

Paper for Consideration by GGC

Amendment to the SCUFN TORs

Submitted by:	SCUFN Chair and IHO Secretariat (as SCUFN Secretariat)
Executive Summary:	This document proposes an amendment to Clause 2.10 of the SCUFN terms of reference, with a view to facilitate and consolidate the decision making process within SCUFN when the members are faced to proposals that seem politically sensitive.
Related Documents:	SCUFN TORs Decisions SCUFN29/13 and SCUFN29/117 GGC33 Report, paragraph 2.6
Related Projects:	N/A

Introduction / Background

1. At SCUFN20 in 2007, revised and improved terms of reference (TORs) were developed at the request of the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC), in order to better describe how the Sub-Committee should conduct business. As a result, the agreed TORs included Clause 2.10 *"The Sub-Committee will not consider undersea feature name proposals that are politically sensitive."* with a view to avoid that SCUFN members be involved in political discussions.
2. The new SCUFN TORs were approved by the IHO in March 2008 (CL 24/2008 refers) and by the IOC at their June 2008 Assembly.

Analysis/Discussion

3. Since, experience has shown that the terse formulation of Clause 2.10 allows diverse interpretations and may lead, every now and then, to questionable outcomes. For instance, it appeared that Clause 2.10 was being invoked as the undersea feature name proposal was located in a claimed maritime area. This sometimes resulted in tough discussions, slowing down SCUFN work, its global efficiency and making the Chair's position quite difficult.
4. At SCUFN29 again, some proposals were not considered in application of Clause 2.10, as a decision made after lengthy discussions. Accordingly, decisions SCUFN29/13 and 117 called for appropriate clarification of the decision making process including possible improvements of SCUFN TORs.
5. Since SCUFN29, several options were considered by the SCUFN Chair and Secretary in liaison with the Secretary-General of the IHO to tentatively improve the situation, for the sake of SCUFN activities in the long term. After consultation, and with the aim to propose changes that are acceptable by SCUFN, then the GGC, the following amendment to Clause 2.10 (in blue) is proposed to facilitate and consolidate the decision making process within SCUFN:

*"The Sub-Committee will not consider undersea feature name proposals that **may be considered politically sensitive or controversial**. **In reaching any decision not to consider certain proposals, the Chair shall take into account the views of the members of the Sub-Committee.**"*

6. At SCUFN30 (2-6 October 2017), this amendment was endorsed by SCUFN Members.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

6. GGC approves this amendment.

Justification and Impacts

7. The revised Clause 2.10, as proposed, should:
 - a. facilitate determining when a matter should not be considered by SCUFN;
 - b. keep a safe environment so SCUFN members can carry out their tasks, adopting an open-minded, realistic and technical-only approach;
 - c. keep SCUFN members, who represent the IHO or the IOC, from being involved in political considerations.
9. The proposed amendment has no impact on the content of Publication B-6, so the two documents remain consistent.
10. The final decision remains at the discretion of the SCUFN Chair who has the authority to make it, based on the opinions given by SCUFN Members.

Action required of SCUFN

9. GGC is invited to:
 - a. note this paper;
 - b. consider the recommendations made in section 6 ;
 - c. approve the amendment to the Art. 2.10 of the SCUFN TORs, in accordance with Art. 9 of the GGC TORs.