Background

1. The Scientific Groups (SG) are currently reviewing, with the intent of updating as appropriate, the Specific Guidelines for Dredged Material (SGDM) which were adopted by the London Convention in 2000. The scope of this activity was determined by the governing bodies in October 2010 and is described in document LC 32/15, paragraph 3.6.1. Revision of the SGDM is to be completed by the conclusion of the SG meeting in 2012.

2. A Correspondence Group (CG) for this effort was established in November 2010. Members of that CG reviewed the current SGDM and provided their written comments to the CG chairman (Dr. Todd Bridges, United States) prior to the meeting of the SG in Tallinn, Estonia. This collection of written comments was distributed to the entire correspondence group by making them available at the following FTP site: ftp://erdcftp.erdc.usace.army.mil/pub/el/Bridges/

Activities

3. The Working Group (WG) was formed during the SG, under the chairmanship of Dr. Todd Bridges (United States), to continue the process of review and to formulate a plan for updating the SGDM through work that would be performed during the intercessional period following the meeting. The WG included representatives from Canada, China, Finland, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, United States, Greenpeace International and the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH).

4. Review comments submitted prior to the SG, as well as WG discussions, identified the need to update the SGDM in order to bring it up-to-date with respect to advances in the science and engineering concerned with sediment management. The WG concluded that revision and updating should seek to make the SGDM a practical tool for Contracting Parties to use in managing dredged sediments. Many opportunities to improve the clarity of the
language, as well as the usability of the SGDM, were identified by the WG. Overarching comments and conclusions proposed by the WG included:

.1 There would be value in including more technical detail, where appropriate, and references to documents that have standing as technical resources and guides on the subjects relevant to sediment assessment and management;

.2 Include additional detail on specific management, engineering, and operational practices that can be undertaken to reduce and manage risks posed by dredged material management and disposal activities. Considerable international experience and knowledge has been gained over the last 10 years concerning engineering practices and technologies for managing sediments in a wide variety of freshwater, estuarine, and marine environments. There is also a need for the SGDM to link the results and conclusions of the assessment process with specific management actions that can be taken to address issues identified during the assessment. This could be facilitated by providing guidance for conducting comparative assessments of alternative risk management actions;

.3 The value of incorporating the development of an operational conceptual model as a part of the assessment and management process, whereby relevant effect pathways would be identified and evaluated. The conceptual model would also serve to support Contracting Parties in their efforts to tailor management actions for the issues, risks, and circumstances presented by proposed project(s);

.4 The “waste hierarchy” specified in paragraph 5 of Annex 2 lists “re-use” as the first among several waste management options. For these reasons, the SG should consider what additional technical guidance can be incorporated into the SGDM to aid Contracting Parties in their efforts to re-use sediments so that “environmental disturbance and detriment are minimized and the benefits maximized” (Annex 2, paragraph 17). Considerable experience has been gained, internationally, in the last 10 years in regard to the beneficial use of both clean and contaminated dredged material. Dredged material is increasingly recognized as a valuable resource that can be used to support both environmental and economic benefits as a part of sustainable sediment management;

.5 Inclusion of a glossary was considered to be a useful addition to the SGDM. This effort will require review and consideration of other LC documents containing glossaries, in order to ensure consistency;

.6 Pursue opportunities to organize and streamline the logical flow of activities undertaken in assessments of dredged material to increase the practical utility of the SGDM as a guide to informing conclusions about the potential for adverse effects associated with disposal operations; and

.7 The revised SGDM should incorporate a tiered approach to assessment, which begins with using more readily available information and proceeds through subsequent tiers where additional information is collected, as needed, to inform permit and management decisions. Such an approach
would support use of the SGDM by Contracting Parties with varying degrees of capacity to perform detailed assessments.

Task Groups

5 Task Groups (TG) were formed by the WG to accomplish the actions that will be undertaken during the intercessional period to revise and update the SGDM. These TG will 1) develop revised input (text and/or figures) to the SGDM, 2) identify full references for available technical guidance documents to be cited and included in the updated SGDM, 3) develop a list of key terms, with definitions, used within the revised text that will be incorporated into a glossary, and 4) determine the need/value of annexes for specific sections when additional detail is deemed necessary. Brief description of these TG follows:

6 Figure 1 of the SGDM. Revision of the flow diagram will incorporate updates made to the generic WAG flow diagram, making note of modifications relevant to dredged material assessment. Other “inset” flow diagrams may be developed to provide additional resolution supporting specific elements of the assessment and management framework. TG membership: Canada, Ireland, United States and Greenpeace International.

7 “Introduction” (Chapter 1 of the current SGDM). Opportunities to update and streamline the introductory text will be pursued. TG membership: Canada and Finland.

8 “Waste Prevention Audit” (Chapter 2). Revise and update the text as appropriate, incorporating best practice examples, distinguishing between efforts to reduce contaminant levels through source control and efforts to reduce dredging volumes through actions taken to reduce channel infilling and/or other engineering actions, and incorporating a relevant discussion of differences among engineering practices and dredging equipment types. There is also a need to coordinate and integrate concepts between Chapters 2 and 3. TG membership: The Netherlands and United Kingdom.

9 “Evaluation of Disposal Options” (Chapter 3). Revise and update the text as appropriate, incorporating the notion of sustainable practice, beneficial use of clean and contaminated sediments, the relation between management options and waste prevention activities, the need and use of sediment characterization data (e.g., physical, chemical, biological attributes) to guide development and planning of opportunities for beneficial use and appropriate management activities, and considering the incorporation of “management” within the title of the chapter. The subject covered in this section is directly relevant to the data and conclusions produced by the assessment, so the position of this section within the SGDM and linking it to other portions of the text should be considered. There is also a need to coordinate and integrate concepts between Chapters 2 and 3. TG membership: United Kingdom and United States.

10 “Dredged Material Characterization” (Chapter 4). Revise and update the text as appropriate, incorporating the use of conceptual modelling that identifies relevant effect pathways, the role of bioavailability, the relation of physical, chemical, and biological investigations, PIANC EnviCom WG 2’s report on biological assessments of dredged material. TG membership: United States, Canada, Greenpeace International, Finland.

11 “Action List” (Chapter 5). Revise and update the text as appropriate, incorporating updated language and concepts on the use of action lists and action levels, how to develop evidence from physical, chemical and biological lines-of-evidence to support decision-making and management actions, PIANC EnviCom WG 2’s report on biological assessments of dredged material. TG membership: Canada and United States.
12 “Dump-Site Selection” (Chapter 6). Revise and update the text as appropriate, incorporating development of a conceptual model that incorporates characteristics of the disposal site and environs (including relevant effect pathways and environmental context, e.g., proximity to sensitive areas etc.), an approach for comparing alternative disposal sites as a basis of selection, opportunities for achieving environmental benefits through management of disposal operations (e.g., development of habitat features). TG membership: United Kingdom and United States.

13 “Assessment of Potential Effects” (Chapter 7). Revise and update the text as appropriate, incorporating the use of effect pathways as an organizing concept and approach for performing the assessment, linking the results of pathway-specific assessments with pathway-specific management actions and practices to reduce risks and impacts, a practical definition for “impact hypothesis” in terms of prediction of effects/impacts, and a segue to the following monitoring section that supports guidance on how to target monitoring on the basis of pathway-specific assessment results. TG membership: Canada and the Netherlands.

14 “Monitoring” (Chapter 8). Revise and update the text as appropriate, incorporating guidance on scaling investment in monitoring (e.g., from small to large efforts), targeting monitoring activities based on the results of pathway-specific assessment results, linking monitoring activities to management actions and practices (e.g., use of capping, etc.). TG membership: Canada, Ireland, United Kingdom and Greenpeace International.

15 “Permit and Permit Conditions” (Chapter 9). Revise and update the text as appropriate, incorporating links to the use of pathway-specific management actions as permit conditions, and drawing from information in the WAG tutorial deemed pertinent and useful. TG membership: Finland and the United States.

16 References (new section). References to germane and suitable technical documents/guidance that are cited within the revised text will be listed in a reference section with directions for where the documents can be obtained (e.g., web links).

17 Glossary (new section). Definitions for key terms will be listed in a glossary. Efforts will be undertaken to draw from existing glossaries for LC documents.

Schedule and Intercessional Activities

18 The WG chairman will immediately seek to establish a “SharePoint” site (or comparable site) that the WG can use to share documents and draft text. Once established, WG members are encouraged to upload suitable/germane technical documents to the site.

19 TG will submit their draft input on or before 30 June, 2011.

20 The WG chair will assemble the first revised SGDM and make it available to the WG on or before 31 July, 2011.

21 The WG will schedule a conference call or web meeting in September/October 2011 (perhaps in conjunction with the Consultative Meeting) to discuss the revised draft and to identify revisions to that text that will be undertaken in preparation of a second complete draft that will be provided to the Secretariat in fall/winter 2011 for submission as an official document for the next SG meeting in Jeju, Republic of Korea.

22 WG representatives from the Netherlands and Finland will serve as connection points between parallel guideline revision/development underway in OSPAR and HELCOM, respectively.
Action requested of the Scientific Groups

23 The Scientific Groups are invited to note the above discussions and intersessional actions proposed by the Working Group and comment as they deem fit.