



## Virtual Expert Meeting on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management

15 April 2021

10:30 hrs. – 13:00 hrs. (UTC)/06:30 a.m. – 09:00 a.m. (EDT-New York/UTC-4)

### Background

At its tenth session the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), in making Decision 10/103, “welcomed the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) as a means to strengthen national geospatial information management arrangements within and across Member States and noted the global significance of the IGIF, which can be applied to any country to guide transformational change”. The IGIF provides a basis, a reference and a mechanism for countries when establishing or strengthening their national geospatial information management arrangements and related infrastructures, or to coordinate activities to achieve alignment between and across existing national capabilities and infrastructures. The Framework translates 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, improve and sustain more effective geospatial information management arrangements. The IGIF Implementation Guide<sup>1</sup>, adopted in September 2020 by UN-GGIM<sup>2</sup> at its tenth session, provides the specific guidance and recommended actions to be taken by Member States to establish, improve or strengthen their national arrangements in geospatial information management, systems and infrastructures.

The IGIF Strategic Pathway 2: Policy and Legal seeks to establish a robust policy and legal framework that is essential for instituting effective, efficient and secure management and exchange of geospatial information - nationally and sub-nationally. The objective is to address current policy and legal issues by improving the policies and laws associated with, and having an impact on, geospatial information management. This is achieved by proactively monitoring the policy and legal environment, including mandating responsibility for the production of data, and keeping abreast of issues and challenges arising from the evolving, innovative and creative use of geospatial information and emerging technologies.

UN-GGIM is cognizant that the need to address policy and legal issues that impact geospatial information management has become more critical as innovative and creative applications arising from new and emerging technologies and devices can be disruptive to existing policy, legal and regulatory frameworks. Examples include, the acquisition and application of geospatial information from remotely operated aerial systems, smart cities initiatives, the internet of things, autonomous vehicles and pervasive mobile applications. These technologies and applications are being used to consume and produce location-based services and information at an increasing pace and volume.

Hence, at the tenth session, UN-GGIM in its Decision 10/110 encouraged the Working Group on Policy and Legal Frameworks on Geospatial Information Management to work with candidate Member States in the implementation of strategic pathway 2: policy and legal of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, to consider appropriate mechanisms to promote data sharing and exchange and to improve the availability, accessibility and usability of geospatial information, including across Member States.

<sup>1</sup> <https://ggim.un.org/IGIF/part2.cshtml>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/10th-session/>



The Secretariat and the Centre for Spatial Law and Policy together with the Working Group are developing standard legal instruments (contract, policy, legislation) that Member States can tailor to implement the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) to:

- i) promote data sharing and exchange; and
- ii) improve the availability, accessibility and usability of geospatial information including across Member States.

### About the expert meeting

This meeting of invited experts will discuss, consider and provide further feedbacks and inputs for the preparation and development of drafts of the following documents -

- Annotated Geospatial Information Data Sharing Agreement
- Form Geospatial Information Management Policy
- Model Geospatial Information Management Legislation

The expert meeting will also consider the substantive content of the “preamble section” to each of the proposed instruments. This section is intended to set the appropriate context and/or rationale for each of the instrument, and to outline the intent, purpose and audience. Additional consideration may be needed to include a segment on “how and who to use these resources”.

This expert meeting will be participatory, where the participants are expected to be active; engage in discussions and have the opportunity to comment and contribute. Prior to wrapping up, the meeting will also comment on the proposed follow-on expert meeting involving expert representatives of Member States.

This follow-on expert meeting will include countries known to be actively preparing to operationalize the IGIF through country-level Action Plans. The proposed objectives of this follow-on expert meeting are -

- To raise awareness on Strategic Pathway 2 of the IGIF within the global policy and legal community;
- To discuss the relationship of legislation, policies and agreements in national geospatial information management; and
- To consult and obtain feedback from invited Member States and relevant stakeholders on the (a) Annotated Geospatial Information Data Sharing Agreement; (b) Form Geospatial Information Management Policy; and (c) Model Geospatial Information Management Legislation.

### The proposed instruments

Annotated Geospatial Information Data Sharing Agreement – The annotated Geospatial Information Data Sharing Agreement is intended to provide national geospatial information management authorities/agencies an annotated form of legal document by which geospatial data can be shared within government if existing agreements are not adequate or responsive to the country’s needs. The goal is to provide a resource that can be adapted and tailored by national authorities/agencies together with their legal personnel to apply the principles of the IGIF to their unique legal systems and national circumstances. This document will include examples of contractual language that aligns with each of the elements listed in the Compendium on Licensing of Geospatial Information as well as alternative language that could be used depending upon the type of geospatial data being shared and the intended use.

Form Geospatial Information Management Policy - A geospatial information sharing policy template that aligns with the elements of Strategic Pathway 2: Policy and Legal of the IGIF as well as other relevant IGIF Strategic Pathways. It includes basic principles to enhance geospatial information sharing within government as well as guidance to reference and follow. The document also includes drafting notes to explain important sections and how the authorities/agencies can adapt and tailor the template to their respective policy and legal frameworks and national circumstances.

Model Geospatial Information Management Legislation – A model geospatial information management legislation addresses the IGIF Strategic Pathways. The purpose is to provide national authorities/agencies a model or template that could serve as an initial or practical starting point to codify IGIF in law. The goal is for relevant government agencies tailor and adapt it to the current and desired future state of integrated geospatial information management in their respective countries, cognizant of their national policy and legal framework and national circumstances.

## Language

The expert meeting will be conducted in English.

## Participants

This virtual expert meeting is a closed event. Participation is solely by invitation only. Invited experts are actively seeking to develop a set of legal documents tailored to the IGIF in order to improve the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information nationally; to address policy and legal considerations, including in data sharing and dissemination; and the preparation of policy and legislation to strengthen nationally integrated geospatial information management.

## Organizers

The United Nations Statistics Division of DESA as the Secretariat of UN-GGIM will organize this virtual expert meeting together with the Centre for Spatial Law and Policy and the UN-GGIM Working Group on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management.

## Points of contact

CheeHai TEO  
UN Global Geospatial Information Management Section  
Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Email : teo@un.org

Kevin Pomfret  
Centre for Spatial Law and Policy  
Email : kevin@spatiallaw.com