

Third Plenary Meeting of the High-level Group (HLG) on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) Summary Notes

22-23 January 2024

Aguascalientes (México)

1. (a) Welcome, background and introductions

The Co-Chairs of the HLG-IGIF, Ms. Deirdre Dalpiaz Bishop from the United States of America, and Mr. Fernand Guy Isseri from Cameroon, welcomed the participants and presented the HLG-IGIF representatives.

(b) Adoption of Agenda, organization of the meeting, related organizational matters and announcements

The Co-Chairs of the HLG-IGIF highlighted the expectations for the meeting and the [provisional agenda](#), which was adopted.

2. Setting the scene: HLG-IGIF Overview

The Co-Chairs of the HLG-IGIF presented the mission, strategic plan, implementation phases, and progress in advancing the UN-IGIF. The presentation also highlighted the lessons learned from the implementation of the UN-IGIF including:

- Finalization and translation of documents are important.
- Partnerships and collaboration are necessary to advance the UN-IGIF.
- A centralized repository for UN-IGIF documents and materials is needed.
- Member States need more comprehensive communication support materials.
- There are a variety of approaches to advancing the UN-IGIF.
- Member States are utilizing the UN-IGIF in many different ways.

The Co-Chairs also explained the process the HLG would follow to address the upcoming strategic goals and noted the upcoming sessions and discussions for this during the Plenary meeting.

The presentations to agenda 1 (a), 1 (b), and 2. are available [here](#).

3. Work Group Updates

The respective Co-Chairs of the Work Groups provided an update on their activities including Mr. Jamie Clark, Co-Chair, Communications Work Group; Mr. Sergio Cimbaro, Co-Chair, Capacity Development Work Group; and Ms. Mimi Chauke/Ms. Odete Semiao, Co-Chairs, Sustainable Funding Work Group.

The presentations are available respectively at:

- [Communications](#) Work Group
- [Capacity Development Work Group](#)
- [Sustainable Funding](#) Work Group and its related [Funding Guide](#)

The Work Group Leads noted the need for two Co-Leads for each Work Group to alleviate the pressure on a single individual to lead and coordinate. It was noted that currently two of the three Work Groups do not have two Co-Leads.

The Co-Chairs of the HLG-IGIF noted the importance of making readily available more of the documents, materials, and references prepared on the UN-IGIF and it was requested that the Secretariat provides support to make these resources available on a repository/website to ensure these references are easy to discover. The various initiatives from regional committees on promoting the documents and materials on the UN-IGIF should also be consolidated and centralized with, perhaps, a new website or repository made available by the Secretariat. The Co-Chairs further noted that external partners could also possibly support the messaging and strategic communication on the UN-IGIF.

The Regional Chairs expressed challenges in sustaining and funding Secretariats for the Regional Committees, to provide continuous support and follow-up on the work related to the UN-IGIF. This was raised, particularly by UN-GGIM: Africa. Discussions occurred on strategies to find alternate sources of funding for the participation of regional participants and the Regional Secretariats or to raise awareness in participating organizations to the proceedings of UN-GGIM. Participants also expressed concerns on the ability to sustain continued engagement on all activities and sustaining leadership.

The Co-Chairs of HLG-IGIF facilitated a discussion around the need for translation of the documents related to UN-IGIF to ensure broader use, the importance of leaving no country behind, and the recommendations that all countries needed to undertake translation efforts, in coordination with the Secretariat.

4. Planning for Actioning the Strategic Goal

The HLG-IGIF discussed and organized break-out sessions to consider the three prioritized goals and the three upcoming goals of the HLG-IGIF Strategic Plan. After the break-out sessions related to the HLG-IGIF Strategic Plan, the recommendations included:

- Assess all six strategic goals and associated actions.
- Realign goals and actions with the existing work groups where possible, consider a new work group where goals and actions don't align (i.e., Goal 2 Promote Data Governance, Availability, and Accessibility).
- Consider the updated work plan and work groups, and how the HLG can engage with the expanded Secretariat of UN-GGIM, the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC), the SDG Data Alliance, Academia, and the Private Sector to advance the UN-IGIF Work Plan.
- Develop clear priorities and goals that will lead and direct the UN-GGKIC and its work plan in support of the HLG-IGIF.
- Consider the communication of the UN-IGIF and tailor messaging according to the specific audiences.
- Consider performance indicators for measuring progress on the goals.
- Ensure that the HLG-IGIF makes decisions on the occurrence or frequency of updates to the documentation.
- Consider including the World Bank in the activity on sustainable funding.
- Consider a more strategic approach by the HLG-IGIF and engage other groups in task-oriented activities.
- Consider engaging the thematic networks to support the HLG-IGIF goals and objectives regarding horizon scanning and the future geospatial ecosystem.

5. Regional Committee Chair Updates

The chairs and presidents of the regional committees provided an update on their current activities and work programme related to the UN-IGIF, with respective presentations available for:

- [UN-GGIM : Africa](#) Ms. Maroale Martha Chauke, Chair, UN-GGIM: Africa
[UN-GGIM: Americas](#) Ms. Sofía Nilo Crisóstomo, President, UN-GGIM: Americas
[UN-GGIM: Arab States](#) Mr. Mohammed Yahya Al Sayel, Chair, UN-GGIM: Arab States
[UN-GGIM-Asia Pacific](#) Mr. Antonius B. Wijanarto, President, UN-GGIM: Asia Pacific
[UN-GGIM: Europe](#) Mr. Frank Tierolff, Co-chair, UN GGIM: Europe

The Regional Committee Chairs and Presidents provided an overview of their structure, accomplishments, and future plans. The Chairs noted that the adoption and engagement of Regional Committees and countries for the UN-IGIF is strong. Further, the Chairs noted the need for continued engagement and collaboration toward the wider implementation of the UN-IGIF for all regions, in particular developing countries, to ensure no one is left behind.

The Chair of UN-GGIM: Europe expressed its appreciation of the balanced approach of the UN-IGIF for all the pathways, and noted that every country, including developing countries, could use the UN-IGIF to understand and analyze their own capacity and identify potential gaps.

The Chair of UN-GGIM: Africa noted that many countries on her continent continue to struggle and expressed appreciation for the ongoing help of the SDG Data Alliance to advance the UN-IGIF in Africa. The Chair further noted that the mentorship provided went beyond technical issues and that the resource persons providing such advice should understand the “local” landscape and issues on the ground so that in-country efforts can be more effective. The Chair concluded that even getting stakeholders into one room was a challenge and that many countries are interested in developing UN-IGIF Country-level Action Plans and the risk of leaving some behind remains high.

The Chair of UN-GGIM: Arab States noted that the UN-IGIF guidelines and pathways were a major opportunity for many countries to take action and key for the Arab States region and have to be used for a better future. The Chair pledged to develop a national UN-IGIF Action Plan (CAP) in Saudi Arabia and to convince other countries in the region to also engage.

The President of UN-GGIM: Americas noted that having a proper website and providing resources for continued follow-up and engagement are key. The President further noted the importance of continued communication on the use of UN-IGIF and CAP such as on LinkedIn and X for showing progress and understanding opportunities in the region. The President expressed that knowledge-sharing is important to support, so that countries can learn from each other and gain insights on best practices. The President further noted the complementarity of the support provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the SDG Data Alliance, in addition to the advancement and investments done in national context.

The President of the UN-GGIM: Asia Pacific noted the diversity in his region and the many challenges associated with the implementation of the UN-IGIF including having national workshops.

6. Approaches and Resources to Support the UN-IGIF

The regional Secretariat of ECLAC made a presentation of the various approaches used in the Americas to implement the UN-IGIF, including the World Bank approach, the United Nations approach, and a hybrid approach. The [presentation](#) detailed several use cases, and highlighted the importance of understanding national circumstances, the stakeholder engagement process, and the high level engagement at the ministerial level.

The HLG-IGIF Co-Lead on Capacity Development presented the results and findings on the [Global Survey on the Use and Implementation of the UN-IGIF](#).

The Co-Chairs facilitated a discussion that included ideas to increase response to the survey and ideas for future survey improvements, including offering the survey in French.

Preliminary survey highlights (as of 1/22/2024) include:

- 98 Member States have responded to the survey so far (51% response rate).
- 59 Member States responded they are currently using or implementing the UN-IGIF.
- An additional 18 Member States are planning to use or implement the UN-IGIF soon.

The Capacity Development WG Lead noted the survey will be extended to 16 February 2024.

7. Member State Experiences Utilizing the UN-IGIF

Member States shared their current work, accomplishments, and challenges to implement the UN-IGIF:

[Experiences advance the UN-IGIF](#) Ms. Ingrid Vanden Berghe, Belgium

[What added value for the development of Cameroon](#) Mr. Fernand Guy Isseri, Cameroon

[Implementation of UN-IGIF in Indonesia](#) Mr. Antonius B. Wijanarto, Indonesia

[The UN-IGIF in Mexico](#) Ms. Eva Luévano Orta, México

[General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information](#) Mr. Mohammed Al Sayel and Mr. Mohammad Almabrook, Saudi Arabia

After the presentation, discussions were held on the experiences from countries and opportunities for partnerships, creating synergies with the United Nations Statistical Commission, and other partners such as Geospatial Societies.

Countries expressed the importance of multiple partnerships: at the international level (ISPRS, FIG...), regional level (AU, EUROSTAT, EuroGeographics, Panamerican Bank), between countries (North-South, South-South cooperation), and also in-country and inter-ministerial partnership and collaboration. The Private Sector Network and Geospatial Societies Network offered support to increase awareness on the UN-IGIF.

A maturity index on the UN-IGIF was also discussed as well as the possibility of evaluating the overall cost of an UN-IGIF process, at least until the preparation of the Country-level Action Plan. The discussions however concluded that maturity index could not solve or address country-specific challenges and understanding of realities.

The moderator of the session (Greg Scott) summarized the discussion and noted that all countries started with similar processes including stakeholder meetings as a pre-requisite, with varying assessment methods used, and noted that depending on the country, the level of engagements varied. The moderator concluded that despite the differences, all countries arrived at a National Geospatial Information Strategy or Plan, that is rooted in the UN-IGIF and which required engagement and validation at highest levels of governments.

8. Future Vision and Priorities

The session was organized in break out groups to consider further the current and upcoming goals, work group progress, regional committee progress, UN-IGIF survey results, collaborations and support, and Member State experiences utilizing the UN-IGIF, and then make recommendations on the top 3-5 priorities they would like to see the HLG-IGIF accomplish in the next 18 months.

The recommendations of the groups included:

- Strengthen communication strategy, objectives, and support materials for the UN-IGIF including for decision-makers.
- Finalize, translate, and publish all UN-IGIF documents and materials, and evaluate if changes are needed.
- Establish a central repository/website with all available documents and materials related to UN-IGIF, including links to resources and e-Learning.
- Establish a strong working relationship with the UN-GGKIC.
- Consider new documents such as “Next Steps” or a “Quick Start” guide for UN-IGIF.
- Provide financial guidance/support for Member States to get through implementation.
- Develop a Progress Dashboard.
- Build Work Group Leadership.
- Reevaluate the role of the HLG-IGIF and the work plan tasks considering other entities.

9. Summary, next steps and close

The Co-Chairs summarized the main points of the meeting, decisions, and next steps including:

- Commended the communications and engagements efforts of all the HLG-IGIF work groups, UN-GGIM Bureau and Secretariat, Regional Committees, Thematic Networks, and partners – noting the preliminary UN-IGIF survey results show these efforts have been very effective – with 100 percent of survey respondents saying they know about the UN-IGIF.
- Noted the need to provide two Co-Leads for each HLG-IGIF work groups.
- Encouraged continued development of messaging and promotional materials to gain decision-maker support for advancing the UN-IGIF and noted the need for new messaging on implementation – once we have a Country-level Action Plan – what’s next?
- Noted the importance of a Central Repository for all UN-IGIF support materials and encouraged the Communications Work Group to work with the Secretariat on this and bridge to work already being conducted by UN-GGIM: Americas/ECLAC.
- Encouraged the Communications Work Group to get communication materials out and not let group decision making and/or the desire for consensus slow the process.
- Encouraged broader communication and engagements with those outside our geospatial circle.

- Noted as a top priority the finalization of all the UN-IGIF documents, addendums, and support materials and tools for the UN Recommended Approach and thanked the Secretariat for their commitment to get this work done in the first half of 2024.
- Commended the Capacity Development Work Group for the translation of all UN-IGIF documents and support materials and thanked the Secretariat for their support to get translated documents approved and posted.
- Thanked the Capacity Development Work Group for implementing of the global UN-IGIF Survey, noting it will serve as a strong baseline to measure progress, and also noting the strong survey response, and high level of awareness and utilization of the UN-IGIF by Member States.
- Commended the Sustainable Funding Work Group for their progress and efforts to complete the Sustainable Funding Guide in advance of the UN-GGIM Fourteenth Session and for the continued expansion of the online Geospatial Value Study Inventory (GeoVSI).
- Noted with appreciation the strong Regional Committee collaboration and engagement on promoting the UN-IGIF, including through regional webinars and workshops.
- Thanked the Regional Committee Chairs and Presidents for their strong collaboration and engagement with the HLG-IGIF and its work groups and encouraged continued strong inter-regional collaboration to share ideas and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Noted the need to not only raise awareness of the UN-IGIF, but to also help Member States move to implementation.
- Thanked ECLAC for the professional video and for their work to support the advancement of the UN-IGIF in the Americas, including for countries utilizing the UN Approach, the World Bank Approach, and other Hybrid Approaches.
- Thanked Belgium, Cameroon, Indonesia, México, and Saudi Arabia for the detailed presentations on their approaches and experiences advancing the UN-IGIF, noting the similarities between the different approaches and that Member States ended up at the same place, with a strong plan to advance the UN-IGIF.
- Noted that no one approach is correct, and more important than the approach utilized to get to a plan, is what Member States do with the plan – moving to implementation is very important!

Next steps:

- The HLG-IGIF will consider the feedback from the break-out groups and make a first attempt at aligning all the HLG-IGIF strategic goals and actions to the existing work groups (where possible) and share recommendations with the HLG-IGIF Leadership Team.
- The HLG-IGIF Co-Chairs will continue their monthly meetings and invite Regional Committee and UN-GGKIC leadership to two HLG-IGIF Leadership Team meetings per year.
- The HLG-IGIF Leadership Team will consider the role of the expanded Secretariat of UN-GGIM, UN-GGKIC, SDG Data Alliance, and the Thematic Networks in assisting with implementation of tasks of the HLG-IGIF Plan of Work so the HLG-IGIF can be more strategic.
- The Co-Chairs will work to identify new Co-Leads for the Communications and Capacity Development Work Groups.
- The Co-Chairs will begin planning for a Fourth HLG-IGIF Plenary Meeting and noted with appreciation the offer from Saudi Arabia to host a Fifth HLG-IGIF Plenary Meeting in February 2025.
- The Co-Chairs thanked the UN-GGIM Bureau and Secretariat, Regional Committee Leadership, SDG Data Alliance, Thematic Networks and other partners for their strong collaboration in advancing this important work.
- The Co-Chairs noted with appreciation the preliminary plans presented by the UN-GGKIC and shared that they look forward to working closely together in the future.



- The Co-Chairs thanked Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography for organizing the week of activities, for sharing their work and culture with us, and for serving as wonderful meeting hosts.

