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CIRCULAR LETTER 21/2020
03 June 2020

IHO CROWDSOURCED BATHYMETRY (CSB) DATA FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN

References:

- A. IHO CL 28/2019 dated 13 June – *Adoption of Edition 2.0.0 of IHO Publication B-12*
- B. IHO CL 47/2019 dated 25 September – *Acceptance of Crowdsourced Bathymetry Activities in National Waters of Jurisdiction*
- C. IHO CL 06/2020 dated 20 January - *Acceptance of Crowdsourced Bathymetry Activities in National Waters of Jurisdiction*

Dear Hydrographer,

1. Reference A announced the approval and adoption of Edition 2.0.0 of IHO Publication B-12 – *IHO Crowdsourced Bathymetry Guidance Document* – by the IHO Member States. At the same time a questionnaire was circulated seeking support for crowdsourced bathymetry (CSB) activities within their waters of national jurisdiction, the results of which were published in Reference B with a summary table uploaded to the Crowdsourced Bathymetry Working Group (CSBWG) page of the IHO website. A follow-up status was reported in Reference C with a revised summary table.

2. The Chair of the CSBWG, in line with the objectives of IHO resolution 1/2017 to improve the availability of bathymetric data worldwide, is seeking the support of the IHO Member States to expand the support for the provision of CSB data, collected by ships within waters subject to their national jurisdiction, into the public domain for the widest possible use. To assist Member States in their internal decision making processes, the IHO Secretariat, in collaboration with the Chair of the CSBWG, has revised the original questionnaire to simplify and clarify the information requested. Member States are requested to indicate their position on the provision of CSB data from ships within waters subject to their national jurisdiction into the public domain as well as highlighting, via the questionnaire provided in the Enclosure, any caveats they wish to apply to such provision. Separately the Chairs of Regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHCs) have been requested to encourage members, associate members and observer states of their respective RHCs as well as any other coastal state within their region, which are not Member States of the IHO, to indicate their position on the provision of CSB data into the public domain as well as highlighting, via the questionnaire in the Enclosure, any caveats they wish to apply to any such provision.

3. It is intended to update the table in the CSBWG page on the IHO website to provide clarity to the maritime community on what caveats, if any, apply to the gathered data. These caveats will also be used by the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB) when archiving the data and for guidance on how the data may be used and made available. Guidance on submission of data sets can be found in IHO publication B-12 or on the IHO DCDB page of the IHO website.

4. CSB data are intended to be provided to the entire marine geospatial community, including the Seabed 2030 Project which may incorporate these data in the annual update of the GEBCO worldwide grid, which is freely available from the GEBCO website:

(<https://www.gebco.net/>). A number of regional and national projects are also using CSB data for diverse purposes, such as chart accuracy/adequacy, habitat monitoring and small scale localised mapping activities to supplement officially published data. On a wider regional and global scale, CSB data will contribute to improving tsunami propagation and wave modelling, both of which are sensitive to bathymetry and ultimately contribute to early warning systems; in addition bathymetry is a key component of ocean circulation models and therefore weather forecasting models, all of these impact directly on coastal states.

5. Member States are encouraged to complete this revised questionnaire attached or preferably by using the IHO Online Form System available at the following link: https://IHO.formstack.com/forms/cl_21_2020 and indicate their support for the provision of CSB data into the public domain **by 4 September 2020**. Member States can resubmit a revised questionnaire to update their position and caveats to the IHO Secretariat at any time. The list published on the IHO website will be updated as new information is received from coastal states.

Yours sincerely



Dr Mathias JONAS
Secretary-General

Enclosure: CSB data provision questionnaire

Distribution: IHO Member States, Chair of the IRCC, Chair of the CSBWG, Chair of the GEBCO Guiding Committee, Director of the Seabed 2030 Project.

**CROWDSOURCED BATHYMETRY DATA PROVISION – COASTAL STATE POSITION
FOR WATERS SUBJECT TO THEIR NATIONAL JURISDICTION**

TEMPLATE FORM

(to be returned to the IHO Secretariat **no later than 4 September 2020**)

E-mail: cl-lc@iho.int - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)

IHO clarification on Crowdsourced Bathymetry Activity

For the purpose of this Circular Letter, the following terms have the specified meanings:

Bathymetry is the determination of ocean, coastal, and inland water depths. The general configuration of sea floor as determined by profile analysis of depth data.

Crowdsourcing is a process by which people and/or groups voluntarily submit observations, data, or information to accomplish a task or goal.

Crowdsourced bathymetry is defined by the IHO as the collection of depth measurements from vessels, using standard navigation instruments, while engaged in routine maritime operations.

Crowdsourced bathymetry data provision is the transmission to the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry for ingestion, aggregation, categorization, and public dissemination of depth measurements made by vessels, using standard navigation instruments, while engaged in routine maritime operations.

IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB) was established in 1990 to steward the worldwide repository of bathymetric data. The Centre archives and shares, freely and without restrictions, depth data contributed by mariners. The IHO DCDB is an IHO resource that is hosted by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on behalf of IHO Member States.

Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, and Exclusive Economic Zone have the same meanings as are given those terms under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Questions:

- 1) Do you support or object to the crowdsourced bathymetry data provision for depth measurements from the internal waters of your country?

SUPPORT	OBJECT
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CAVEAT:

- 2) Do you support or object to the crowdsourced bathymetry data provision for depth measurements from the territorial sea of your country?

SUPPORT	OBJECT
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CAVEAT:

- 3) Do you support or object to the crowdsourced bathymetry data provision for depth measurements from the Exclusive Economic Zone of your country?

SUPPORT	OBJECT
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CAVEAT:

- 4) If you support the crowdsourced bathymetry data provision for depth measurements from the Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, or Exclusive Economic Zone of your country, do you wish to be informed when such information is received by the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry?

- a. Internal waters (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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- b. Territorial Sea (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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- c. Exclusive Economic Zone (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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- 5) If you support the crowdsourced bathymetry data provision for depth measurements from the Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, or Exclusive Economic Zone of your country, do you wish to review such information before its ingestion into the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry?

- a. Internal Waters (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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b. Territorial Sea (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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c. Exclusive Economic Zone (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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6) If you support the crowdsourced bathymetry data provision for depth measurements from the Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, or Exclusive Economic Zone of your country, do you wish for the opportunity to put caveats on the further dissemination of such data? If yes, please provide your recommended caveats in the comment boxes.

a. Internal Waters (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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CAVEAT:

b. Territorial Sea (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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CAVEAT:

c. Exclusive Economic Zone (Yes/No)

YES	NO
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CAVEAT:

7) Do you consent to the IHO Secretariat incorporating your responses to this survey into a summary listing to be made publicly available via the IHO website?

YES	NO
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- 8) Please provide contact details of national focus for CSB and crowdsourced bathymetry data provision for use by the Chair CSBWG and Director DCDB.