

Justification

Stakeholders in marine states and coastal regions need to include hydrographic surveys in their strategic plans and investments because the return on investment is at least 5 to 1. Hydrographic surveys are forming an underlying basis of a value chain of data products and services to support socio-economic needs and challenges of developing maritime states, says Gordon Johnston, vice-chair of FIG Commission 4 on Hydrography in his paper *The Economic Benefits of Hydrography And Ocean Mapping*. Johnston's paper is one of 14 papers in this recent FIG publication *Report on the Economic Benefit of Hydrography* (www.fig.net/pub/figpub/pub57/pub57_full.pdf), all of them trying to touch the benefits of hydrography and the potential it holds for society when an appropriate capacity is developed and maintained.

One could argue that this is not the best time for such a report as when reading the newspaper, turning on the television or the radio there's nothing but doom scenarios on the economy. Despite differences in explaining the causes and origins of this crisis, all views on who needs to pay for it are bound to come to one conclusion, you and me, the taxpayer: whether it is for labourers getting unemployment benefits after their companies have gone bankrupt and let them off or banks that need to be rescued by governments, in the end it will be us who pay the bill. In many countries throughout the world we have already seen major cuts in spending, taxes have gone up, benefits lowered, services suspended, etc . All measures to try and get the housekeeping book in balance.

I am arguing that this is the right time for the FIG *Report on Economic Benefits of Hydrography*. In the end, it's governments that decide how to allocate the money we are handing over to them through taxes. It's the government that decides what projects are undertaken for the near future and it will need to take into account the return-on-investment of its decision. Good governance implies daring to allocate money for unusual projects that might acquire a lot of money in the somewhat more distant future. Developing and maintaining appropriate hydrographic capacity would be a visionary decision that would definitely gain some economic benefits for the marine state or coastal regions of a larger country.

Thanks to Commission 4, vague links or maybe even gut feelings about positive impact has been brought together and laid down in a firm report that serves the business in advocating the case for hydrography. To all of you who are responsible for trying to bring the same case forward, i.e. justifying investments in hydrographic surveys: use it to your advantage!