

Terms of Reference

Seamap Australia Steering Committee



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1 Background

Seamap Australia is a multi-faceted program providing national marine seafloor habitat data, an associated habitat classification scheme, and delivers tools for marine resource managers, policy makers, researchers and other stakeholders including the general community (“End Users”). More explicitly, Seamap Australia comprises three main elements:

1. a spatial database which integrates seabed habitat data of Australia’s continental shelf from multiple sources to provide a single national map of marine habitat;
2. a hierarchical classification scheme, registered with a vocabulary service, encouraged for adoption for national mapping and survey activities in support of promoting a nationally consistent record of seafloor habitats; and
3. a spatial data portal that aggregates other supporting data products and delivers information to meet the needs of our primary stakeholders to ensure that Seamap Australia is relevant and accessible for managing Australia’s marine jurisdiction.

Seamap Australia represents a step change in access, integration and interoperability of large and diverse marine habitat and seafloor associated data holdings; with capacity to readily derive information and products to underpin decision making around marine spatial planning and conservation prioritisation, reporting, and research. It is a world first fully integrated national-scale marine seabed habitat mapping and data service.

The Seamap Australia Steering Committee has been established as part of the Seamap Australia program instigated and administered by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) at the University of Tasmania in 2017 in consultation with its data providers and relevant experts.

Relevant documents can be accessed at:

<http://seamapaustralia.org>

2 Purpose of the Steering Committee

The Seamap Australia Steering Committee is tasked with providing oversight for changes to the requirements for inclusion of data in new versions of the Seamap Australia National Benthic Habitat Layer (NBHL); updates to the Seamap Australia National Benthic Habitat Classification Scheme and major development projects for the Seamap Australia web portal. In doing so, the Committee commits to ensuring that:

- a. the data portal remains relevant to its End Users and its broader role with the Australian marine data landscape.
- b. the Seamap Australia NBHL and Classification Schema retains its scope and relevance as a nationally consistent benthic habitat classification
- c. data supported by the Seamap Australia data portal meets FAIR data standards.

Changes to the Seamap Australia National Benthic Habitat Classification Scheme require approval of the committee before they are implemented.

The Steering committee will assist with the development of a five-year strategy and work plan to be reviewed annually.

3 Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee

The Committee will:

- a) Bring the perspective and priorities of their organisation in relation to Seemap Australia, and the sector of the community that they represent, to the Committee
- b) Formulate and maintain policy and guidelines sufficient to effectively manage and communicate changes to the Seemap Australia Data Portal, the NMHL, and Habitat Classification Schema.
- c) Identify and govern a process for interested parties to propose changes to the Data Portal, the NMHL, and Habitat Classification Schema.
- d) Review and approve changes to the Habitat Classification Schema.
- e) Have primary responsibility of the success of Seemap Australia.
- f) Formulate and propose measures to ensure the sustainability of Seemap Australia.
- g) Attend and prepare for meetings, including proposing agenda items for meetings and nominating a proxy or providing a written apology when unable to attend.
- h) Facilitate the review of feedback or progress on initiatives from their respective sectors, as required by the Committee.
- i) Facilitate the communication regarding Seemap Australia to their workplaces and sectors in support of Seemap Australia objective and specific projects.
- j) Participate in working groups to carry out reviews or work identified by the committee required to meet its obligations.
- k) Identify and support funding opportunities.

4 General

4.1 Committee Membership

The Committee shall be comprised of:

- a) A Chair nominated and elected by committee members annually.
- b) Up to 10 members (including Chair) chosen from relevant organisations operating across and within relevant jurisdictional boundaries and with broad understanding of the Seemap Australia Data portal, the NMHL, and Habitat Classification Schema and broad representation including researchers, marine managers and other end users
- c) Membership is for three years and members can be reelected for additional terms.
- d) The IMAS Manager, Data and Information Systems, and Data Analyst (non-voting), for technical advice related to development, maintenance and management of the Seemap Australia Data Portal, the NMHL, and Habitat Classification Schema.

4.2 Chair

The Chair shall convene the Committee meetings.

If the designated Chair is not available, then the Chair will nominate an Acting Chair who will be responsible for convening and conducting that meeting. The Acting Chair is responsible for informing the Chair as to the salient points/decisions raised or agreed to at that meeting.

4.3 Agenda Items

All Committee agenda items must be forwarded to the Chair by COB 7 working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

The Committee agenda, with attached meeting papers will be distributed at least 3 working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

The Chair has the right to refuse to list an item on the formal agenda, but members may raise an item under 'Other Business' if necessary and as time permits.

4.4 Minutes and Meeting Papers

The minutes of each Committee meeting will be prepared by the Chair or their delegate.

Full copies of the Minutes, including attachments, shall be provided to all Committee members no later than 14 working days following each meeting.

By agreement of the Committee, out-of-session decisions will be deemed acceptable provided a Quorum of members participate in the decision. Where agreed, all out-of-session decisions shall be recorded in the minutes of the next scheduled Committee meeting.

The Minutes of each Committee meeting will be monitored and maintained by the Chair as a complete record as required under provisions of the Archives Act 1983.

4.5 Frequency of Meetings

The Committee shall meet twice yearly on agreed dates during March and September each year. Additional meetings may be held as required or by agreement of the committee.

4.6 Quorum

A minimum of six Committee members (inclusive of the Chair or nominee) is required for the meeting to be recognised as an authorised meeting for the recommendations or resolutions to be valid.

4.7 Implementation of Agreed Changes

Changes to the Seamap Australia Data Portal, NBHL or the Marine Habitat Classification Schema identified or approved by the Committee will be implemented by the IMAS Manager, Data and Information Systems.

4.8 Document Control

Version	Revision Date	Author	Action
Draft	05/02/2021	Vanessa Lucieer	Developed TOR
Draft	17/04/2021	Emma Flukes	Reviewed
Draft	28/04/2021	Peter Walsh	Reviewed
Draft	05/05/2021	Peter Walsh	Reviewed
Draft	27/05/2021	Peter Walsh	Reviewed
Draft	29/06/2021	Vanessa Lucieer	Finalised V1 of TOR
Version 1	25/08/2022	Vanessa Lucieer	Endorsed by Steering committee at meeting #1