Maintaining vessel engagement

Tools to maintain vessel engagement may include communication and contact, personalization of mission goals, and celebrating the impact of a vessel's participation. These forms of engagement do require input and effort on behalf of the CSB program managers and range widely in time-intensiveness. Depending on an organization's available man-hours, some of the following examples may be more feasible to implement than others.

For example, the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS), in collaboration with Orange Force Marine, has created a data visualization product that uses a hexagonal grid to highlight areas with high and low data density. This system required up-front programming labor, but now runs automatedly, making it a relatively low-maintenance way of maintaining vessel engagement. This example "gamifies" CSB efforts by encouraging participants to get involved so that they can be the one to contribute data where it's never been collected before. 'Gamification' could be taken a step further by providing a dashboard or application where top contributors are rewarded. It would also be necessary to note a country's status on having signed the global circular letter when in national waters.

To better serve the Florida Tampa Bay region, the Center for Ocean Mapping and Innovative Technologies (COMIT) developed a dedicated ArcGIS® Esri Hub called "Crowd the Bay.". This site was designed to host regional CSB data in a way that directly engages local stakeholders. CSB data are pulled quarterly from the DCDB and run through NOAA's Pydro Explorer application to generate CSB datasets that are corrected for tidal fluctuations. Once corrected, the data are imported into ArcGIS® Pro to create user-friendly shapefiles that are then shared as Esri Web Layers within the "Crowd the Bay" Hub data portal. The ArcGIS® Pro workspace also allows the data to be reformatted and shared according to participant needs (i.e., shapefiles, KMLs, xyz, etc.). Sustained stakeholder engagement depends on ensuring that contributors benefit from the use of CSB data.

In a similar vein, although through a more manual process, the International SeaKeepers Society has developed a "Million Soundings Society" to celebrate any of their vessels that have individually contributed over 1 million depth soundings to Seabed2030. This is celebrated at their annual gala where members will be "inducted" and celebrated for their contribution. Data contributions are tracked through the DCDB CSB Data Provider Dashboard. Another publicly available dashboard includes the FARSOUNDER Dashboard, which is likely to include leaderboard functionality in the near future, and currently includes automatically generated graphics of each vessel or trusted node's contributions to date. If a vessel is particularly interested in seeing their own data, as is common with the COMIT program stakeholders, you can provide this to vessels directly or provide them guidance on how to retrieve their data on their own. A guide on how to do this can be found in the Data Extraction and Processing section. An additional tutorial for participants to visualize their own data using a free and open-source software (QGIS) can be found in the Data Visualization

section. The DCDB is also rolling out customized provider and vessel map URLs in 2026, allowing providers and any user to quickly bookmark and share links to their specific data contributions.

Finally, engagement activities such as newsletters can help maintain consistent communication with stakeholders about the progress being made, updates in the program, new tools, and overall organization contributions. This will encourage vessels to stay involved and reach out with questions.

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