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CIRCULAR LETTER 02/2026
08 January 2026

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO THE IHO - NIPPON FOUNDATION GEOSPATIAL MARINE ANALYSIS AND CARTOGRAPHY (GEOMAC) PROJECT, UKHO, TAUNTON, UK

References:

A. IHO CL 10/2014 dated 24 January - Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the International Hydrographic Organization and the Nippon Foundation.
B. IHO CL 34/2025 dated 05 August - Questionnaire Results for the IHO - Nippon Foundation Geospatial Marine Analysis and Cartography (GEOMAC) Project.

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The IHO - Nippon Foundation (NF) "Geospatial Marine Analysis and Cartography" (GEOMAC) project and its predecessors, through the IHO Capacity Building Work Programme, have been providing training opportunities for nautical cartographers recognized by the FIG-IHO-ICA IBSC with the Category "B" at the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) for 17 years. The total number of alumni has currently reached 112 from 52 countries, playing an important role in nautical cartography at national, regional and international levels.

2. The IHO Secretariat had submitted a proposal for the next GEOMAC project to the NF, considering the results of the questionnaire analysis on the GEOMAC project (Reference B). The new two-year cycle is expected to begin in 2026, once the NF had formally approved it.

3. Following the NF's approval to continue supporting the GEOMAC project, the next course is expected to take place from 9 July to 11 December 2026. It will combine on-site training at the UKHO in Taunton, UK, from 27 July to 11 December, with two weeks of supervised remote learning from 9 to 22 July. Annex A provides an outline of the updated course programme, which includes some modules on new technologies essential for Smart Navigation, such as S-101 ENCs, other S-100 data model products, MSDI, autonomous ships and AI.

4. Financial support from the NF is expected for up to seven trainees. This support will cover course fees, travel to and from their respective countries, accommodation, and a reasonable living allowance. Accommodation for trainees will be arranged at the sole discretion of the GEOMAC project and cannot be changed for any reason.

5. **All IHO Member States** which consider that their nautical cartographic production could benefit from internationally recognized training for nautical cartographers are invited to consider nominating **up to two suitable candidates** for the GEOMAC course.

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6. Candidates must be employed by a hydrographic office, a port authority or a related national agency of the nominating country. The nomination must include a statement confirming that the candidate is, or will be, involved in producing and maintaining nautical charts, and they will continue to work in this field even after the training. A template for the Nomination Statement is available in Annex B. This statement must be signed by a representative of the candidate's national authority and submitted via the IHO Online Form System, as detailed in paragraph 9.

7. Nominated candidates **MUST** meet the following criteria:

- A very good knowledge of English, both written and spoken, with reasonable technical English. (*Level B1 CEFR or above or equivalent is recommended. Candidates' level of English will be checked and confirmed by a telephone or teleconference interview before final selection*).
- Strong background in mathematics and geography.
- A background in cartography, hydrographic surveying, geospatial sciences or related areas.
- Individual commitment for international cooperative projects, such as the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 project and the IHO's technical and regional bodies.

8. Candidates for the next course will be selected by a Selection Panel, comprising of representatives from the IHO Secretariat and the NF, in consultation with the UKHO and the JHOD. Successful candidates and their national authorities will be notified by **mid-to-late March 2026**. Once candidates have been selected, they cannot be changed by the national authorities. Selected candidates will receive detailed logistical information from the UKHO.

9. Applications should be submitted via the IHO Online Form System including the signed Nomination Statement (Annex B) and the signed Application Signature Form (Annex C), **no later than 10 March 2026**. All information and documents which are submitted to the IHO Secretariat must be written in English. If Member States experience technical difficulties with the IHO Online Form System, please contact the IHO Secretariat individually. The IHO Online Form System can be accessed at the following address: https://iho.formstack.com/forms/web_form_cl_02_2026.

On behalf of the Secretary-General
Yours sincerely,

Luigi SINAPI
Director

Annexes (*in English only*):

A. Outline of the Training Course Programme
B. Nomination Statement by the National Authority
C. Application Signature Form

OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED TRAINING COURSE PROGRAMME

- **Distance Learning Module**
  - Self-paced learning to introduce the basic elements equivalent to 1 week of study.
  - Textbooks will be distributed to students approximately six weeks prior to the in-person course commencement will be marked in advance.

- **Foundation Module** – 4 weeks (including 2 weeks remotely).
  - To introduce the underlying principles of marine cartography, covering charting and geospatial fundamentals and database management.
  - The foundational content for the first two weeks of this module will be delivered through supervised remote learning.

- **Geospatial Fundamentals Module** – 2 weeks.
  - To cover the fundamentals of geospatial information, including the IHO S-57 data transfer standard, the practical aspects of S-57 Composer software and data management in geospatial databases.

- **Compilation Module** – 3 weeks.
  - Practical training in creating a geospatial database using a primary dataset, covering the bathymetric elements, coastlines, scheduling, field exercises, and metadata.
  - To introduce the concepts of IHO S-100 production, IHO S-101 editing and S-57 to S-101 conversion.

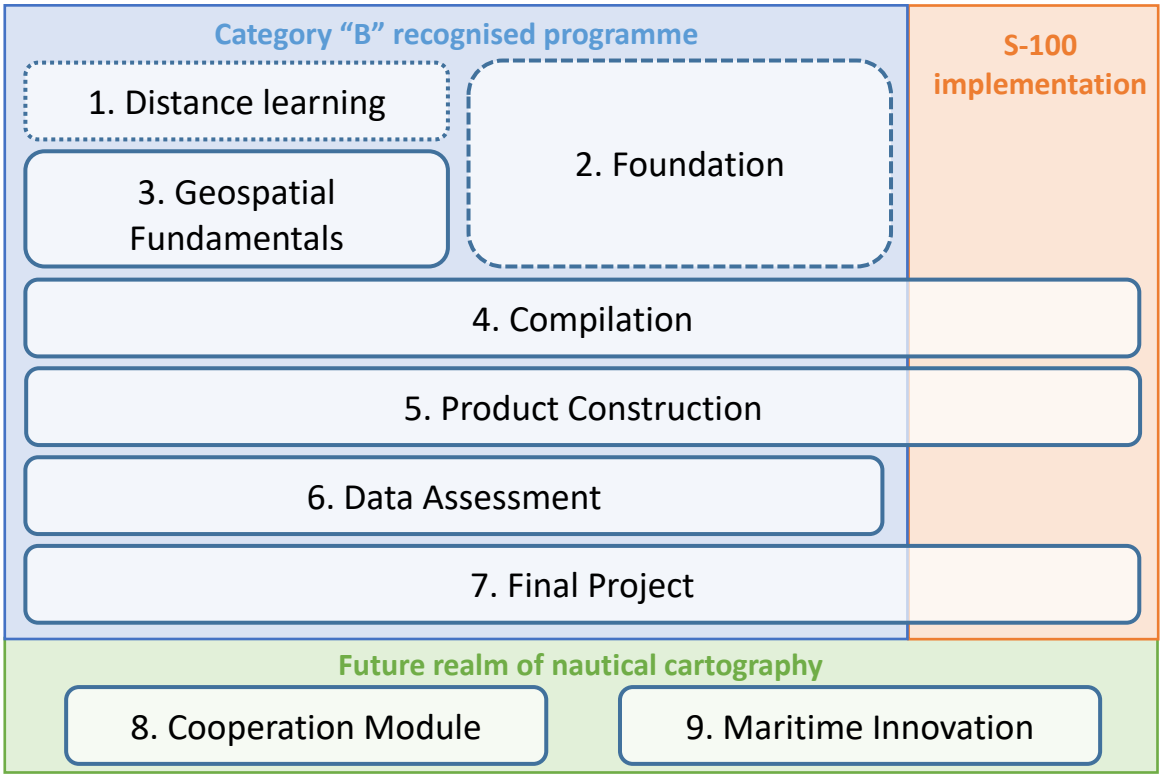
- **Product Construction Module** – 3 weeks.
  - To produce ENC and paper charts from the geospatial database, including the quality assurance and publication processes.
  - To provide an overview of S-101 product.

- **Data Assessment Module** – 4 weeks.
  - Practical training in critical decision-making and the implementation of the safety information, such as Notice to Mariners, new or revised editions, to support the maintenance of nautical chart products and fulfil the responsibilities of the Hydrographic Offices.

- **Final Project** – 4 weeks.
  - Comprehensive exercise for each student involving the creation and maintenance of S-57 and S-101 products.
  - In the Final Project, students will also review and evaluate the entire course, identifying their key lessons learnt.

- **Cooperation Module** – 1 week
  - To introduce the latest integrated data management framework for ocean governance, based on the Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) and the S-100 data models.
  - To introduce the latest seabed mapping technologies, highlight the significant and multiple demands for seabed data and present the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 project.

- **Maritime Innovation Module** – 1 week
  - To introduce the new technological components for maritime safety, such as cyber security and AI for Autonomous Ships.
  - To introduce the practical applications of maritime data and their specific benefits for ocean environment management, conservation and restoration, with focus on the broader need for ocean knowledge.



Applications for training under the IHO - Nippon Foundation Geospatial Marine Analysis and Cartography (GEOMAC) Project, including a FIG-IHO-ICA IBSC Category "B" Programme, at the UKHO, Taunton, UK

NOMINATION STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Candidate's Name: _____

1. What makes the candidate suitable for the course?

2. What are the expected employment position and responsibilities of the candidate immediately upon completion of their course?

3. How many years is the candidate expected to serve as a nautical cartographer?

Furthermore, I am committed to encouraging the candidate to actively participate in international cooperative projects, such as the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 project and the IHO's technical and regional bodies, as much as possible once they have completed their course.

The Hydrographer (or appropriate authority) of _____ endorses this application and accepts the conditions that apply.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

- *This Nomination Statement is available at the following address: https://iho.int/uploads/user/Capacity%20Building/IHO-Nippon%20Foundation%20CHART%20project/AnnexB_NomStat_GEOMAC2026.docx .*
- *Please note that a signed copy of this document must be uploaded to the IHO Online Form (<https://iho.formstack.com/forms/web_form_cl_02_2026>), no later than 10 March 2026.*

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APPLICATION SIGNATURE FORM

I hereby declare that the answers which I have provided in the IHO Online Form System to the following questions were prepared by me and are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. If any of the information provided in this application is found to be false, incorrect or incomplete, I will accept responsibility for the consequences.

1. Personal Information
2. Contact Information (Office address, telephone and mobile phone numbers are mandatory)
3. Curriculum Vitae (in any standard format, including a photograph)
4. Description of the candidate's experience (education, training and work experience)
5. Written and spoken ability in English language
6. The candidate's current position
7. Description of the duties and responsibilities of the candidate's current position
8. Current issues confronting the candidate and organization
9. How, in practice, the candidate could apply what is learnt during the training course to solve the above-mentioned issues
10. The candidate's short-term (within 5 years) career plan
11. The candidate's long-term vision
12. Your perspective on and approach to new technologies related to nautical cartography
13. How would the candidate contribute and benefit as part of the alumni network

Furthermore, upon completion of my course, I am committed to actively participating in international cooperative projects, such as the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 project and the IHO's technical and regional bodies, utilizing my skills and knowledge to the best of my ability.

Date: _____

Candidate's Name: _____

Candidate's Signature: _____

- *This Application Form is available at the following address: https://iho.int/uploads/user/Capacity%20Building/IHO-Nippon%20Foundation%20CHART%20project/AnnexC_AppSign_GEOMAC2026.docx .*
- *Please note that a signed copy of this document must be uploaded to the IHO Online Form (<https://iho.formstack.com/forms/web_form_cl_02_2026>), no later than 10 March 2026.*
- *Please complete the online form to answer the following questions and do not enter your answers directly into this document.*