



Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)

## UN-GGIM ACADEMIC NETWORK REPORT by TASK TEAM

Chair Professor Abbas Rajabifard

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Distinguished Delegates and Participants, UN-GGIM Director, and Secretariat Team,  
Representatives of JB GIS, Private Sectors, and Representatives of the Academic Network  
Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this occasion of the sixth session of the UNGGIM Committee of Experts Meeting, I would like to convey the greetings from the Academic Network Task Team and delegates in attendance here, The Academic Network is most honoured to be part of UN-GGIM Initiative and family.

### Background

As a background, The UN-GGIM at its meeting convened in New York in December 2015, the Bureau discussed the merits and establishment of an Academic Network under the auspices of UN-GGIM as a means to capture and include the role and contributions of academia in global geospatial information management.

As a result of the above, an exploratory **UN-GGIM Academic Network** meeting was convened as a Side Event to the Fourth High Level Forum on UN-GGIM, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this year, on Tuesday 19 April 2016. In this meeting it was anticipated that the Academic Network operates along the same lines as the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JB-GIS) and is able to "self organise" and contributes to the activities of UN-GGIM in a similar and productive manner.

Acknowledging the discussion at the first Academic Network Meeting, and referring to the Addis Ababa Declaration at the conclusion of the Fourth High Level Forum, which endorsed UN-GGIM facilitating the establishment of an Academic Network as a strategic knowledge, research and training arm to assist its activities and objectives, UN-GGIM Secretariat has formed an Academic Network Task Team, with members from different regions, and has appointed Professor Abbas Rajabifard, from the University of Melbourne to Chair the Task Team with a Mandate to start the process and consultation, to assist with the initial tasks on:

- Draft "ToRs" for the UN-GGIM Academic Network.
- Develop a process for membership in the Network.
- Draft potential roles and responsibilities for members to be an effective and active Network.
- Prepare an initial workplan for its activities.

As a result of this, the Academic Network Task Team has been formed and started its activities in July with the following members:

- Prof Abbas Rajabifard, The University of Melbourne, Australia (*Chair*)
- Prof Huayi Wu, Wuhan University, China
- Prof Joep Crompvoets, KU Leuven, Belgium
- Prof David Coleman, University of New Brunswick, Canada
- Prof Harlan Onsrud, University of Maine, USA
- Prof Menno-Jan Kraak, University of Twente, Netherlands
- Prof Josef Strobl, University of Salzburg, Austria



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- Prof Maria Antonia Brovelli, Politecnico di Milano, Italy
- Prof Daniel Páez, University of Los Andes, Colombia
- Prof Jide Kufoniyi, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

The Task Team has started its activities in June and has responded to the initial tasks by developing a document to facilitate the consultation for establishment of the Academic Network. In this document the Task Team has proposed a draft ToRs, a process and set of functions for the Academic Network operation and memberships, and also suggested a set of KPIs to measure its success. The Task Team will meet and finalize the principles. The Academic Network had a side meeting on Tuesday 2nd August to brief participants on the activities and progress of the work.

Here is a snapshot of the proposed ToR, process and the functions for the Academic Network, and the full document is part of the UN-GGIM meeting documents for the record.

### Academic Network Terms of Reference (ToR)

The main objective of the UN-GGIM Academic Network is a platform for the academic community to provide input and to support UN-GGIM in achieving its vision and goals by generating a platform for academic community to input to the UN-GGIM process. This input is to be in the form of strategic knowledge, research, education and training input and be a strategic arm to empower UN-GGIM to achieve their vision and goals.

The network will provide both research and education capabilities for UN-GGIM and affiliated members to identify and response to challenges and opportunities in which UN-GGIM and related UN offices can achieve their visions. The UN-GGIM Academic Network will be a coalition of recognized universities, research and education centers or equivalent involved in the research, development and training on geospatial and land information and related matters.

### Functions

A selected functions of the Academic Network are to:

- (a) Provide strategic knowledge, research, education and training input and be a strategic arm to empower UN-GGIM and its related organizations to achieve their visions and goals;
- (b) Provide a forum for coordination and dialogue among academics and researchers from the geospatial information management community with a view to advance activities related to the administration, management, and use of geospatial information, and to identify and response to challenges and opportunities in which UN-GGIM and related members can achieve their visions;
- (c) Advise and support capacity building programs of the UN-GGIM;
- (d) Offer advise based on UN-GGIM questions and when we see a gap and inform UN-GGIM of that gap/problem;
- (e) Bring to the attention of UN-GGIM and its regional organizations state-of-the-art research and academic trends on global geospatial information, or write white papers on any of related topics, and also offer training/education in those fields;
- (a) Undertake work that is able to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and other areas as appropriate;
- (a) Promote and encourage close collaboration between universities and encourage the development and sharing of geospatial knowledge and analytics.



The Academic Network will normally operate virtually and will meet in concurrence with related geospatial meetings, and also officially meet and report during each UN-GGIM Committee of Experts and High Level Forums.

### **Membership, Composition and Terms of Office**

- (c) This Network will comprises of relevant universities, academic institutions or research centres (as members) where geographic information, and or land administration research and/or education are carried out.
- (d) Members may be involved in matters relating to surveying, photogrammetry, remote sensing, mapping, cartography, computing, geospatial analysis, web geo-services, socio-economic and environmental modelling, as well as application areas such as infrastructure design and development, water, agriculture, forestry, geology, hydrology, land administration, market research, urban planning, transport, and research on the legal and institutional issues associated with the management of geographic information as well as the use of the relevant technologies.
- (d) In order to become a member, an Expression of Interest (EoI) Form with a statement on the capabilities and availability to respond to UN-GGIM academic and research support needs should be submitted to the Academic Network Secretariat. The application must describe how the institution will contribute to the objectives of UN-GGIM.
- (e) A country could have more than one institution accepted in the network. However, each member would nominate one leading academic and up to 2 delegates to the network.
- (a) The Academic Network will meet regularly at the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts, High Level Forum, and any formal meetings.
- (b) If considered appropriate, the Academic Network will establish sub-regional groups inline with UN-GGIM regional committees and or task teams to focus on particular aspects of the programs under its oversight.
- (k) The Academic Network will have at least one member in each UN-GGIM Expert Groups and Working Groups.

### **Specific activities**

To achieve the Academic Network's objectives, the initial workplan will focus on:

- Inventory of current capabilities, training programs, MOOCs, facilities, current projects, etc. relevant to UN-GGIM activities,
- Training and research registry,
- Review of the current UN-GGIM WGs' workplans to identify the areas for support and input.

On behalf of the Task Team, The Academic Network will be committed to supporting member states, society and governments by collaboratively facilitating initiatives and programmes that establish and grow the capacity to deliver timely, comprehensive and useful geospatial information. The members of the Academic Network will contribute to this initiative, and will champion the advancement of the UN-GGIM initiatives through their various individual and collaborative efforts. The Academic Network, through its member institutions, will contribute actively to the work of the UN-GGIM initiative and its WGs and to take actions as necessary as a result of the deliberations and discussions out of this meeting.

Thank you  
Professor Abbas Rajabifard  
Chair of Academic Network Task Team

Delivered by Professor David Coleman, Member of Academic Network Task Team

