

Scoping note on

Capacity Building and Technology Transfer for Global Geographical Information Management¹

By Claude Tapsoba, Burkina Faso

The management of geographic information aims, inter alia, for the effective use of information relevant to policy development and decision support at all levels, including for the prevention and management of major global events such as floods (consequences of climate change), energy crises, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

It is interesting to note that some organizations are able to produce the geographic data they need across the globe, using the tools offered by new technologies (GPS, satellite imagery, GIS software, etc.), without involving local organizations in charge of mapping, especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This solution, which is technically feasible, would maintain the institutions responsible for the production of geographic information in the Least Developed Countries, contained lack of capacity to produce and manage information that can help prevent disasters, and arrange for suitable solutions to mitigate their effects. These countries will be on the sidelines of the dynamics pursued by the global geographic information community.

Spatial Data Infrastructures aim at effective management of geographic information, enabling discovery and access to available data. In some countries, the establishment of this spatial data infrastructure has already proven itself, but unfortunately, other countries have not yet grasped the need to produce relevant geographic information, let alone the building of a spatial data infrastructure, despite the advocacy carried out by the professionals in the geographic information field.

Given the huge gap and disparity in capacities of quality data production and their effective use for decision making, it is recommended to put in place a mechanism for capacity building and technology transfer from advanced countries to those who are in need. The ultimate goal of capacity building is to achieve a normalization of the production of spatial data, and any thing that would help their sharing, their timely access, and their interoperability at global level.

This capacity building must aim to improve:

- Scientific knowledge and technical skills of the beneficiaries from geo-information development;
- Production and management of geographic information;
- Effective recognition of geographic information in policy and decision making of governments.

Without being exhaustive, the following can be recommended to achieve this:

- Strengthen the capacities of local training in production and management of geographic information;
- Develop national and regional networks of producers of spatial data (national mapping, statistics, urban planning, land management, etc.);

¹ Informal internal translation from the original copy in French.

- Strengthen the institutional mapping services to reflect the horizontal nature of geographic information;
- Develop international cooperation on exchange of expertise and experience in the field of geographic information;
- Facilitate the funding of mapping projects by the technical and financial partners.

During the discussions, we must bear in mind two important issues that need answers:

- 1 - What are the key gaps, bottlenecks and challenges for the appropriation of geographical science by policy makers in LDCs?
- 2 - What are the immediate needs to stimulate the use of geospatial tools for decision-making in LDCs?