weave the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) #14 *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources* with SDG #5 *Gender equality, Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life* particularly.
5. Recognizing that women are equally capable as men, the activities under this work item are intended to increase awareness of IHO Member States, expose and address systemic issues within the field of hydrography which often limit women's opportunities to develop and demonstrate their competencies and capabilities to the same extent as their male colleagues;
 - Increase awareness of IHO Members States and hydrographic community on the benefits of having gender-diverse teams at all levels;
 - Ensure equal access to opportunities for women to improve their technical knowledge and leadership skills;
 - Support and promote greater participation of women in the working bodies of the International Hydrographic Organization;
 - Increasing the awareness of what constitutes a safe, secure, and supportive workplace for all employees.
6. Canada is proposing that:
 - a. A new work item, ***Empowering Women in Hydrography (EWH)*** be added to the Capacity Building Sub-Committee (CBSC) work plan.
The proposed work plan contains the following elements:
 - CBSC (or delegated oversight group/team) socialize the establishment of a new capacity building work plan item ***Empowering Women in Hydrography (EWH)***.
 - Prepare for, and hold an initial virtual Workshop to present and discuss proposals and plans for activities. The outcome of this workshop to be held in May 2021 will be the foundation for the subsequent activities.
 - Based on the initial workshop, CBSC develops a more detailed work plan consisting of intended activities and present it to the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) for review and for the inclusion in the Capacity Building work plan.

- Promotion of the gender-diversity program to Member States during IHO activities (Increase awareness of IHO Members States and associated business, on the benefits of having Gender-diverse teams). (on-going during the 4 year program).
- Support a one-to-two month internships at the IHO Secretariat, at other hydrographic offices, or at-sea tours for operational experience for women employed or going to be employed by IHO Member States Hydrographic Offices or other national or international bodies involved in maritime issues.
- Prepare for and host subsequent EWH workshops to be held in conjunction with the IHO WGs/Committees/SubCommittees meetings once the EWH activities are planned.
- Support greater female participation to an annual workshop and/or participation to IHO meetings or other events, with special consideration for women from small-island developing states and/or coastal least developed countries. Possibilities are: Inter-Regional Coordination Committee or Capacity Building Sub-Committee meeting (June 2022); Canadian Hydrographic Conference (2022); US Hydrographic Conference (2023); Hydrographic Services and Standard Committee meeting (May 2023), and a book-end workshop in March 2024.
- Virtual workshops on hydrographic related subjects with female expert invitees to promote role models.
- Teaming up with other events in the ocean science or maritime domain with gender-equity themes (e.g: IMO, ...).

It should be noted that the elements are expected to evolve over the course of the project based on experience, opportunities/risks, and clarifications of the desired outcomes. There is flexibility to address changing needs as the project moves forward.

b. The IHO apply for funding to support an ***Empowering Women in Hydrography (EWH)*** project under the Ecosystems and Oceans Science Contribution Framework of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

- The project would commence 1 April 2021 and run for three years until 31 March 2024.
- The IHO application would be for 100 000 CAD (approx. 65 000 €) per year.
- Under the terms of the Contribution agreement, the total DFO contributions (financial + in-kind + administrative costs) cannot exceed 75% of the total cost of the project. Therefore, the applicant, that is, the IHO, is responsible for organizing the remaining portion of the funding. This may include financial, in-kind, or administrative contributions from the IHO itself, Member States, or other third parties.

7. IHO is hopeful that other member states will actively participate and want to contribute above and beyond to build on the initial funding from Canada. As an example of a Member State in-kind contribution, NOAA Office of Coast Survey, has tentatively offered [with caveats for COVID restrictions and operational considerations] to host up three female candidates each year of the project.

Conclusions

8. It is a great opportunity for IHO to show leadership and take concrete actions in order to reduce the gender bias between men and women in the field of hydrography

Recommendations

9. It is recommended that IRCC supports the adoption of this new work item to be included into the Capacity Building Work Plan from 2021.

10. It is recommended that IRCC tasks CSBC to work out further details on activities under this new work item for the period 2021 - 2024

Justification and Impacts

11. For women in hydrography and their organizations:

- More exposure to, and interest in participating in IHO bodies;
- Greater understanding of the IHO and how it operates within the global context;
- Ability to participate and contribute to the international hydrographic community;
- Increase in skills and competencies which provide access to promotion;
- Expose women to career possibilities (leadership and technical);
- Increase gender diversity in hydrographic organisation at all levels;
- Professional networking; and;
- Minimizing the existing gender leadership and technical gaps in the hydrographic domain.

12. In addition to targeted activities, a key part of this project will be to support the participation of women at all levels of the IHO structure and to increase both the technical and leadership skills of women in order to empower them to take on greater decision-making roles and responsibilities in the field of hydrography.

Action Required of IRCC

The IRCC is invited to:

- a) Support the adoption of this new work item to the Capacity Building Work Plan from 2021, subject to approval by the forthcoming 2nd IHO Assembly.
- b) Invite the Assembly to approve an action for the Secretariat to negotiate and sign a Cooperation agreement with Directory of Fisheries and Oceans Canada for funding.
- c) Subject to Assembly approval task the CBSC to work out the project plan in further detail including coverage of relevant parts to be funded, to propose project management arrangements and define suitable key performance indicators.