Joint UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe

Workshop on Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Standards 2017
Stockholm, Sweden 6-8 Nov., 2017

Introducing UNECE Statistics
Our work in statistics

- Intergovernmental process – under the Conference of European Statisticians (CES)
- Major international organisations involved to ensure coordination and avoid duplication (Eurostat, OECD, IMF, UNSD, …)
- All work is demand-driven – reflects topics that interest chief statisticians
- Work is often “cutting-edge”, developed in UNECE and then used globally

Background to the workshop

- Links between statistical and geospatial information have been discussed several times by the CES
- New mandates to get more involved in this topic:
  - ECOSOC 2016
  - CES 2015, 2016
  - UN-GGIM 2017
Growing partnership with UN-GGIM: Europe

- Proposals for greater collaboration
- Idea of joint workshop as a “pilot”
- Chose topic of standards because of interest from Statistics Sweden
- More joint activities planned for the future

The workshop

- 80+ participants, 30+ countries
- Good balance between statistical and geospatial communities – opportunity to start to engage and discuss
- 2.5 days of presentations and discussions
Terminology

- Models / frameworks / standards
- Models and frameworks are generic for many different contexts - help countries to standardise and provide a benchmark
- Standards are more precise, defined and not too generic – so they can be interpreted in a specific way without risk of misunderstanding

Introducing the standards

- Statistical models and frameworks are more conceptual, geospatial standards are more technical
- Important to build understanding between the communities and identify areas for common projects
- Demand for information is growing - the two communities will need to collaborate, and can learn from each other
Group discussion: Future work

- Consider in GSBPM and GSIM reviews how geospatial processes and information can be represented
- Encourage statistical offices to consider geospatial data as part of their core data
- Include statistics in UN-GGIM fundamental data
- Common projects based on user needs
- Collaborate on address and building registers, e.g. a reference ontology for addresses and buildings
- Project on data exchange – how to connect statistical and geospatial offices.

Group discussion: Future work

- Keep communicating
- Develop communication materials to explain the different frameworks and how they work together
- Engage vendors to build tools to support standards
- Common core metadata for geospatial data
- Identify key people in both communities who can make decisions and lead the way.
- Consider opportunities in relation to SDGs and the 2020 census round
Collaboration across communities

- Both provide information for better decision making
- Understand interdependencies, gaps and overlaps
- International collaboration should be supported by senior managers, through national institutional arrangements, long term, sustainable commitments with clear business requirements
- Broaden the communities - industry, ministries, mapping agencies, INSPIRE, earth observations, ISO, UN Expert Group on Classifications.
- How can the communities work together to provide answers to user questions?

Proposals for future work

- A “pitch statement” to get senior management buy-in and funding
- Pilot on persistent identifiers for statistical and geospatial data
- Beginners guide to standards from both communities
- How to store geospatial concepts in existing databases
- Standard language and semantics
Proposals for future work (cont.)

- Map the data exchange process between statistical and geospatial organisations
- Describe the standards from both communities and how they relate to each other
- Improve the discoverability of tools based on standards
Important outcomes

- Standards and interoperability are important, but the biggest issues are institutional, e.g.
  - Partnership mechanisms
  - Communication
  - People
- Two communities working together in cooperation and friendship to solve issues: Building a geo-statistical community

Next steps

- Find owners for these activities
- UNECE / UN-GGIM: Europe to discuss future activities in Geneva next week
- Build on what we have started this week