

# Promoting the Blue Economy Concept



The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) recently held its 25th Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 16 to 21 June 2014. Commission 4, focusing on hydrography, was well represented with six technical sessions, including one specifically dedicated to the concept of the Blue Economy. This important concept is not as widely known among the international hydrography community as one would desire, and so Commission 4 sought to expose the international audience in attendance. Noted speakers at the technical session included Mr. Gordon Johnston, Commission 4 vice-chair, Administration and Communication, and Admiral Mustpha Iptes, director of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), Monaco.

What then is this 'Blue Economy' – from a hydrography point of view – and why is it important? A simplistic perspective of the Blue Economy concept is that nature operates holistically as systems, and that economically emulating those systems can provide new opportunities for innovation and social entrepreneurship, solving most of the world's problems where product-based economies have failed. The Earth's water cycle systems impact upon inland waters and the world's oceans, which form the foci of hydrography. The IHO's definition of hydrography clearly positions the discipline as a major contribution to the Blue Economy:

[Hydrography is the branch of applied sciences](#) that deals with the measurement and description of the physical features of oceans, seas, coastal areas, lakes and rivers, as well as with the prediction of their change over time, for the primary purpose of safety of navigation and in support of all other marine activities, including economic development, security and defence, scientific research and environmental protection.

The FIG has taken a couple of steps to promote the Blue Economy among interested stakeholders: the organisation of a Blue Economy workshop, jointly with the IHO, at the National Oceanography Centre, on 9 April 2013 as part of Ocean Business 13; and the technical session at FIG 2014 mentioned above. Whether the concept will take root in the hydrography community, and bear socioeconomic fruit is left to be seen. No concept that holds possibilities for the improvement of lives, such as the Blue Economy, ought to be ignored, and Commission 4 seems set to keep our international hydrography community involved, at least for the time being.