

# World Hydrography Day 2013: Underpinning the Blue Economy



The term “blue economy”™ is becoming more frequently heard. It is an expression used to describe all the economic activity associated with the oceans, seas, harbours, ports, and coastal zones. Underpinning this activity is hydrography. Every human activity conducted in, on or under the sea depends on knowing the depth and the nature of the seafloor, the identification of

any hazards that might exist and an understanding of the tides and the currents. Obtaining and disseminating this hydrographic knowledge is the role of the world’s hydrographers. Their work is the most fundamental of all the enablers required to develop and sustain the Blue Economy.

The theme for this year’s World Hydrography Day on 21 June, which is also the 92nd anniversary of the establishment of the IHO, is: ‘Hydrography - underpinning the Blue Economy’.

## IHO Celebrations

Many of the world’s hydrographic offices will be organising awareness raising events focussing on the Blue Economy. They will be emphasising the vital contribution that hydrographers and related professions in both the government and the commercial sectors make to the Blue Economy.

## The Potential of the Blue Economy

The seas and oceans, including the seabed and the sub-seabed, represent a vast resource for food, mineral and hydro-carbon reserves, energy generation, water, bio-medicines, and infrastructure that in turn create wealth for nations and for the population.

The Blue Economy is much more than the traditional core activities of fishing and shipping. It also includes, but is not limited to:

- Aquaculture
- Biomedicine
- Boats and Shipbuilding
- Cables and pipelines
- Coastal Zone management
- Defence and Security
- Desalination and water treatment
- Marine recreation
- Ocean energy and minerals
- Ocean science and observation
- Port operations
- Robotics and submarines
- Shoreline development
- Telecommunications
- Tourism
- Very large floating platforms
- Weather and climate science

Each of these important and growing maritime sectors provides jobs and creates wealth. Each depends, in some way or another, on hydrography as its enabler.

Some facts about the Blue Economy:

- The Oceans already provide at least 15% of animal protein for about 3 billion people, aquaculture (farming) of fish and aquatic plants is worth more than USD106 billion, the fishing industry provides livelihood to more than 540 million people.
- Cruise ship passengers spend at least USD100 each for each day ashore. That is over a quarter of a million dollars from a typical cruise

ship for every day in a port.

- Well over 95% of the world's intercontinental data and telephone traffic passes through undersea cables.
- 75% of the world's oil supplies and 55% of the world's gas supplies are transported by sea.
- Offshore wind farms are increasingly becoming cost competitive with fossil fuel and nuclear sources.
- Port economic activity usually generates at least one other indirect job for each new job. For high tech industries this multiplier effect can reach up to 5 or 6.
- Economic studies show that the cost:benefit ratio for national investment in hydrography and nautical charting is always positive and can be better than 1:10.
- For most ships, 30cm extra depth of navigable water allows at least 2,000 tonnes more cargo to be carried.

More information is available on the IHO website.

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<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/article/world-hydrography-day-2013-underpinning-the-blue-economy>

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