

## UN-GGIM Frequently Asked Questions

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### **Question 1. What is Geographic Information System**

A geographic information system (GIS) integrates hardware, software, and data for capturing, managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information. GIS is used to view, understand, question, interpret, and visualize data in many ways that reveal relationships, patterns, and trends in the form of maps, globes, reports, and charts. A GIS helps you answer questions and solve problems by looking at your data in a way that is quickly understood and easily shared.<sup>1</sup>

### **Question 2. What is Geospatial Information Management**

GIM encompasses the management, leadership, structures and practices required for the successful operation of GIS within an entity, nationally, regionally or globally.

### **Question 3. What is UN-GGIM**

- United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)
- A global initiative
- An Inter-Governmental Mechanism spearheaded by the United Nations which seeks to guide the making of joint decisions and set directions on the production and use of geospatial information within national and global policy frameworks.

### **Question 4. Importance and Purpose of UN-GGIM**

- Working with Governments to improve policy, institutional arrangements, and legal frameworks;
- Addressing global issues and contributing collective knowledge as a community with shared interests and concerns
- Developing effective strategies to build geospatial capacity in the developing countries

### **Question 5. UN-GGIM Vision**

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.esri.com/what-is-gis/overview#overview\\_panel](http://www.esri.com/what-is-gis/overview#overview_panel)

To make accurate, authoritative, reliable geospatial information readily available to support national, regional and global development.

**Question 6. Why was the UN-GGIM Secretariat created?**

It was created to provide the leadership role of setting the agenda for the development of global geospatial information and to promote its use to address key global challenges. Prior to its creation no global multilateral or intergovernmental mechanism existed.

**Question 7. Global Issues Underpinning the Need for GGIM**

- The value of reliable, credible and authoritative geospatial information not fully realized by many governments,
- the lack of an agreed set of readily available and authoritative global reference datasets by specific themes
- inadequate marine environment and space-based information which is needed to expand the land information base
- need to develop guidelines and standards for GIM institutional arrangements and legal frameworks
- need to determine the best mechanisms to provide knowledge, education and support to the newest entrants into the national geospatial arena so as to ensure that they understand the importance of certain geospatial principles
- need to promote data sharing, accessibility and dissemination

**Question 8. What is the UN Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management**

The committee consists of government experts from United Nations Member States as well as experts from international organizations, as observers. The Committee is scheduled to meet at least once a year and reports directly to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is served by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the Cartographic Section, in the Department of Field Support (DFS).

The committee is mandated, among other tasks, to provide a platform for the development of effective strategies on how to build and strengthen national capacity on geospatial information. It is also tasked to compile and disseminate best practices and experiences of national, regional and international bodies on geospatial information related to legal instruments, management models and technical standards.

**Question 9. What is the UN-GGIM Committee of Expert Meeting**

The Committee of Experts meetings are formal inter-governmental interventions that are held annually guided by processes and protocols of the United Nations. This meeting is only open to Member States and recognized global observers. There is a set agenda, actions and resolutions that are to be discussed and determined. It is convened with full translation in the 6 United Nations official languages. The Report of this meeting goes directly to ECOSOC for discussion and endorsement. Private sector and international organisations may attend as invited observers (if agreed by

the Committee). Importantly, this is the forum where outcomes and decisions eventually have the ability to be tabled at ECOSOC. These meetings therefore provide the avenue via which recommendations are tendered, resolutions made and decisions approved.

**Question 10. What are the GGIM High Level Forums**

These are global meetings that are arranged under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) who encourages the convening of “global forums to promote comprehensive dialogue on global geospatial information management with all relevant governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.” These forums, which can be likened to a global conference, allow for presentations from a cross section of geospatial stakeholders, knowledge is shared and exchanged and there is open dialogue on topical issues. These forums are therefore open to anyone with bona-fide credentials to attend. Attendees are generally representatives from Member States, international organisations and the private sector whose mandate and work deals with spatial data infrastructures and geographic information management at the global level.

**Question 11. Who Can Participate in the UN-GGIM Initiative**

All Member States of the United Nations, international organizations, the geospatial private sector and non-governmental organizations with mandates and work programs relevant to geospatial information management and or spatial data infrastructure can participate in UN-GGIM initiatives. However only United Nations Member States can participate in UN-GGIM Committee of Expert Meetings, other bodies are recognised as global observers.