

Annex 3:

Terms of Reference of the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial information

[The establishment of a United Nations Statistical-Geospatial Expert Group was requested by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 44th Session in March 2013 and endorsed by the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) at its Third Session in July 2013.]

Objectives and functions

1. The overall objectives and functions of the UN Group of Experts will be:

(a) To provide a forum for coordination and dialogue among representatives of both statistical and geospatial communities with a view to developing a global statistical-geospatial framework as a standard for the integration of statistical and geospatial information;

(b) To propose workplans and guidelines to advance the implementation of a global statistical-geospatial framework so that there is increased information to support social, economic and environmental policy decision making, including at the sub-national level;

(c) To address various technical, institutional and information policy issues related to implementation of a global statistical-geospatial framework, especially issues related to confidentiality;

(d) To pursue the implementation of the statistical-geospatial framework in the 2020 Round of Censuses with the understanding it would apply to other initiatives including other censuses, such as agriculture censuses, economic censuses, etc, and global initiatives such as the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Big Data.

2. To achieve these objectives, the UN Expert Group programme of work will focus on the following:

(a) Undertake activities that foster collaboration between statistical and geospatial communities at national and international levels, including to identify and address common issues to linking socio-economic information to a location and implementing a global statistical-geospatial framework;

(b) Evaluate the statistical-geospatial framework developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and determine if and how this could be internationalised;

(c) Support the development, promotion and sharing of guidance material and best practice documentation in relation to a global statistical-geospatial framework;

(d) Identify existing capability development programmes in National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and Geospatial communities that could be leveraged to develop geospatial components suitable for other NSOs and geospatial agencies, including the ability to promote and standardise geocoding processes, methodologies and frameworks (for example: dynamic linking techniques);

(e) Promote and encourage close collaboration between NSOs and their national geospatial counterparts during the 2020 Round of Censuses so that statistical and geospatial integration occurs, and encourage adoption of global statistical-geospatial framework principles in this work.

(f) Encourage the use of existing, and development of new data and metadata standards as well as other standards to enhance the interface of location-based datasets from multiple sources;

(g) Encourage the development of approaches to increase geospatial skills and capabilities within national statistics offices and geospatial agencies;

(h) Encourage the development of 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;

(i) Encourage the development of geospatial analytics.

(j) Encourage the work of the geospatial community towards developing Spatial Data Infrastructures, and their potential use for improving integration of statistical and geospatial information.

3. The Expert Group will bring to the attention of United Nations Statistical Commission, the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and the United Nations Statistics Division new developments relating to the integration of geospatial and statistical information, the work on developing a global statistical-geospatial framework, as well as other developments coming from the Expert Group's programme of work.

Membership, composition and terms of office

4. The Expert Group will comprise high-level experts from national governments and international organizations from both the statistical and geospatial communities. In appointing their national representatives, Member States will seek to designate experts with specific knowledge drawn from the fields of statistics and geospatial information. Where only one representative is appointed, Member States will encourage collaboration between representatives at the national level. Member State representatives would also be selected so as to ensure equitable regional representation.

5. The Expert Group will elect two co-Chairs, one from the statistical community and the other from the geospatial community. Each will serve for a 3-year period, renewable once for an additional 3 years.

6. If considered appropriate, the Expert Group will establish a Bureau to assist the two co-Chairs in progressing activities outside of Expert Group meetings. The Expert Group may establish sub-groups to work on particular aspects of the programme under its oversight.

7. The Expert Group will liaise as required with other international groups that may have an interest in linking statistical and geospatial information, including: the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA), the United Nations Cartographic Division and the United Nations Expert Group on Revising the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses.

8. The Expert Group will review, and if appropriate, revise its terms of reference every three years, and in conjunction with a change in chairs.

Reporting procedure

9. The Expert Group will report to the Statistical Commission and the UN Committee of Experts on GGIM.

Frequency of meetings

10. The Group of Experts will normally operate virtually and try to meet in conjunction with appropriate meetings.

11. The group of Experts will operate with the help of a website to facilitate communication, collaboration, knowledge management and information.

Secretariat

12. The United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will serve as the permanent Secretariat of the Expert Group. It will provide the day-to-day management and coordination, host and maintain the website, and undertake all internal and external communication on behalf of the Group of Experts. In cooperation with the co-Chairs, the Secretariat will coordinate, monitor and report on the activities of any sub-groups, organise and develop the agenda for the Expert Group meetings, maintain the Expert Group website and issue notices from the Expert Group.