

GEBCO SUB-COMMITTEE ON UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES (SCUFN)

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

References:

- A. IHO CL 24/2008 dated 06 March - *GEBCO: New Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure*
- B. IOC Executive Council XLI, June 2008
- C. IHO CL 59/2008 dated 9 July - *GEBCO Guiding Committee and its Sub Committees: Final Approval of New Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure*
- D. 35th Meeting of the GEBCO Guiding Committee, November 2018 – *Amendments to Art. 2.8*
- E. 36th Meeting of the GEBCO Guiding Committee, November 2019 – *Amendments to Art. 2.4*
- F. GEBCO Guiding Committee, March 2024 (endorsement received by correspondence) – *Some editorial corrections and amendments to Art. 2.5 and 2.8 and insertion of a new Art. 2.11.*

1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1 The Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names reports to the Joint IHO-IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) as its designated authority for all matters concerning undersea feature names.
- 1.2 It is the function of the Sub-Committee to select those names of undersea features in the world ocean appropriate for use on GEBCO graphical and digital products, on the IHO small-scale International chart series, and on the regional IBC series.
- 1.3 The Sub-Committee shall:
 - 1.3.1 Select undersea feature names from:
 - a) names provided by national and international organizations concerned with nomenclature;
 - b) names submitted to the Sub-Committee by individuals, agencies and organizations involved in marine research, hydrography, etc.;
 - c) names appearing in scientific journals or on appropriate charts and maps;
 - d) names submitted to the Sub-Committee by the Chairpersons or Chief Editors of IBC projects, in relation to the work on these projects.
 - 1.3.2 Define, where appropriate, the extent of named features.
 - 1.3.3 Provide advice to individuals and appropriate authorities on the selection of undersea feature names located outside the external limits of the territorial sea and, on request, inside the external limit of the territorial sea.
 - 1.3.4 Encourage the establishment of national boards on undersea feature names where such boards do not exist.
 - 1.3.5 Prepare and maintain an international and worldwide IHO-IOC GEBCO Gazetteer of

Undersea Feature Names.

1.3.6 Encourage the use of undersea feature names included in the IHO-IOC GEBCO Gazetteer, on any maps, charts, scientific publications and documents by promulgating these names widely.

1.3.7 Prepare and maintain IHO-IOC Publication B-6 “Standardization of Undersea Feature Names” for the standardization of undersea feature names and encourage their use.

1.3.8 Review and address the need for revised or additional terms and definitions for undersea features.

1.3.9 Maintain close liaison with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the focal point of which shall be invitations to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee, and with international or national authorities concerned with the naming of undersea features.

1.3.10 Provide, where feasible, historical information regarding the origin of pre-existing published names and historical variant names. This research will include discovery ship and/or organization, information regarding the individual or vessel being commemorated or geographic feature with which the name is associated, origin of variant names if required and source material regarding naming information.

2. Rules of Procedure

2.1 Membership of the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names is covered by the following rules:

2.1.1 The Sub-Committee shall normally consist of 12 members, preferably 6 members being appointed by IHO and 6 by IOC acting in close consultation.

2.1.2 Appointed Members of the Sub-Committee represent their parent organization as experts¹ and no substitution shall be allowed.

2.1.3 Members of the Sub-Committee shall be appointed for a five-year period, renewable for one additional five-year term by the corresponding parent organization if so recommended by the Sub-Committee through the GGC. The Sub-Committee Chairperson shall inform the relevant parent organization of any foreseeable vacancy in a timely manner.

2.2 The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the Sub-Committee subject to endorsement by the GGC. They should normally come from different Parent Organizations.

2.3 The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are elected for a five-year period but not exceeding their current membership of the Sub-Committee. The Chairperson will normally be succeeded by the Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson may be re-elected by the Sub-Committee for one additional five-year period. Should the Chairperson step down before the end of his/her term, the Vice-Chairperson shall take over as Chair till the end of the current term.

2.4 The Chairperson, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall conduct the business of the Sub-Committee. If the Chairperson is unable to carry out the duties of the office, the Vice-Chairperson shall assume the Chairperson with the same powers and duties. Meetings will usually be held every year, ideally before the GGC meeting. In the intervening period the Sub-Committee shall conduct its business by correspondence (preferably electronic mail).

2.5 Members are expected to attend every plenary meeting of the Sub-Committee. Sub-

¹ So far as IOC is concerned, the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names is classed as a Joint Group of Experts under the IOC guidelines for subsidiary bodies.

Committee Members who are absent from plenary meetings over two consecutive years will normally be considered to have resigned and new nominations shall be sought from the relevant parent organization. Intersessional work by correspondence or teleconference can also be considered by the Sub-Committee if appropriate, in addition to plenary meetings.

- 2.6 Representatives of non-governmental entities / organizations, or individuals that can provide a relevant and constructive contribution to the work of the Sub-Committee may attend meetings with observer status. In the event that a large number of observers seek to attend a meeting, the Chairperson may restrict attendance by inviting them to act through one or more collective representatives.
- 2.7 Observers from IHO and/or IOC Member States may attend meetings. Attendance shall normally be limited to one observer per Member State.
- 2.8 Proposals, and undersea feature name proposals in particular, which are to be considered at SCUFN meetings must be submitted two months before meetings, in digital form, and preferably through the SCUFN online submission interface² for undersea feature name proposals.
- 2.9 The quorum necessary to hold a meeting shall be 7 Sub-Committee members. The Sub-Committee should strive to decide by consensus. If a vote is necessary, the majority required for acceptance is a simple majority of the total number of members. Only members present may cast a vote. The Chairperson shall have a casting vote in the case of a tie. This option will be used exceptionally if no consensus can be reached and a decision has to be made.
- 2.10 The Sub-Committee will not consider undersea feature name proposals that are politically sensitive.
- 2.11 The number of new or revised undersea feature name proposals to be submitted per meeting from one country³ is limited to 25; and the maximum number of new or revised undersea feature name proposals to be considered by SCUFN in a plenary meeting is limited to 250. This limitation for new and revised undersea feature name proposals does not change the fast-track procedure⁴ described in Appendix B to Publication B-6.
- 2.12 Recommendations of the Sub-Committee shall be submitted to the GGC for consideration and decision.
- 2.13 The Chairperson is to submit an annual report to the Chairperson of the GGC.

² Once commissioned (still under development in 2023).

³ “Country” must be interpreted here as the one given in the proposal form > section [main] Proposer (such as national authority, national naming boards, scientists, individuals...), not the one of the Concurrer, if different).

⁴ No more than 50 names per meeting from one country.