

Progress Report

Preamble

This report is prepared and submitted to the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal (IAEG-SDGs) Indicators by its Working Group on Geospatial Information at the Sixth Meeting of IAEG-SDGs from 11 – 14 November 2017 in Manama, Bahrain.

Membership

The Working Group currently composed of 16 national representatives who are subject matter experts from 15 Member States. In addition, the Working Group includes 7 experts representing the United Nations System and international organizations. The Working Group is co-Chaired by Mexico (Mr. Rolando Ocampo Alcantar, INEGI) and Sweden (Ms. Marie Haldorson, Statistics Sweden). Its web-presence is at: at <http://ggim.un.org/UNGGIM-wg6/>

Membership of the Working Group is in accordance with the Terms of Reference, from the statistical community, comprising IAEG-SDGs and/or HLG-PCCB members. From the geospatial community are national experts nominated by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) through its Regional Committee. Since the last reporting to IAEG-SDGs, three members (Cabo Verde, Jamaica and Uganda) were rotated off the Working Group and to-date, and one new member (Canada) joined the Working Group. The co-Chairs and the Secretariat aim to invite up to two new members who are currently members IAEG-SDGs and/or HLG-PCCB, and more importantly who are able to participate and contribute to the objectives and tasks, to join the Working Group.

Meetings

Third meeting of the Working Group, Kunming, China

The third meeting of the Working Group was held in Kunming, China from 6 - 8 May 2017, and attended by 18 of the 23 members of the Working Group, two invited resource persons, four national experts and the Secretariat. The National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China hosted the meeting on the sideline of the Kunming Forum on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management with the theme “Cities of the Future: Smart, Resilient and Sustainable” that was held from 8 – 10 May 2017. Members of the Working Group also participated and contributed to the successful outcome of the Kunming Forum.



The meeting reviewed and discussed updates and reports from the co-Chairs, Task Teams and the Secretariat, and continued working on identifying, prioritizing and developing the "how" to address identified geospatial information gaps, issues and contributions to the global indicator framework, and the associated geospatial methodologies, data sources and data availability. In any of these developmental works, as a practical starting point, the Working Group intends to defer to the short-list of indicators¹ prepared by the Working Group from a review of the global indicator framework from a "geographic location" lens.

The Working Group deliberated and considered issues around data availability vis-à-vis production of indicators: i) what and where are useable and applicable data sets (in particular satellite imageries) and how to ensure data ready for the production are nationally led? ii) is there a need for a 'demonstration project' on the availability and applicability of geospatial information? and iii) what are the modalities to engage custodian agencies to support their development of definitions, methodologies, identifying appropriate data sources and to address data availability?

WebEx Meeting

The Working Group held its first WebEx meeting on 5th October 2017, considered its activities and progress since May 2017, deliberated on a draft Work Plan for 2017/2018, as well as the provisional agenda for the fourth meeting of the Working Group in December 2017. The co-Chairs and the Working Group agreed that regular WebEx meeting would be useful to advance its activities and tasks before the Working Group, notwithstanding the challenge to co-ordinate time zone differences amongst all members of the Working Group.

The Working Group seeks to improve the pace of its activities and tasks by leveraging e-meeting from now on.

Fourth meeting of the Working Group, New York

A fourth meeting of the Working Group will be held at UN Headquarters, New York from 6 – 8 December 2017. The meeting's web page is at: http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2017-4th_Mtg_IAEG-SDG-NY/ and information about the meeting will be progressively uploaded. This meeting, should allow the Working Group to come and work together over three days to develop advice and guidance to the IAEG-SDGs and the wider statistical community on how geospatial information, Earth observations and other new data sources can reliably and consistently contribute to the production of indicators.

¹ The global indicator framework (together with its compiled metadata) for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda was reviewed through a "geographic location" lens. There was consensus around an initial short-list comprising of 15 indicators (4 Tier I, 4 Tier II, 7 Tier III) where geospatial information and Earth observations, together with statistical data, can contribute directly to the production of these 15 identified indicators. An additional short-list of 9 indicators (1 Tier I, 4 Tier II, 3 Tier III and 1 that has multiple classifications for its sub-indice) was identified where geospatial information and Earth observations can significantly support the production of these indicators. These indicators were reported to IAEG-SDGs at its fifth meeting and UN-GGIM at its seventh session in August 2017.

Issues and considerations

Data availability remains one of the primary challenges. “Production ready” data must be made available to allow for the production of indicators and informing of targets and Goals that are country owned and country-led, in accordance with national priorities and needs. Data from international agencies may differ from national data, but could be applied to augment and/or validate national data, used in models, and provide estimates e.g. to improve existing data sets, or produce regional and global aggregates. Data interoperability and comparability between such international and national data is thus crucial.

The application of geospatial processes, its integration with statistical processes for the production of a specific indicator may require specialist capacities and expertise that Member States may not have e.g. specialist operational capacities and expertise on land cover classifications that meet a specific application required for the production of an indicator. The Working Group is realizing the need to begin some consideration on capacity development for national statistical systems to ensure the wider utilization of geospatial information management and the application of geospatial information. In this regard, the Working Group is seeking to work with the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, as the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework will facilitate consistent production and integration approaches for geo-statistical information².

The Working Group continues to deliberate on how to proactively engage with the custodian agencies in order to support and contribute to the development of both methodology and metadata of indicators, as well as to address data sources and data availability, as part of its ongoing efforts to advance the tasks and expectations before the Working Group.

The Working Group has concluded that geospatial information management, its data, methodologies and processes, is able to provide enabling methodologies and processes for data to be disaggregated by geographic location. It observed that the disaggregation of national statistical data is considerably strengthened through the lens of geospatial information.

The Working Group at its fourth meeting from 6-8 December 2017 will address all these identified issues and gaps.

²

The Committee of Experts has adopted the five guiding principles (at its sixth session, August 2016), as the foundation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework; subsequently endorsed at the 48th session (March 2017) of the Statistical Commission.



Concluding Remarks

One of the strength of the Working Group is with its representation, from both the statistical community and the geospatial community. With unique understanding of context and circumstances, the combined statistical and geospatial expertise is well positioned to facilitate and enable a 'data ecosystem' that leverages an accessible, integrative and interoperable local to global information system for measuring and monitoring the SDGs, and tracking progress.

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