



## GSDI Short Report to 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparatory Meeting of the Proposed United Nations Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management

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by

Abbas Rajabifard

GSDI President

The Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI) is a non-profit organization comprising agencies, firms, and individuals from around the world. The purpose of the organization is to promote international cooperation and collaboration in support of local, national and international spatial data infrastructure developments that will allow nations to better address social, economic, and environmental issues of pressing importance.

The GSDI Association continues to be highly active and engaged. The Association currently has been active for the preparation of the GSDI 13 World Conference (to be held in Canada, May 2012) as well as production the regional newsletters, launching of the small grants program, development of the Geographic Information Knowledge Network, International Geospatial Society (IGS) the new individual arm of the association, outreach and capacity building with several other organizations and development of a strategic plan for the organization.

GSDI is also supportive of international collaboration and inline with UN and other official agencies initiatives. As a result of this GSDI is supportive and continually participating and contributing to the UN new initiative to establish Global Geospatial Information Management Forum (GGIM). The Association is also a member of JBGIS and participating and contributing to the activities of this Joint Board. In addition, and in line with convergence strategy, GSDI has signed MoU with FIG during FIG Congress 2010 and the GSDI Association is in the discussion with ICA for a similar arrangement to make closer collaboration.

### GSDI 12 World Conference

GSDI-12 world conference was a joint conference with 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of UN sponsored Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia-Pacific (PCGIAP). The theme was “Realizing Spatially Enabled Societies”. A successful conference with over 670 participants from 65 countries. Over 140 high quality presentations including high level of keynote speakers. These arrangements and invited presentations reflect the Association strategy ambition: Conversion, bridge building and the creation of new dynamics for the future and also inline with the aim of spatial enabled society.

The key messages of the conference were:

- Emphasis on being relevant, user driven and addressing needs of society
- Complete and rich spatial data sets have arrived
- SDIs becoming critical infrastructure
- Spatial is now mainstream
- Spatial is being unleashed through innovation
- The importance of **location**, the need to **innovation** and the importance and need for **collaboration**.

Also, the other important issues highlighted were:

- Capitalizing on the power of spatial enablement, especially in government
- An infrastructure that spans the land-marine interface
- Institutional catch-up and over-coming the culture of non sharing of data
- Understanding and explaining “spatial enablement”

- Regulatory frameworks?
- The importance of Voluntary Geographic Information (VGI)
- Integration of Authoritative and VGI (non-authoritative) datasets
- Preparation of SDI best practice and requirement for SDI development
- Importance of standards and interoperability (at both technical and non-technical levels including policies and governance levels).
- Metadata automation and updating mechanism.

As part of the conference, there was also a dedicated Forum for the CEOs of Mapping and Spatial Information Agencies with an aim to discuss and plan for issues of common concern as:

- What is the role of national mapping, cadastral, surveying and land administration agencies in building spatially enabled society? How can these agencies best help each other achieving this goal?

As part of the Forum, there were three questions which facilitated the discussion.

1. What are the most critical needs that could be better addressed through expanded development of spatial data infrastructure?
2. What are the most appropriate roles for government in building spatially enabled platform and what are the most appropriate roles for the private sector? Why?
3. What actions need to be taken to realize spatially enabled society to create a sustainable platform spanning local, regional and global levels?

As a result of the discussions, the attached document is the outcome report from this Forum.

GSDI Also continues its effort for the capacity building by supporting and producing Regional Newsletters

The regional newsletters continue as highly valued outlets for information about spatial data infrastructure developments and activities across the globe. All three newsletters (Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin Americas) solicit contributions from key organizations advancing SDI projects and educational programs in their regions. Feedback from readers confirms that the newsletters have led to increased awareness of SDI initiatives and progress as well as awareness of research and funding opportunities.

#### Small Grants Program

The GSDI Association has issued again a call for proposals for its Small Grants Program for 2010. The small grants program supports SDI developments in developing nations and is administered by the GSDI Association. GSDI expect twelve cash awards and four professional services awards to be made in this round. Primary funding as well as administrative support for this program is supplied by the U.S. Federal Geographic Data Committee of the USGS along with contributions of specialist expertise supplied by URISA's GIS Corps.

The 2009-10 GSDI Small Grants call for proposals was issued in August of 2009 resulting in 52 proposals of which, 32 were accepted and referred to regional review committees for their evaluation and recommendations.

#### The Geographic Information Knowledge Network

At a previous conference, a group of mapping and land administration agency personnel from across the globe requested that the GSDI Association take the lead in developing a Geographic Information Knowledge Network (GIKNet) for the mapping agency community that might also serve the broader world-wide geospatial community. The GSDI Association has made significant progress in advancing this facility over the past year and a half. Agency heads from across the world have received an invitation to join the GIK Network to document the status and progress of their SDI implementations. Participation is by "invitation only" and our current intent, subject to feedback, is to invite only geospatial managers and specialists to join the network. A much broader population of geospatial companies, non-profit organizations and individuals

will soon be invited to join the network. Eventually we hope that this new communication facility will greatly enhance the ability to share up-to-date information among geo-spatial peer agencies and peer professionals.

#### Outreach and Capacity Building

*PCGIAP:* In terms of capacity building initiatives, GSDI joined with the Permanent Committee on Geographic Information for Asia and Pacific (PCGIAP) to encourage initiatives focused on the spatial enablement of government in Asia and Pacific countries. As a follow-up to a session in September 2007 in Seoul South Korea, the PCGIAP organized the 3<sup>rd</sup> Land Administration Forum in May of 2009 in Iran in cooperation with the Registration of Deeds and Properties- Iran, the Tehran Municipality, the Melbourne University, FIG and the GSDI Association. The primary message conveyed is that spatially enabled government leads to efficient policy guidance processes, improved decision making, reductions in administrative costs, and better outcomes for government as a whole and enhanced industry development opportunities.

*UNGIWG and UNSDI:* The GSDI Association recently became an official partner to the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) and the UNSDI initiative now underway. Discussions to date indicate that materials we are producing that are of substantial interest to this community include SDI Best Practices including standards for implementation globally, SDI case studies and learning materials. Thus, primary GSDI Association involvement to date has centered around proposing "SDI Best Practices" and promoting the GSDI SDI Cookbook wiki as a vehicle by which all member associations can contribute to greater knowledge on a wide range of SDI implementation issues. Means for working together more efficiently in achieving common goals are currently being explored.

*GEO, GEOSS and CEOS WGISS:* The GSDI initiatives also link national SDI efforts with the vision and goals of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) and its Global Earth Observations System of Systems (GEOSS). One example is building our information system technologies to automatically lead users to each others complementary registries rather than duplicate efforts. Since 2005 the GSDI Association has also had a liaison with the Working Group on Information Systems and Services of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS WGISS) A GSDI delegate attends WGISS Annual Meetings to keep them informed about the achievements in the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association and highlighting the role GSDI plays in the GEOSS Committee on Architecture and Data as well as User Interfaces.

*JBGIS:* The Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JBGIS) is an emerging forum for further cooperation among global geospatial member organizations. During the JBGIS Board meeting in China in July 2008, representatives of the involved global geo societies decided to focus cooperation on a few selected projects and GSDI has chosen to participate in the JBGIS Committee on Risk and Disaster Management. GSDI is also inviting all other joint board organizations to contribute to and invite their members to contribute to the Geographic Information Knowledge Network.

#### Planning for the Future

Throughout the past two years the leadership of the GSDI Association participated in several brainstorming sessions to develop a concise strategic plan with measurable objectives for the organizations. New or emerging initiatives suggested in the plan include institutionalizing a new individual membership arm of the organization, supporting standing committees as primary centres of membership activity and productivity, creating and maintaining a Geographic Information Knowledge Network (GIK Network), expanding the association web site capabilities, developing strategic alliances with other organizations, supporting SDI convergence among technical and policy approaches used within and among nations, encouraging expanded participation by the research and academic communities in the organization, and preparing and instituting an annual online survey for the membership.

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 Abbas Rajabifard  
 GSDI President