

BENEFITS OF THE CROWDSOURCED BATHYMETRY (CSB) IN THE HYDROSPATIAL DOMAIN AND THE EMERGING SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY

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Abstract

The hydrospatial domain represents all types of spatio-temporal data, information and knowledge about the Blue of our Blue Planet and its contiguous zones. Hydrospatial is the Blue Geospatial. Hydrography is “THE” foundational piece of the hydrospatial domain. Crowdsourced bathymetry (CSB) is depth measurements collected and shared from vessels of opportunity using standard navigation instruments, while engaged in routine maritime operations. Industries including commercial and luxury shipping, cruise-liners, commercial and pleasure fishing, and oil & gas operate across the world’s oceans can support by collecting and sharing some of their data, they can help to fill vast knowledge and bathymetric gaps, contribute to scientific research and improve navigational safety and efficiency. The bathymetric gap around the coast of Sri Lanka and within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) can be partly filled collecting and using CSB data. However, to do so, coastal states must give explicit consent to the collection, validation and publication of CSB data in waters under national jurisdiction. Sri Lanka not yet responded to the IHO Circular Letter 21/2020, hence a geographical filter is applied to the Sri Lankan waters and there is no CSB data available to download and use. This paper introduces the CSB process to the interested parties to study and to consider a positive reply which might some restrictions if necessary to regulate CSB data. Ultimately this valuable bathymetric data has the potential to utilised for the hydrospatial domain of Sri Lanka to maximize the benefits of an emerging sustainable blue economy in the country.

Keywords: *Blue Economy, Hydrography, Crowd Soused Bathymetry*