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Work Plan 2022 – 2024

Prepared by the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information

Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information

Work Plan 2022 - 2024

I. Introduction

The United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information was established by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) in 2013 to pursue the implementation of a statistical-geospatial framework that would be applicable in the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, with the understanding it could apply to other censuses, such as agriculture censuses, economic censuses, etc.

A Framework for the world, the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF) enables a range of data to be integrated from both statistical and geospatial communities and, through the application of its five Principles and supporting key elements, permits the production of harmonised and standardised geospatially enabled statistical data. The resulting data can then be integrated with statistical, geospatial, and other information to inform and facilitate data driven and evidence-based decision making to support local, sub-national, national, regional, and global development priorities and agendas, such as the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At its ninth session in August 2019, UN-GGIM adopted the GSGF (decision 9/106) as a common methodology for geospatially enabling statistical and administrative data, and to ensure that data from a range of sources can be integrated with other geospatial information based on 'location'. The GSGF was subsequently endorsed by the UNSC at its fifty-first session in March 2020 (decision 51/123).

In their respective decisions, both intergovernmental bodies of the Statistical and Geospatial Information communities primarily requested the Expert Group to develop guidance to assist Member States with implementing the GSGF. Accordingly, guided by the Expert Group's Work Plan 2020 – 2022[1], the Expert Group produced the GSGF Implementation Guide, implemented its "Global survey to diagnose readiness at the country level for implementing the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework"[2] and its Members contributed to several for a to promote the implementation and operationalisation of the GSGF.

Building on this progress, the Expert Group proposes to continue its work in raising awareness and promoting the GSGF. Therefore, this Work Plan examines the objectives and functions (in section II) as provided in the terms of reference[3] to guide the work of the Expert Group for the 2022-2024 period and details specific activities. This Work Plan was agreed with the Expert Group in principle in its report to the Statistical Commission for its 53rd session in March 2022[4]. This present Work Plan has been revised in consultation with the Expert Group to better reflect the dynamic short- and long term needs of both the Statistical and Geospatial Communities.

[1] http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/10th-Session/documents/EG-ISGI_Work%20Plan_2020-2022.pdf
[2] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/52nd-session/documents/BG-4j-EG-ISGI_Global_Survey-E.pdf
[3] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-item-3u-EG-ISGI-Terms-of-Reference-E.pdf
[4] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/53rd-session/documents/2022-28-GeoInfo-E.pdf

II. Objectives and Functions

The objectives of the Expert Group are to:

1. Provide high-level coordination and a forum for dialogue, among representatives of both the statistical and geospatial communities, on global efforts relating to the integration of statistical and geospatial information;
2. Play a leadership role by raising awareness and highlighting the importance of reliable, timely, fit-for-purpose, and integrated statistical and geospatial information to support social, economic, environmental, and resilience policy decision making, including at the sub-national and regional levels;
3. Prioritise and propose Work Plans and guidelines that advance national and global efforts relating to the integration of statistical and geospatial information, particularly those associated with the GSGF, so that there is increased information to support social, economic, environmental, and resilience policy decision making, including at the sub-national and regional levels;
4. Promote and support activities that facilitate the implementation of the GSGF, particularly in the International Rounds of Population Censuses and in other censuses, including agriculture censuses, economic censuses, etc, and in global initiatives, such as the 2030 Agenda; and,
5. Support the United Nations Statistical Commission and UN-GGIM in the development of norms, principles, guides and standards to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable integrated statistical and geospatial information, including any regional capacity development initiatives.

The elaborated functions of the Expert Group are to:

1. Provide a forum for dialogue and coordination between Member States, United Nations System, and other international organisations and experts with a view to:

i. Undertake activities that foster collaboration between statistical and geospatial communities at national and international levels, including to identify and address common issues associated with the integration of statistical and geospatial information, particularly the implementation of the GSGF;

ii. Support the development, promotion, and sharing of guidance material and good practice documentation in relation to the GSGF and support the strengthening of the GSGF through its development, *inter-alia*, in the areas of geocoding, common geographies, and interoperability;

iii. Identify existing capability development programmes in National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and National Geospatial Information Agencies (NGIAs), National Mapping Agencies (NMAs), and other geospatial organisations that could be leveraged; including the ability to promote and standardise geocoding processes, methodologies and frameworks (for example: dynamic linking techniques);

iv. Promote, foster, and encourage close collaboration between NSOs, NGIAs, NMAs, and other relevant agencies so that the integration of statistical and geospatial information can be achieved, while ensuring its privacy and confidentiality in-line with prevailing guidelines and practices;

v. Encourage the use of existing, and support, the development of new forms of data, data and metadata standards as well as other standards to enhance the interface of location-based datasets from multiple sources to ensure interoperable and usable data;

vi. Encourage the development and modernisation of statistical and geospatial capacity within NSOs, NGIAs, and NMAs through capacity building and the promotion of good practices;

vii. Develop communication mechanisms to increase the visibility of geospatial activities, beyond specialist geospatial units that exist in some national statistics offices and other agencies, to help keep the statistical and geospatial communities aware of the developments coming from the Expert Group's programme of work;

viii. Encourage the work of the geospatial community towards the expanding of national data infrastructure, *inter-alia* through the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and working on identifying and strengthening the interlinkage between the work of the Expert Group and the work programmes of the UNSC, UN-GGIM, and the relevant regional bodies to enhance the integration of statistical and geospatial information.

2. Bring to the attention of UNSC, UN-GGIM, and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) new developments relating to the integration of geospatial and statistical information, the work on implementing the GSGF, as well as other developments and advancements coming from the Expert Group's programme of work:

i. Respond to the dynamic integrated geospatial and statistical data needs demanded by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As COVID-19 has elevated the importance of integrated geospatial and statistical information, the Expert Group affirms to promote and support activities that can provide Member States with guidance to develop and strengthen their integration efforts;

ii. Encourage the implementation of Global agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SAMOA Pathway, Paris Agreement etc; Frameworks, such as the Integrated Geospatial Informaton Framework, the Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters, and other mechanisms that require high-quality, timely and reliable integrated statistical and geospatial information;

3. Propose Work Plans to address the main area of focus identified by Member States while ensuring that there are no overlaps or duplication of initiatives with other groups:

i. Affirm to frequently review the work plan to ensure that Expert Group and its task teams and work streams remain aligned to the overarching requirements and mandate provided to it by the Statistical Commission and UN-GGIM, while responding to the dynamic and prevailing needs of global agendas and national development priorities.

III. Activities and Deliverables

Through the following activities and deliverables, the Expert Group aims to continue its work to advance the GSGF, in-line with its mandates and the needs of Member States.

#	*Activities*	*Deliverables*
A	**Expand on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework for the Statistical Domain** As the overarching 'anchor' Framework for the global geospatial information community, the Expert Group recognises the importance of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) as an enabling Framework for the GSGF[5]. Through its members sharing national experiences of implementing both the IGIF and the GSGF, the Expert Group has further identified the interlinked and interconnected nature of both Frameworks, noting that each foster an enabling environment for the other.	• Develop a white paper "The IGIF for the Statistical Domain". This paper will draw on the IGIF and its Implementation Guide, combined with the Expert Group's work on the GSGF Implementation Guide to assist in the understanding and operationalisation of the GSGF
B	**Developing capacity-assessment tools and maturity models for statistical and geospatial integration** The "Global survey to diagnose readiness at the country level for implementing the GSGF"[6] took stock of national capacity to integrate statistical and geospatial information and progress of how the GSGF. In identifying clear trends on the global progress of implementing and operationalising the GSGF, the survey underscored the importance of strengthening the integration of statistical-geospatial integration as a means of supporting national development priorities and the implementation of global development agendas, including the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.	• Explore the development of a capacity-assessment tool that helps countries assesses their maturity of statistical-geospatial integration
C	**Leveraging enterprise architecture in the integration of statistical and geospatial information** Since 2019, the European implementation of the GSGF, "Geostat 4" has been investigating the potential of leveraging enterprise architectures. These architecutres helps improve the integration of statistical and geospatial information and ensure the resulting geospatially enabled statistical data can be produced once to be reused many times. Initiatives such as the	• Contextualise enterprise architectures for a global audience • Identify resources that help support this area, including Activity #A.

[5] Moreover, in its decision 11/106, the Committee of Experts suggested that the future workplan of the Expert Group address the gaps identified by the Global Survey and develop the interlinkages between the GSGF and the IGIF

[6] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/52nd-session/documents/BG-4j-EG-ISGI_Global_Survey-E.pdf

	Geospatial view of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model[7] (GeoGSBPM) also advance work in this area.	
D	**Providing guidance on developing user-centric and other geographies** Even before COVID-19, there has been a growing need for geospatially enabled statistical data to be disseminated in various non-statistical geographies. Advances in user-centric and other geographies, combined with a deeper understanding of national statistical/privacy laws, data release policies, nationally agreed guidelines, national, regional or global quality assurance frameworks provide a need for countries to be informed on the opportunity of user defined geographies that respect disclosure and prevailing good practices.	• Develop or highlight recommended good practices for NSOs to strengthen their statistical disclosure control methods for geospatially enabled statistical data • Develop a position paper on statistical disclosure control methods for geospatially enabled statistical data, that will identify pros and cons of each approach and help countries set up their own policy • Identify geospatially enabled statistical data disclosure control techniques that are applicable regardless of the national context
E	**Carrying out activites to strengthen interlinkages with relevant groups in both the statistical and geospatial communities** Through its mandates and the outcomes of the global survey, there is still an urgent need to promote and raise awareness of the merits and benefits of the GSGF, and to share the knowledge and expertise that has been developed by the Expert Group.	• Identify potential interlinkages and engage where appropriate with other groups[8] to support the collaboration and delivery of this work programme • Support Regional Committees of UN-GGIM at their annual plenary meetings; and as appropriate, convene meetings with regional focal points • Promote and raise awareness of the GSGF across the statistical and geospatial communities, include side events and other related fora

IV. Reporting and Working Modalities

The Expert Group will report to both the UNSC and UN-GGIM at their respective annual sessions. This will include the preparation of written reports and related background documents as appropriate. Further working modalities of the Expert Group are within its Terms of Reference[9].

[7] https://statswiki.unece.org/display/GSBPM/GeoGSBPM
[8] including IAEG-SDG: WGGI, the Open Geospatial Consortium's Statistical DWG, the Working Group on Legal and Policy Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management and others
[9] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-item-3u-EG-ISGI-Terms-of-Reference-E.pdf