



Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information

1. Mandate

- 1.1 The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) at its Seventh Session in August 2017 endorsed the terms of reference and establishment of the UN-GGIM Working Group on Marine Geospatial.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Working Group are to:

- 2.1 Play a leading role at the policy level by raising political awareness and highlighting the importance of reliable, timely and fit-for-purpose marine geospatial information to support the administration, management and governance of the marine environment;
- 2.2 Encourage the use of internationally agreed-upon geospatial information frameworks, schemas, systems and established standards to improve the growing inter-dependent relationships between people and the marine environments; and
- 2.3 Support the Committee of Experts in the development of norms, principles, guides and standards to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable geospatial information including any regional capacity development initiatives.

3. Functions

The functions of the Working Group will be to:

- 3.1 Provide a forum for dialogue and coordination between Member States, United Nations System, International Hydrographic Organization, and other international organisations and experts with a view to –
- i) Encourage enhanced global cooperation in mapping the seas and oceans;
 - ii) Explore opportunities for the use and usability of marine geospatial data;
 - iii) Encourage maintenance and enhancement of the marine spatial data infrastructure;
 - iv) Encourage the integration of land and marine geospatial information including considering the issues related thereto;
 - v) Encourage the integration of inland tributary hydrographic data with marine geospatial information;
 - vi) Improve the availability and accessibility of marine geospatial information including encouraging free and open data access policies and reducing data security concerns;

- vii) Motivate Member States to improve international engagement on marine geospatial information matters;
- viii) Facilitate improved inter-governmental coordination of marine geospatial data activities, standards and infrastructure development; and
- ix) Provide recognition that contributions by Member States to the marine spatial data infrastructures are valuable and benefits all.

3.2 A key undertaking is to contribute towards significantly increasing the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable marine geospatial information to support national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

3.3 Propose work plans, informed by broad global consultation, to address the main area of focus identified by Member States while ensuring that there are no overlaps or duplication of initiatives.

4. Membership, Composition and Term of Office

4.1 The Working Group will comprise expert representatives nominated by Member States from their geospatial and statistical communities who are knowledgeable and experienced in the work of the Group. The Working Group will also invite an expert representative nominated by the International Hydrographic Organization. To ensure broad expertise and effectiveness, subject matter experts from the United Nations System, international organisation and the wider hydrographic surveying communities could be drawn into the Group.

4.2 The Working Group will select two members as co-Chairs and any other position as deemed necessary to support the work of the Group. The co-Chairs will serve for two (2) years and should the work continue beyond two (2) years, the Working Group may retain existing co-Chairs or elect new co-Chairs for another two (2) years. In normal circumstances, co-Chairs should not serve more than two consecutive two (2) year terms.

4.3 Should the need arise; the Working Group may establish sub-groups or task teams to work on particular aspects of its work programme. All sub-groups or task teams must have defined deliverables, delivery milestones and are established with a fixed duration. All sub-groups or task teams must bring its task to a satisfactory conclusion at each session of the Committee of Experts.

4.4 The Working Group will liaise, as required, with international organisations and invite their nominated experts as observers that have an interest in marine geospatial information.

5. Reporting Procedure

5.1 The Working Group will report to the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management at its annual session and this will include the preparation of written reports and background documents from time to time.

6. Frequency of Meetings

- 6.1 The Working Group will operate virtually and meet when the opportunity arises in concurrence with related UN-GGIM events.

7. Governance

- 7.1 The UN-GGIM Bureau may review and evaluate the work of the Working Group from time to time, may proposed to UN-GGIM revision of the terms of reference based on the work the Working Group has completed and any new items that UN-GGIM would like the Working Group to consider.

8. Secretariat

- 8.1 The United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs will serve as the permanent Secretariat of the Working Group. It will provide the day-to-day management and coordination when necessary, and undertake internal and external communication on behalf of the Working Group.
- 8.2 The co-Chairs will coordinate, monitor and report on the activities of any sub-group or task teams to the Secretariat and the UN-GGIM Bureau.
- 8.3 In co-operation with the co-Chairs, the Secretariat will coordinate and assist with the organisation and preparation of the agenda for the meetings of the Working Group, issue notices and any other support activities deemed necessary.

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