

IHO File No. S3/2644/A

CIRCULAR LETTER 51/2019
03 October 2019

**ADOPTION OF EDITION 4.2.0 OF PUBLICATION B-6
“STANDARDIZATION OF UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES”**

References:

- A. IHO CL 34/2019 dated 3 July - *Call for the approval of new edition 4.2.0 of Publication B-6 “Standardization of Undersea Feature Names”*.
- B. Outcome of the 32nd Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 5-9 August 2019 (Summary Report in progress).

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The approval of Member States of the new edition 4.2.0 of Publication B-6 – *Standardization of Undersea Feature Names* – was requested by Reference A.
2. The Secretariat would like to thank the following 50 Member States that replied to Reference A: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.
3. All 50 Member States approved the proposed new edition of Publication B-6. Six Member States offered comments in addition to their vote. These comments and the outcome of their review by the Chair of SCUFN and the Secretariat are provided in Annex A to this Circular Letter. Minor technical and editorial changes to the proposed edition 4.2.0, taking into account the outcome of the last SCUFN meeting (Reference B), are also given in Annex A.
4. When Reference A was issued, there were 91 Member States of the IHO with three States suspended. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the IHO, the minimum number of affirmative votes required is 30. As a result, edition 4.2.0 of Publication B-6 has been adopted.
5. The final text of the bilingual edition 4.2.0 of Publication B-6 (English/French) is available on the IHO website > Standards & Publications > B-6.

On behalf of the Secretary-General

Yours sincerely,



Mustafa IPTES
Director

Annex A: Member States' responses to IHO CL 34/2019 and comments from the Chair of the SCUFN and the Secretariat.

Copy: The Secretariat of the IOC of the UNESCO,
The Chairs of the GGC and SCUFN.

**MEMBER STATES' RESPONSES TO IHO CL 34/2019
AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE SCUFN AND THE SECRETARIAT
ADOPTION OF EDITION 4.2.0 OF PUBLICATION B-6
"STANDARDIZATION OF UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES"**

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BRAZIL (Vote = YES)

Page 1-i, FOREWORD

Move the acronym GGC out from the quotation marks, this way: "Joint IHO-IOC Guiding Committee for GEBCO" (GGC)

Move the acronym UNGEGN out from the quotation marks, this way: "United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names" (UNGEGN)

Include quotation marks for the expression United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, this way: "United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names" (UNCSGN)

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Page 1-iii, CONTENTS

Remove the quotation marks from the 3rd item in French as it is in English, leaving this way: Directives pour la Normalisation des noms des formes du relief sous-marin

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Page 1-iv, LIST OF ACRONYMS

Rectify the name for SCUFN, this way: GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Page 1-v, STANDARDIZATION OF UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES, INTRODUCTION

In 1.i)

Remove the quotation marks from the expression Undersea Feature Name Proposal Form, since they won't be used with it when it appears again in this Publication

Move the acronym SCUFN out from the quotation marks, this way: "GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names" (SCUFN)

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

In 2.

Include quotation marks for the expression GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names, this way: "GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names" (SCUFN)

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Page 2-9, UNDERSEA FEATURE TERMS AND DEFINITIONS, and I. GENERIC TERMS, Notes

word Sections beginning with capital letter as seen in page 2-8 of this Publication

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Include the Generic Term DRIFT and its translation to French, since there are already features named as DRIFT by the international scientific community

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Not included as there is no DRIFT in the current GEBCO Gazetteer and this suggestion has never been addressed by the Sub-Group on Generic Terms in the preparation of Edition 4.2.0. It is also considered that DRIFT is a widely used term in the field of sedimentology and glacial geology. It is a generic term with a genetic implication. However, it is not fit for SCUFN term because it may not be applicable to a permanent feature. It is considered as a kind of sedimentary body that materials are transported and deposited by a glacier or a current etc.

Page 2-15, II. GENERIC TERMS USED FOR HARMONIZATION WITH OTHER GAZETTEERS, Notes

word Sections beginning with capital letter as seen in page 2-8 of this Publication

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Appendix A, USER'S GUIDE FOR PREPARATION OF..., Page A-2, 2.2, Coordinates

no space between degrees and minutes for Longitude as it is written for Latitude and degrees of Longitude expressed in three digits, this way: 028°52.17W

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Page A-3, 2.2, Chart/Map References

rectify the word International when referring to chart to the word INTernational as seen in page 1-v

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Page A-10, 4. CONCLUSION

set capital letters for the beginning of the words of the expression undersea feature name proposal form, as seen before in this Publication, this way: Undersea Feature Name Proposal Form

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

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CANADA (Vote = YES)

Comment 1: Edit page 2-8, para 2, first word: it appears a "T" is missing.

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Comment 2: Given that there is still some work ongoing by SCUFN and the Generic Term Sub-Group (see documents from SCUFN 32 SCUFN32-06.1A and SCUFN32-06.1B) has there been consideration given to making the more dynamic parts of B-6, specifically, the Undersea Feature Name Proposal form, the Terminology section, and the Users' Guide section, separate stand-alone documents which can be updated without the need for Member State approval of multiple new editions of B-6?

There already is an Undersea Feature Generic Terms and Definition Web site.

As an example, in the document submitted to SCUFN-32 SCUFN32-06.1A the sub-group proposes an amendment to the definition of Ridge which is different from the definition in Ed. 4.2, and SCUFN32-06.1B is proposing guidelines for optimal horizontal resolution between undersea features that are eligible for naming. If one or both of these proposals (or others) are adopted it could mean that MSs will be asked to adopt another new Edition of B-6 next year. Or would these changes be considered 4.2.x versions the may not need full MS approval?

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

This is a very valid point which was considered by SCUFN in the preparation of Ed.4.2.0 but only for the list of naming authorities which is now available, as a separate table, on the SCUFN webpage > Miscellaneous.

Noting that B-6 is in Appendix 2 of the IHO Resolution 2/2007 as amended (IHO CL 46/2019 dated 25 September), SCUFN considers that any amendment on Generic Terms or on the Proposal Form should be classified as “Clarifications” in general unless it is considered substantive. No formal approval will be requested from Member States for these changes. This is different from the strategy on the optimal horizontal resolution between undersea features that are eligible for naming which is still under development, as is an internal “SCUFN cook-book” on the decision making process. These projects will need to be experimented first, before they become fully operational. When considered as mature enough, SCUFN has already planned to incorporate some subsequent guidelines into a new edition of B-6. It is likely that it will take some years, as it was for the so-called “fast-track” procedure.

Comment 3: Related to (2) CA believes the work of the Sub-group to provide clearer and more concise definitions should continue. This effort to quantify characteristics (e.g. gentle slope, steep slope, gently dipping slope, flat, near) permits more object analysis and facilitates the use of GIS tools for the automated identification of new features.

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Agreed and fully acknowledged by SCUFN. Thanks to the involvement of the SCUFN Project Team (UFNPT) led by Canada, working in liaison with the Sub-Group on Generic Terms, significant progress was already reported at the last SCUFN-32 meeting.

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CHILE (Vote = YES) – Original comment in Spanish

Like the objection presented by Cdr. Barrios [Secretariat's Note: SCUFN Member, IHO] to the procedure called "fast track", I think is something extreme. I do not think that the application of the "fast track" is something that leaves SCUFN only as a "validator" since, to apply this modality, SCUFN has given several conditions / requirements that must be met:

- The role of the proposer is ONLY reserved to the national authorities related to geographical names, that is, the proposers cannot be individuals or institutions.
- The concerned name must have been used at least 25 years in the literature, plans, letters, maps etc., that is, it cannot be a newly appeared name
- The proposal cannot contain or be associated with a sensitive political issue, that is, it must be accepted by others and its use must not be unilateral and conflicting,

- The proposal follows a procedure and if someone from SCUFN has any objections to the denomination, such case is assigned to an established council for its analysis; and if there is no agreement, the proposal is sent to the "normal track".

However, it is estimated that we can answer by approving the new edition of the publication, without making any comments and without violating our interests.

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Concerns and conditions to be met are duly acknowledged. The so-called "fast-track" procedure aims at facilitating the international recognition of some existing, truly recognized features in the world while optimizing the resources needed to retrieve the proof (fair sheets, relevant data) in support of the submission for the benefit of proposers. This does not prevent SCUFN from acting with greater vigilance in the decision making process when reviewing such proposals in a speedy manner.

The "fast-track" procedure has been experimented for over 2 years ensuring there is no deviation from the general principles in the guidelines and has been acknowledged efficient and safe.

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IRAN (Islamic Republic of)

Comment 1: In the General section, paragraph A (page 2-1), it is not clear whether this paragraph refers to territorial waters or outer limit of territorial waters. Therefore, the paragraph needs to be revised.

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

This paragraph with this wording is in force since the 4th Edition of B-6 issued in November 2011 and is not concerned by any change in the proposed Edition 4.2.0. It states: "*International concern for naming undersea features is limited to those features entirely or mainly (more than 50 %) outside the external limits of the territorial sea, not exceeding 12 nautical miles from the baselines, in agreement with [UNCLOS].*" From the experience gained since 2011, it looks that there is no misinterpretation of this wording, neither by proposers nor SCUFN. However, Iran is welcome to submit any change proposal that seems appropriate which will be addressed at the next SCUFN-33 meeting (Nov. 2020) for the preparation of the next edition.

Comment 2: In the Appendix (page A-1), section 2.1. Proposal Selection (Second paragraph), the wording should be changed as follows: single or multibeam bathymetric data. The reason is that, in the same Appendix (page A-4), section 3, Supporting Maps, under Note section, it is implied that single beam data is also acceptable.

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Correct. Change made in Section 2.1 to read "...single and/or multibeam bathymetric data...".

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NEW ZEALAND (Vote = YES)

New Zealand votes to support the proposed new Edition 4.2.0 of Publication B-6, in order for it to proceed uninhibited through to IHO for final ratification.

However we wish to formally record these comments:

1. New Zealand fully supports the numerous updates identified for this version of the standard, and does not wish its one concern to compromise the process, contributions and agreement by member states to get to this point.
2. New Zealand raised a concern at the recent IRCC11 June 2019 meeting about the existing last sentence under: II. PRINCIPLES FOR NAMING FEATURES, A. Specific terms, 6. 'In the case of names in the vicinity of Antarctica, it is recommended that specific terms should relate to the Antarctic region, explorers, researchers or vessels.'
3. New Zealand's concern is that this could impede SCUFN accepting Maori names for undersea features around Antarctica. Our preference is to 'recognise and encourage the application of indigenous names', and so we sought to have the text changed accordingly or the whole sentence removed as the criteria for 'specific term' naming of undersea features in the Southern Ocean should be no different to the rest of the world.
4. New Zealand appreciates consideration by IRCC at its recent June 2019 meeting of this concern. The subsequent draft report records that 'New Zealand expressed concerns about the addition of Antarctic naming principles in the new draft edition as New Zealand would want to use Maori language names. The Committee considered that New Zealand can use Maori names for the features in the Antarctic region, if SCUFN agrees that these Maori names are in fact relevant to the Antarctic region. New Zealand stated that it does not endorse the amendments to the proposed new edition 4.2.0 of the IHO Publication B-6 Standardization of Undersea Feature Names.'
5. New Zealand notes that in the future it will have opportunity during the next revision round of B-6, to seek a suitable change to this clause at the outset, giving members states sufficient time to fully consider and decide on the matter.

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Noted. Decision to submit this change for GGC's and IRCC's endorsement was made in full consensus from SCUFN Members at the SCUFN-31 meeting (2018) in Wellington, New Zealand. As indicated in B-6 (II.4, Reason for Choice, ...), preference is already given for specific terms in relation to ocean sciences which does not prevent New Zealand from justifying naming proposals in Antarctica region using Maori names.

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PORTUGAL (Vote = YES)

IHPT enthusiastically sees the clarification of procedures with the approval of this publication. IHPT is interested in translating publication B-6. IHPT is interested in being more participative and returning to the SCUFN group.

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Proposals from Portugal are more than welcome. Once translated into Portuguese, the new Edition will be made available on the IHO website together with the other bilingual B-6 versions. In accordance with SCUFN Rules of Procedures (Art. 2.7), IHPT can always participate in SCUFN meetings as Observer and submit naming proposals. IHPT may also wish to consider the possibility of becoming an active Member of the Undersea Feature Names Project Team.

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SAUDI ARABIA (Vote = YES)

Page 2-8, Terminology para 2. First word, delete "he" insert "The"

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (Vote = YES)

The United States congratulates the SCUFN for the outstanding work updating 4.2.0 of Publication B-6. The improvements will improve the standardization of underwater names, and streamline processes for submissions.

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SCUFN Members and Secretary (outcome of SCUFN-32 meeting, August 2020)

Minor editorial comments such as:

Make all email addresses dynamic. New cover page taking into account new IHO branding.

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.

Action SCUFN32/183

SCUFN32/183	6.1A	<p>SCUFN approved the new definition for RIDGE as proposed in Doc. SCUFN32-06.1A, and agreed that no amendments were necessary for the definitions of CANYON, VALLEY and SEAMOUNT.</p> <p>When reporting on the outcome of IHO CL 34/2019, SCUFN Secretary to amend the definition of RIDGE in B-6 Ed. 4.2.0 before publication.</p>	<p>Decision</p> <p>September 2019</p>
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RIDGE “An elongated elevation of varying complexity and size, generally having steep sides.”

Comments by SCUFN Chair/Vice-Chair/IHO Secretariat:

Done.