



The Seabed 2030 Arctic & Pacific Ocean Regional Center  
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It is often said that humankind cannot manage what it hasn't measured. Nowhere on Earth is this truer than in the Global Ocean. After more than a century of effort, vast areas remain uncharted to modern standards, even within the coastal waters of wealthy, high-technology nations. The lack of ocean maps and charts directly impact the possibility of delivering the highest standards of ocean stewardship, marine spatial planning, and disaster response as phenomena such as tsunamis are greatly affected by the shape and depth of the sea floor.

It is estimated that over one billion people will live in the coastal zone by 2050. As nations continuously invest resources into coastal cities and infrastructure, there is no doubt that inadequate seabed mapping will directly impact human well-being, wealth and economic development.

Born in 1903 from an initiative of Prince Albert I of Monaco, The General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) seeks to harness the efforts of the ocean mapping community, producing regular new editions of the global chart with increasing resolution. Nonetheless, considerable gaps in data remain. The loss of flight MH370 in 2014 was a stark reminder that there were parts of the ocean where only the most rudimentary of charts existed.

Recognising the need to speed up the pace of data gathering to benefit of all humankind, Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of Japanese philanthropic organisation The Nippon Foundation, announced at the first ever UN Ocean Conference in 2017, a partnership with GEBCO to form The Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project (Seabed 2030).

Seabed 2030 is a global project within the GEBCO initiative of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO. It aims to bring together all available depth data to produce the definitive map of the world ocean floor by 2030 and make it available to all. Mapping the entire seafloor is an important Ocean Decade deliverable, and directly or indirectly supports Sustainable Development Goals 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 17.

Seabed 2030 works with a growing network of global partners to deliver seabed mapping at an accelerated pace across the planet. Since the launch of Seabed 2030 in New York five years ago – at a time when only 6% of the ocean had been mapped to an adequate resolution – over 170 partners, data contributors, and supporters in 50 countries have now joined our efforts to map the entire seafloor by 2030.



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In 2022 at the second UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, we announced that almost a quarter (23.4 %) of the global ocean is now mapped. Despite continued challenges around ocean mapping, some 10 million sq km (3.8 million sq miles) of new ocean depth data was added to the GEBCO grid in the past year. This is an area broadly equivalent to the land surface of Europe. We also announced a new partnership with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) this week, cementing the already strong working relationship between Seabed 2030 and the United States.

UNESCO also launched a new flagship report entitled “State of the Ocean Report”, offering a brief overview of the current state of the ocean, and to mobilize global society to act - and monitor progress - towards global goals. The report highlights the progress, but more importantly the data gaps we need to fill in order to achieve the ocean we want, including the need for more seabed mapping activities.

The new contribution to the GEBCO map is a great achievement, but we still have a long way to go. We will continue to accelerate our efforts to crowdsourcing mapping data and welcome new partners to the project. Each new data set is helping to complete more of the ocean’s jigsaw puzzle that will enable us to sustainably manage our shared marine resources, protect coastal communities and build a more resilient future for all of humankind.

The third UN Ocean Conference co-hosted by France and Costa Rica in 2025 will be the next milestone of the Ocean Decade. In the meantime, we call on the global community to further mobilise and accelerate efforts to map the remaining 76% of our ocean for the benefit of the people and planet.