

**Third International Workshop on
Operationalizing the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework**
Conference Room, Office of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus
Minsk, Belarus
26 – 28 November 2019

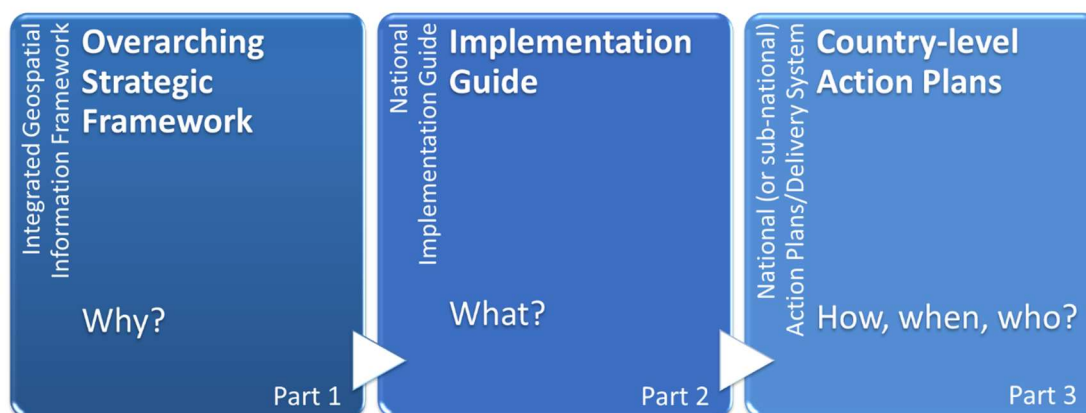
SUMMARY REPORT

Preamble

In August 2018, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) adopted the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF), which was jointly developed by the World Bank and the United Nations Statistics Division (as the Secretariat for the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management). The IGIF provides a basis, a reference and a mechanism for countries when developing and strengthening their national and sub-national arrangements in geospatial information management and related infrastructures. The Framework translate high-level concepts to practical implementation guidance and does this by leveraging seven (7) underpinning principles, eight (8) goals and nine (9) strategic pathways as a means for governments to establish and maintain more effective geospatial information management arrangements.

The IGIF is a basis, a reference and a mechanism for developing and strengthening national arrangements in geospatial information management in developing countries including small islands developing states, landlocked developing countries and least developed countries. Equally, it is also referenced to coordinate and improve activities to achieve efficiencies and alignment between and across existing infrastructures and capacities in geospatial information management in developed countries.

The Overarching Strategic Framework is intended for a wide range of stakeholders – these primarily being high-level policy and decision makers, institutions and organizations within and across government. The Implementation Guide provides the specific guidance and options to be taken by countries in implementing the IGIF. It captures strategic to operational needs with guiding principles; while not being detailed and prescriptive. The aim is to provide guidance for governments to establish ‘nationally’ integrated geospatial information frameworks in such a way that transformational change is enabled, visible and sustainable. The Guide’s benefits will cascade right down to the citizen. Country-level Action Plans reference the specific guidance, options and actions provided in the Implementation Guide and addresses each of the nine strategic pathways to capture and operationalize the strategic-to-operational needs of a country when implementing the Framework.



Part 1: Overarching Strategic Framework – **WHY** geospatial information management needs to be strengthened.

Part 2: Implementation Guide – **WHAT** types of actions can be undertaken to strengthen geospatial information management.

Part 3: Country-level Action Plans – **HOW** the actions will be carried out, **WHEN** and by **WHOM**.

This International Workshop was an activity under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-fund¹ of the United Nations Trust Fund for Peace and Development². It is the third of three programmed workshops on operationalizing the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-fund Project, the IGIF focuses on improving and strengthening national geospatial information management, systems and infrastructure, capacities and capabilities towards achieving national development priorities and national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and to leave no one behind. The IGIF anchored by its nine strategic pathways, together with the Implementation Guide, provides Member States a mechanism for articulating and demonstrating national leadership in integrated geospatial information management, and the capacity to take positive steps.

The Workshop

The three-day workshop was a peer-to-peer learning event to raise and improve awareness, knowledge and understanding of the IGIF, the GSGF, and the integrative role of geospatial information for participants from Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. It addressed the availability and accessibility of geospatial information, and its integration with statistics and other data, inter-alia, the data demands in support of national development priorities and national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The workshop introduced, informed and worked through with invited participants the implementation guidance and suggested approach to operationalize the IGIF according to their national circumstances through the designing and development of a country-level action plan for integrated geospatial information management.

This International Workshop sought to contribute to the strengthening of nationally integrated geospatial information management towards the production, dissemination and application of geospatial information for national development priorities and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also explained the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework as an important bridge that enables a range of data to be integrated from both statistical and geospatial communities and also other data sources, through the application of the five principles and supporting key elements. GSGF permits the production of standardized and integrated geospatially enabled statistical data. Through the IGIF, countries can evolve their national spatial data infrastructures and capacities, transitioned towards nationally integrated geospatial information management towards evidence-based policy and decision making. The IGIF anchored by its nine strategic pathways, together with the Implementation Guide, provides Member States a mechanism for articulating and demonstrating national leadership in integrated geospatial information management, and the capacity to take positive steps.

¹ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-fund Project “Strengthening National Geospatial Information Management Capacities towards Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

² Established in 2016, following the pledge by the Government of the People's Republic of China to contribute to the United Nations over a ten-year period with the aim to work together to achieve the goals of the Charter of the United Nations through implementation of innovative, forward-looking and pro-active projects and activities financed by the Trust Fund.

The international workshop was attended by 30 participants from seven Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asian countries³, UNECE⁴, UNDP-Belarus, UN-GGIM: Europe, UN-GGIM: Geospatial Societies⁵ (International Cartographic Association) and European Free Trade Association⁶ (EFTA). It was highly interactive and participatory including breakout activities, where invited participants exchanged, presented and discussed their national situation and progress over the years to strengthen their national arrangements in spatial data infrastructures and capacities to produce geo-statistical data.

The venue was conducive, provided by the host, a conference room that included facilities for simultaneous interpretation from English to Russian and vice versa. a national spatial data infrastructure. The interpretation service was supported by EFTA whereas UNDP-Belarus provided with refreshments and snacks.

The workshop began with opening and welcome statements by the Ms. Inna Medvedeva, *Chairperson, National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus*; Ms. Alexandra Solovieva, *Resident Representative, United Nations Development Program – Belarus Country Office*; and Ms. Carol Agius⁷, *Administrator, Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM: Europe)*. The opening statements stressed:

- the importance of the SDGs for Belarus and how the application of geospatial information in their recent census contributed to location-based statistics;
- the importance of geospatial information in SDGs monitoring efforts and for providing knowledge, especially about the environment;
- the need for good cooperation and interdisciplinary efforts, in the situation of Belarus, in producing its 259 national indicators (147 are global indicators with 112 proxies); and
- continuing country-level support, for UNDP-Belarus, the work towards a national SDGs monitoring platform and to operationalize new and emerging frameworks including for geo-statistics.

Ms. Anastasia Uelskaya, also from BelStat, provided the workshop with a short briefing on safety, health and environment matters and also the housekeeping announcements. Invited participants were then invited to introduce themselves including their expectations. Many shared of their need to improve their understanding of the IGIF and the GSGF and how to implement these frameworks in support of their daily activities. Others spoke of the opportunities afforded by the workshop to engage one another, to share experiences, and to learn from one another, particularly in the application of geospatial information within statistical production processes. And there were those that spoke of their desire for better coordination of the various national activities around the SDGs.

A total of 26 presentations were delivered at the workshop, 16 of which were from the seven participating countries, two from UNECE-Statistics Division, one from EFTA-Statistical Office, and one from UN-GGIM: Europe. There were six presentations from the UN Secretariat on Global Geospatial Information Management on the IGIF and the GSGF.

³ Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine. Invitations were extended to Albania, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

⁴ Statistics Division

⁵ International Cartographic Association

⁶ Statistical Office

⁷ On behalf of Mr. Tomas Patek, Chair of UN-GGIM: Europe

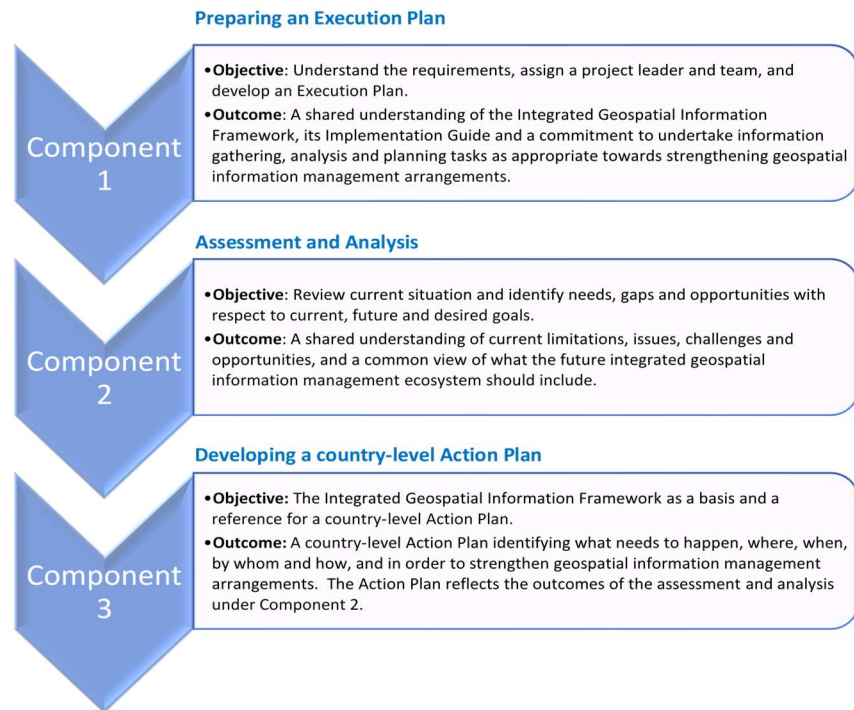
Participants took the opportunity in their presentations to assess the ‘state-of-play’ in their respective countries with regards to strengthening their national infrastructures and capacities in geospatial information management, and in the integration of statistical, geospatial and other data for national development needs and for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Some of these national presentations also highlighted issues and challenges, a common thread was around the ‘how to’ – how to integrate data from multiple sources or to apply geospatial information for statistics or to implement internationally developed standards in their production processes, and also the lack of capabilities and competencies for some of these needed efforts.

The Overarching Strategic Framework was explained to the participants. It is a forward-looking Framework built on national needs and circumstances, provides the overarching strategic messages and more expansive and integrated national framework, particularly focusing on policy perspectives and elements of geospatial information. It sets the context of ‘why’ integrated geospatial information management is a critical element of national social, economic and environmental development. It has both a Vision and Mission statement, to communicate the overarching aim of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework.

The workshop considered the integration of statistical, geospatial and other data towards evidence for policy and decision-making, and to leave no one behind. The GSGF through the application of its five principles and supporting key elements, permits the production of standardized geospatially enabled statistical data. The resulting data can be integrated with statistical, geospatial, and other information to inform and facilitate data-driven and evidence-based policies and decisions. The GSGF is the bridge that enables a range of data to be integrated from both statistical, geospatial communities and other data communities to support national development priorities, the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Census and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Participants were presented and interacted on the draft Implementation Guide that aims to provide the ‘what’, the specific guidance and options to be taken by countries in implementing the IGIF. The Guide captures strategic to operational needs with guiding principles, not detailed nor prescriptive. It expands on each of the nine strategic pathways, comprises references, good practices and specific principles and actions for each of the Pathways, including those generated through a great body of knowledge and work of the the Subcommittee, Expert and Working Groups of UN-GGIM. The intention of the Guide is to provide guidance, options and recommended actions for governments to establish ‘nationally’ integrated geospatial information management in such a way that transformational change is enabled, visible and sustainable.

The approach to operationalize the IGIF was suggested to the participants, with three components and sixteen recommended tasks that will lead to the designing, development and preparation of country-level Action Plans according to national circumstances. Country-level Action Plan was also better understood, viewed as the ‘requirements document’ for national integrated geospatial information management, it references the specific guidance, options and actions provided in the Implementation Guide and addresses each of the nine strategic pathways taking into consideration national circumstances. The suggested approach is accompanied by a suite of resource materials, sixteen in total, corresponded to the sixteen recommended tasks. A number of these resource materials were presented and explained to the participants at the workshop.



The approach to operationalize the IGIF through a country-level Action Plan was welcomed and adjudged to be workable and feasible. The resource materials being developed corresponding to each of the sixteen recommended tasks was particularly welcomed given the approach is one that is self-paced. Participants welcomed the fact that country-level Action Plan is designed, developed and prepared by them with their assessment and analyses including stakeholder engagement, and subsequently implemented by them.

Participants acknowledged that they were better informed and improved their knowledge and understanding on the IGIF - the Overarching Strategic Framework (IGIF Part I), the Implementation Guide (IGIF Part II), and the Country-level Action Plan (IGIF Part III). Participants also improved their knowledge and understanding of the GSGF – an important bridge that enables a range of data from a multiplicity of sources to be integrated.

Participants requested to be kept abreast with the development of the Implementation Guide and also the resource materials to design and develop a country-level Action Plan. There's the need to promote and share the guidance, options and resource materials as they are developed and become available to operationalize the IGIF. The importance of capacity development activities to introduce, instruct and sustain the understanding of both the IGIF and the GSGF was stressed, including the process to design, develop and prepare, and subsequently, to implement a country-level Action Plan.

Through interactions, discussions and break-out activities, participants identified Strategic Pathways 8 – Capacity and Education, 2 – Policy and Legal; and 3 – Financial as their collective priorities. In this activity, all nine strategic pathways⁸ were identified as a priority by the participants.

⁸ In one of the breakout activities, participants discussed and identified up to three Strategic Pathways considered as their country's priority

Participants also –

- shared they had a better understanding of the approach to implement the Framework at their country-level and appreciated that there are resources available to support their “self-paced” efforts towards designing and developing their Action Plans;
- understood the Framework (all three parts) provided them a mechanism and a pathway to evolve their national spatial data infrastructure towards nationally integrated geospatial information management, strengthening existing infrastructures and capacities to serve the demands of sustainable societal, economic and environmental development according to national priorities and circumstances;
- identified the importance and need to develop capacity in budget estimation and to conduct socio-economic analysis;
- expressed willingness⁹ to design and develop their respective country-level Action Plans following the suggested approach, with a series of assessments and analyses and which is self-paced; and
- understood they needed resources including budgets in the process, both in designing and developing their country-level Action Plans, and more importantly, when implementing the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework.

The collaboration between UNDP-Belarus country office, EFTA, UNECE and UN Secretariat (UN-GGIM) was welcomed and necessary in the midst of scarce resources to further capacity and capability development and support amongst EECCA countries. At the close, participants were encouraged to continue to network with one another and further their peer-to-peer engagement and learning. Participants were also encouraged to collaborate nationally to address the unprecedented data demands for sustainable national development and the SDGs, and in this regard, to share their data and information, and to integrate geospatial, statistical and other data. Participants were requested to share the outcomes and take-aways from the workshop with their respective leaderships including to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of the GSGF and the IGIF. The UN Secretariat availed their support (albeit remotely) to countries seeking to operationalize the IGIF through country-level Action Plans.

*Minsk, Belarus
28 November 2019*

⁹ Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine