



IOC Circular Letter No 3038
(Available in English only)

IOC/VH/JB/eh
5 May 2025

To : IOC Member States (Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC)
Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO, and
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States

C.c. : The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission
Officers of Major IOC Subsidiary Bodies (Scientific, Technical and Regional)
Chair of the GEBCO Guiding Committee
GEBCO Technical Secretary (IHO)

**Subject: Call for nominations for vacant IOC representative seats
at the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC)**

The joint IHO-IOC GEBCO (General Bathymetric Chart of the Ocean) Project is led by the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC), which includes five members appointed by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and five members appointed by the UNESCO-IOC for a five-year term, renewable once.

Since the last communication on the subject (cf. IOC Circular Letter, [3004](#)) of August 2024, three IOC-appointed seat have become vacant in 2025 following the stepping down of Dr Marzia Rovere (Italy), Ms Kim Picard (Australia), and Commander Prashant Srivastava (India). In accordance with GEBCO Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, I will appoint experts based on the nominations received from IOC Member States.

The criteria for the selection of GGC members include:

- Significant knowledge in bathymetry, especially in state-of-the-art ocean surveying and mapping;
- Experience in undersea topographic terrain analysis;
- Basic awareness of the marine or Earth science disciplines;
- Demonstrated understanding of the role of bathymetric and other marine data as a part of the ocean science value chain;
- Knowledge of the needs of various ocean stakeholders including end-users of ocean mapping products and services;

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Mr Vidar HELGESEN
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- Capacity to positively influence global ocean mapping efforts in the international arena through strategic inputs; and
- Analytical and communication skills.

The Terms of Reference and the Rules of Procedure of the GGC are enclosed in Annex A for reference. The current membership of the GGC is provided in Annex B.

IOC Member States wishing to nominate an expert to GGC are kindly invited to complete the application form in Annex C and send a CV to the IOC secretariat, c/o Ms Isabel Chavez (i.chavez@unesco.org) by 1st June 2025. The CV should outline the credentials and experience of the nominee with regard to the criteria described above. Experts from both public and private sectors are welcomed.

I would like to emphasize that the cost of the applicant's participation in GGC meetings will have to be borne by the Member State or institution that proposed the applicant for the duration of the membership.

In my capacity as IOC Executive Secretary, I will examine the nominations received and, in liaison with the GGC Chair and in consultation with IHO, will confirm nomination of the new IOC-appointed member of the GGC.

Membership will be effective from 1st July 2025 for an initial term of five years. The selected expert will be invited to attend the next GGC meeting (GGC-42) in November 2025 at a location to be confirmed.

The IOC Secretariat takes this opportunity to welcome Dr Pip Bricher (Australia) appointed in December 2024, and thanks Dr Marzia Rovere (Italy), Ms Kim Picard (Australia), and Commander Prashant Srivastava (India) for their commitment to the activities of the GCC over many years, as well as their national supporting organizations for sponsoring them as members of the GGC.

Looking forward to receiving nominations at your earliest convenience, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signature]

Vidar Helgesen
Executive Secretary

Enclosures (3): A – Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures for GGC
B – Current composition of the GGC
C – Nomination form

Annex A

GENERAL BATHYMETRIC CHART OF THE OCEANS (GEBCO) PROJECT

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE JOINT IHO-IOC GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

GEBCO was proposed in 1899 and became a reality in April 1903 when HSH Prince Albert I of Monaco offered to organize and finance the production of a new chart series designated: "The General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans" (GEBCO), under the Prince's Scientific Cabinet. In 1922 the responsibility for GEBCO was passed to the Director of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and in 1929 was transferred to the International Hydrographic Bureau (today the IHO). Since 1973, GEBCO has been a joint Project of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

The goals of the IHO-IOC GEBCO Project are to:

1. Develop and constantly improve the portrayal of global ocean depths;
2. Act as the designated international authority for undersea feature names;
3. Advance the development and application of sea floor mapping technology;
4. Encourage and facilitate ocean mapping cooperation leading to the exchange and preservation of bathymetric data and associated metadata;
5. Foster collaboration among individuals and organizations with established and developing expertise so as to assist local and regional mapping efforts to attain a global standard of quality;
6. Identify oceanic areas that are insufficiently mapped and recommend to appropriate ocean-going organizations and institutions that such areas are surveyed;
7. Promote education and training in ocean mapping through high level courses in Ocean Bathymetry acknowledged by the IHO and IOC;
8. Bring together the ocean mapping community and users of bathymetry thereby leading to products that are more widely used.

GEBCO is an IHO and IOC Project that is open to all those interested in mapping the ocean floor. It relies largely on the voluntary efforts of an international collaborating community of scientists and hydrographers with the support of the IHO and the IOC.

GEBCO is led by the Joint IHO-IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The GEBCO Guiding Committee shall:

1. Guide the IHO-IOC GEBCO Project, under the general governance of IHO and IOC while recognizing and following IHO and IOC policies.
2. Prepare and disseminate maps, grids, data files and other appropriate depictions of the ocean floor.
3. Identify the needs of the various user communities of the bathymetry of the world's oceans; study the ways and means whereby these needs can be met.

4. Identify the necessary resources, both human and financial, for its undertakings and make appropriate recommendations to its parent organizations.
5. Stimulate the flow of data relevant to the GEBCO Project by actively identifying sources of new data and encouraging and promoting the release of data to appropriate data banks, with the objective of ensuring that maximum available data are provided to the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB).
6. Supervise the development, maintenance and routine updating of GEBCO products. Activities are to include but are not restricted to:
 - (1) Study and set out procedures for new compilations of bathymetry.
 - (2) Develop standards and methodologies for the production of bathymetric maps and grids and recommend their adoption to the IHO and IOC and to the seafloor mapping community.
 - (3) Supervise the development, production and updating of a worldwide grid of digital bathymetric data.
 - (4) Supervise the preparation and maintenance, in association with national and international bodies, of an authoritative IHO-IOC GEBCO *Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names*.
 - (5) Study and implement the best distribution mechanism for the effective use of GEBCO products by all users.
7. Investigate and develop appropriate logistical and financial arrangements necessary for the furtherance of the GEBCO Project, recognizing and taking into account the relevant IHO and IOC policies, and seeking the assistance of the Secretariats of the IHO and IOC as appropriate.
8. Integrate into its products the geographical names of undersea features that appear in the IHO-IOC GEBCO *Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names*.
9. As required, establish subordinate bodies (sub-committees and working groups) to fulfil the Committee Work Programme and approve the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of those bodies, reviewing annually the continuing need for each subordinate body. The GEBCO Guiding Committee will report annually and intersessionally if necessary, to the IHO and IOC for endorsement on the status of subordinate bodies and encompass their comments before establishing, reviewing, modifying, and/or terminating subordinate bodies; actions which must be included as GGC agenda items to allow sufficient prior consideration by the IHO and IOC secretariats and member states.
10. Direct and monitor the work of its subordinate bodies.
11. Engage with regional mapping projects to encourage their compatibility with, and eventual inclusion in, GEBCO products.
12. Build capacity by encouraging and enabling the training and scientific education of new generations of ocean mapping operational experts worldwide.
13. Pursue, in dialogue with the IHO and IOC, policies that facilitate the suitability of GEBCO products not only for scientific users but also, where appropriate, for educational and socioeconomic purposes in the broadest sense.
14. Take all practical opportunities to advocate the scientific and societal benefits of mapping the seafloor.
15. Report annually to the IHO and to the IOC, through their respective governing bodies and should also propose activities to be considered in the IHO's and IOC's work programmes, identifying and requesting, where necessary, the required funding support.

16. Prepare an annual GEBCO Work Plan and budget and propose it to each meeting of the IHO and IOC, through their respective governing bodies. The Guiding Committee should consider and submit to the IHO and IOC governing bodies proposals for new work items under the GEBCO Work Plan, taking into account the financial, administrative and wider stakeholder consequences.
17. Monitor the execution of the GEBCO Work Plan and receive reports from its Subordinate Bodies, including an evaluation of performance and progress achieved against agreed objectives.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. Membership

- 1.1 The Committee shall consist of five Members appointed by the IHO, and five Members appointed by the IOC. The Secretariats of the IHO and IOC, in close consultation with the Committee Chair, will seek to strive that all appointed Members are, as far as possible, from different regions so as to achieve a balanced and diverse representation.
- 1.2 Appointed Members shall serve for a term of five years, renewable by a majority recommendation of the Committee for one additional five-year term and with the approval of the corresponding parent organization. The Chair shall inform the relevant parent organization of any foreseeable vacancy in a timely manner.
- 1.3 The Chairs of GEBCO Sub-Committees established under Article 9 of the Terms of Reference and the Director of the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB), shall also be voting Members of the Committee. If a Member of the Committee mentioned under paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 above is also the Chair of a subordinate body, that Member shall have only one vote on the Committee.
- 1.4 Representatives of the Secretariats of the IHO and IOC shall be permanent Observers in the Committee. The Secretariats of the IHO and IOC will also be recognized as permanent Observers in all subordinate bodies established by the Committee.
- 1.5 The Committee may invite other suitably qualified individuals to take part in specific meetings as Expert Contributors.
- 1.6 Members of the Guiding Committee serve as experts in their personal capacity rather than as representatives of their organization and/or country.
- 1.7 Members are expected to attend every meeting of the Committee. Members who are absent for two consecutive meetings will normally be considered to have resigned and new nominations shall be sought. No substitution shall be allowed at meetings.
- 1.8 Business may be conducted between meetings by appropriate communication systems.
- 1.9 All documents related to meetings and decisions of the Committee and Sub-Committees and other relevant documents will be posted on the GEBCO web site linked to the IHO and IOC websites.

2. Office Bearers

- 2.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected by the Committee from the voting Members of the Committee and normally should be from different parent organizations. The Chair and Vice-Chair are each elected for three-year terms, but not exceeding their current membership of the Committee. They can be re-elected for one additional term by the Committee. The Chair shall conduct the business of the Committee. If the Chair is unable to carry out the duties of the office, the Vice-Chair shall assume the Chair with the same powers and duties.
- 2.2 The Committee shall appoint a Secretary for a five-year term which can be renewed by the Committee. If resources permit and at the Committee's request, a secretary may be provided by either the Secretariat of the IHO or the IOC. The function of the Secretary shall be defined by the Guiding Committee.

3. Meetings

- 3.1 Representatives from Member States of IHO and IOC may participate as observers in Committee meetings.
- 3.2 Meetings shall be held at least every two years. The venue and date of the next meeting will normally be decided at the previous meeting, in order to facilitate participants' travel arrangements.
- 3.3 The quorum to hold a meeting shall be two more than half of the voting Members of the committee.
- 3.4 An extraordinary meeting can be called by the Chair or any Committee Member, with the agreement of the simple majority of all voting members of the Committee.
- 3.5 The working language of the Committee shall be English.
- 3.6 The Committee shall strive to make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be taken by simple majority vote of the Members entitled to vote. The Chair shall have the casting vote if there is a tie.

4. Amendment and Revision

- 4.1 These Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure shall be endorsed and approved by the IHO and IOC according to their current procedures. The Committee may propose to IHO and IOC changes to these Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure with the approval of two thirds of the Committee. Any changes shall enter in force after being endorsed and approved by both IHO and IOC.

The [Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of GGC](#) were adopted by IOC and IHO in 2015 (in particular Assembly [Decision IOC-XXVIII/6.2](#)) and further amended in 2019 (in particular Assembly [Decision IOC-XXX/9.1](#)).

Annex B

**IHO-IOC GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE
(GGC)**

List of GGC members – 28 April 2025

- | | Term Period: |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. IHO Appointed Members: | |
| Mr Hiroaki Saito (Japan) | (2024–2029) |
| Mr David Millar (USA)* | (2024–2029) |
| Mr Evert Flier (Norway)* (<i>Chair</i>) | (2024–2029) |
| Dr Geoffroy Lamarche (New Zealand) | (2021–2026) |
| Ms Yerinelys Santos Barrera (Colombia) | (2022–2027) |
| 2. IOC Appointed Members: | |
| Dr Paul Brett (Canada) | (2022–2027) |
| Ms Pip Bricher (Australia) | (2024–2029) |
| +3 Vacancies (<i>Currently being recruited</i>) | |
| 3. Ex-officio Members: | |
| Ms Aileen Bohan (Chair of SCRUM) | |
| Mr George Spoelstra (Chair of TSCOM) | |
| Mr Yasuhiko Ohara (Japan) (<i>Chair of SCUFN</i>) | |
| Vacant (<i>Chair of SCOPE</i>) | |
| Ms Jennifer Jencks (USA) (<i>Director of IHO-DCDB</i>) | |
| * Members serving a second 5-year term. | |
| 4. Secretary: | |
| Mr Sam Harper (IHO) | (2021–2026) |

NOTE: Members of the Secretariats of the IHO and IOC are permanent non-voting Members in the Committee.

Annex C

THE JOINT IHO-IOC GEBCO GUIDING COMMITTEE (GGC)

Nomination Form

(to be returned to the IOC Secretariat, **by 1st June 2025 by e-mail to:**
i.chavez@unesco.org)

Note: The boxes will expand as you type your answers

IOC Member State

1. Would you like to nominate an expert to be a member of GGC?

Name of the candidate:

**Institution/Employer of
the candidate:**

E-mail:

**2. If the nominee is selected, is it your intention to
support his/her participation in meetings of GEBCO
during the nominee membership?**

Yes or No

Comments:

**Signature and official
position of the
proposer:**

Date :

Attachment: CV of nominated applicant