Concept Note

International Workshop
Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Information

National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China (NASG)
Beijing, China, 9-12 June 2014

Background

The geospatial and statistical professional communities are major contributors of information used as evidence in decision-making processes across many sectors, both public and private. With the increasing complexity of national and global challenges and issues, the need to understand the interrelationships across the economic, social and environmental pillars is becoming critical. In today's global community, there is a clear recognition of the need to and value of linking geospatial information (which includes much environmental information) and statistical information (which includes much socioeconomic information) to improve the relevance of the evidence on which decisions will be made. The challenge being faced is how best to achieve this integration in an effective and consistent way.

The United Nations Statistical Commission (Statistical Commission) and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) have recognized the need to meet the challenges of managing and effectively integrating geospatial and statistical information nationally and globally. In 2013, in each of their respective annual sessions, they "acknowledged the critical importance of integrating geospatial information with statistics and socio-economic data and the development of a geospatial-statistical framework, especially in the context of the on-going debate on the post-2015 development agenda".

An Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information has been established, and convened its first meeting in New York 30 October to 1 November 2013. Composed of experts with an even professional mix of statistical and geospatial expertise, and with good geographical representation, the Expert Group has been tasked with developing and advancing the implementation of a global statistical-geospatial framework as a standard for the integration of statistical and geospatial information. A key component of this task will be inclusive global consultations and communications with relevant experts in determining the metrics of a statistical-geospatial framework. Mechanisms for achieving this include a Global Forum on the topic, to be held in New York 4 to 5 August 2014, and a number of technical workshops.

Therefore, the International Workshop on Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Information will contribute to the global consultation, and will discuss and demonstrate the importance of geography to census activities, and to statistical information in providing the statistical-geospatial framework and the structure for collecting, processing, storing, integrating, aggregating, and disseminating the data on appropriate platforms. The workshop will also provide country experiences of the benefits that national geospatial information authorities have derived from meeting the specific needs of census geography/cartography and statistical analysis, and their overall cooperation with national statistical offices.

Objectives of the Workshop

The International Workshop on Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Information will provide a platform for discussing priority issues related to developing and advancing the implementation of a global statistical-geospatial framework as a standard for the integration of statistical and geospatial information. The workshop will consist of a number of themes and sessions that will enable participants to engage with leading international experts to share experiences and methodologies, including in the following areas:

- Country experiences in the integration of socio-economic and environmental information using geography;
- Practices and approaches used to determine and represent geographical units, including geocoding, for statistical purposes;
- Comparison, including advantages, benefits, and issues, of grid-based versus population/administrative approaches to the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics;
- The importance of international standards development, and what existing standards are relevant for both geospatial and statistical communities;
- Statistical analysis of geospatial (environmental, social, and economic) information, and examples of how national SDI developments can support statistical operations; and
- Future challenges and trends to be considered by both the statistical and mapping organisations in the region in integrating statistical and geospatial information. These include: technology; big data; the 2020 Round of Censuses; an emerging need for agriculture and economic censuses; environmental-economic accounting; and the post-2015 development agenda.

Organizers

The United Nations Statistics Division of DESA, as the Secretariat of the Statistical Commission and UN-GGIM, will jointly organize this workshop with the National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China (NASG). The workshop will be convened at NASG's headquarters in Beijing, and will include a technical visit to China's Geospatial Industrial Park. It is expected that up to 120 international and national participants from both the geospatial and statistical professional communities will attend.

Workshop Format

This International Workshop will be unique in that it will be bringing together for the first time a blend of global geospatial and statistical experts from Member States, and will be convened in the main Auditorium at NASG's Headquarters in Beijing. In addition, the Workshop format will consist of three days of international presentations and dialogue in specific sessions and themes from Monday 9 to Wednesday 11 June, followed by technical visits on Thursday 12 June. The draft format is as described in the table below.

Inter. Workshop Monday 9 June	**Opening Ceremony and Keynote Addresses**	09:00-12:30
	Lunch	12:30-14:00
	Session 1 Country experiences in integrating statistical and geospatial information using geography.	14:00-17:30
Inter. Workshop Tuesday 10 June	**Session 2** Approaches to determine and represent geographical units, including geocoding methods.	09:00-12:30
	Lunch	12:30-14:00
	Session 3 Comparisons of grid-based versus administrative approaches to the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics.	14:00-17:30
Inter. Workshop Wednesday 11 June	**Session 4** Statistical analysis of geospatial (environmental, social, etc.) information, and relevance of SDI's and international standards.	09:00-12:30
	Lunch	12:30-14:00
	Session 5 Positioning for the future. Trends in technology, big data, 2020 Round of Censuses, and the post-2015 development agenda.	14:00-17:30
Thursday 12 June	**Technical Visits**	09:30-16:00

Expected Outcomes

The following workshop outcomes are envisaged:

1. Recognition that a statistical-geospatial framework has a vital role to play in integrating diverse economic, social and environmental information to support more robust decision-making processes across many sectors of the economy, nationally, regionally and globally. It also extends the ability for nations to not only map their geography and environment, but also their populations, demographics, and many other statistical variables at multiple levels of aggregation;
2. An emerging understanding of the key issues and challenges to developing a statistical-geospatial framework, especially in the context of geocoding data requirements and methodologies;
3. A better understanding of future challenges and other required actions to be taken by both the statistical and mapping organisations in the region and the world in integrating statistical and geospatial information;
4. A more informed and shared understanding of the technical capacities and work program of NASG, and of possible collaborations that may be initiated towards a coordinated approach to the integration of geospatial and statistical information for the Chinese census;

5. Agreement on topics that can be carried forward to the United Nations Global Forum on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, to be held 4-5 August 2014 in New York in conjunction with the 4th Session of UN-GGIM;
6. Identifying possible mechanisms and strategies for positioning the importance of the integration of geospatial and statistical information for the 2020 Round of Censuses and the broader post-2015 development agenda; and
7. Identifying a possible pilot project that demonstrates the steps and processes required to integrate national geospatial and statistical information.