



**International Advisory Committee (IAC) for the
United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC)
Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China**

Terms of Reference version 1.0

I. Background

Since its establishment by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2011, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) has been very aware of the need to improve and strengthen the growth of national geospatial information management and associated enabling technologies to assist developing countries and to support a capacity-building program to meet the needs of national development priorities and national implementations for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This was recognized by ECOSOC in July 2016 when, following a year-long consultative process on the comprehensive review of the work and operations of UN-GGIM, the Council adopted resolution 2016/27 entitled ‘Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management’. The resolution broadened and strengthened the mandate of UN-GGIM as the relevant body on geospatial information consisting of government experts, and to report on all matters relating to geography, geospatial information, and related topics.

The Moganshan Declaration, issued by participants at the conclusion of the first United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) in November 2018, supported “the establishment of Global Centers of Excellence on Geospatial Knowledge, including in Deqing, to promote and build global geospatial capacity and capability, develop collaborative knowledge and innovation hubs for harnessing contemporary methods, technologies and analytics in geospatial information, facilitate access to regional and global information and data sources including Earth observations, and to improve and strengthen national geospatial information management to assist developing countries to implement the SDGs.”

The concept of, and understanding towards, a Global Geospatial Knowledge Centre of Excellence gained considerable support, momentum, and commitment by the international community. Therefore, the Government of China and the United Nations expressed their intention for further collaboration when signing a Memorandum of Intent in Beijing, China on 28 April 2019. The Memorandum committed the parties to consider and progress in more detail the arrangements and cooperation modalities to further develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of China and the United Nations.

In making decision 9/101 at its ninth session in August 2019, UN-GGIM “welcomed the efforts of the United Nations and the Government of China in developing a proposal to jointly advance the establishment, led by the United Nations, of a Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre



in Deqing, China, providing opportunities to build global geospatial capacity and capability and to improve and strengthen expertise on how to prepare for national geospatial information management arrangements in countries, especially developing countries.” Decision 10/101 of the tenth session of UN-GGIM in September 2020 emphasized these same efforts.

A series of collaborative and productive consultations between the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), as the UN-GGIM Secretariat, and the Government of China, through the Ministry of Natural Resources, were convened from 2019 to 2022. These negotiations, including a Memorandum of Understanding on the ‘Operationalization of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC)’, were concluded in May 2022 when each party signed Agreements in a virtual ceremony that formally established the UN-GGKIC.

In adopting resolution 2022/24 entitled ‘Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements’ on 22 July 2022, ECOSOC recognized “the sustained efforts of UN-GGIM to establish the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China, and the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence at the United Nations campus in Bonn, Germany, each of which will, in an open, inclusive, participatory and transparent manner, provide opportunities to develop and expand global geospatial capacity, competence and capability, and to strengthen geospatial information management arrangements in countries, especially developing countries.” Further, ECOSOC reiterated “the importance of strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee of Experts, particularly for the achievement of its operations focused on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, to strengthen and ensure its continued effectiveness and benefits to all Member States.”

In making decision 12/101 at its twelfth session in August 2022, UN-GGIM “noted the progress and efforts to finalize the modalities for the establishment of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China, and the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence in Bonn, Germany, and appreciated the involvement of the International Advisory Committees throughout the setup process, and encouraged them to remain engaged and to regularly share progress with the Committee as the Centre’s operationalize their activities.” In making decision 13/101 at its thirteenth session in August 2023, UN-GGIM “noted the progress and efforts made to finalize the modalities for the establishment of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing and the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence in Bonn, as tangible means to develop and expand global geospatial capacity and capability and to strengthen geospatial information management arrangements in countries, especially developing countries, and looked forward to ongoing updates on the operations of the Centres at future sessions of the Committee of Experts.”

The Centre’s overarching goal is to work towards the ambitions of implementation of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) set by Member States, to develop capacity, promote and support the required innovation, leadership, coordination, and standards to develop, strengthen, integrate and deliver national geospatial information policy, data, systems, tools, services and capabilities into their national government development policies, strategies and arrangements. The objective is to strengthen and advance the geospatial information management capacity development capabilities of Member States, especially developing countries, and to strengthen knowledge sharing and innovative cooperation.



In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding on the Operationalization of the UNGGKIC, a Steering Committee and an International Advisory Committee are to be formed to provide the required governance and oversight of the Centre.

II. Mandate

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and the Government of China on the Operationalization of the UN-GGKIC, there shall be an International Advisory Committee (IAC), comprised of international geospatial experts with balanced geographical representation and diversity from UN-GGIM, to provide the required guidance and advice on the development, implementation, and review of the substantive annual programme of work of the Centre, in consultation with the Director of the Centre. In accordance with UN-GGIM decision 12/101, the IAC shall regularly share progress with UN-GGIM as the Centre operationalizes its activities.

III. Objective

The overarching aim of the IAC is to provide the required guidance and advice on the development, implementation, and review of the substantive annual programme of work of the Centre, in consultation with the Director of the Centre.

In this regard, the IAC will guide, advise and review the Centre's annual programme of work so that there are:

- a) Programs and activities that: i) strengthen and advance the geospatial information management capacity development capabilities of Member States, especially developing countries; ii) strengthen knowledge sharing and innovative cooperation of Member States; and iii) advance implementation of a core function of UN-GGIM, namely mobilizing, catalyzing and facilitating access to global financial, technical and scientific resources needed to promote, monitor and assess the implementation of national geospatial information management general principles, frameworks and guides, promoting applications of geospatial information in other fields.
- b) Synergies and coordination with related activities implemented by other International Organizations, the United Nations, and other key elements of the global UN-GGIM architecture, including its regional committees and thematic networks.

The IAC will work with the Director of the Centre so that the Centre coordinates, engages and supports the aims, objectives and mandates of UN-GGIM, including in the development of norms, frameworks, principles and guides, and capacity development initiatives, as appropriate.

IV. Key Functions

Subject to guidance by the Steering Committee and UN-GGIM, key functions of the IAC shall include, but not be limited to, providing guidance and advice on the implementation of the Centre's programme of work and priorities. The Centre's priority is to initially focus on:



Technical assistance and capacity building

- Provide technical assistance and capacity building for national SDG monitoring and reporting and allowing greater availability and visibility of country data at sub-national, national, regional and global levels.
- Develop and disseminate methodological guidance and tools for countries to collect, manage and communicate policy-relevant, actionable SDG data and information in an integrated, standardized and consistent manner.
- Leverage international geospatial technical expertise, capabilities, technologies and experiences to assist developing countries in the region and globally to develop their own capacity and capabilities in geospatial information to support sustainable development.
- Become a leading establishment for capacity development and strengthening the capabilities of countries to develop effective strategies and policies in geospatial information and management in the implementation of the SDGs, including with appropriate enabling tools and technologies.

Knowledge centre

- Build upon, scale, resource and support the implementation of efforts initiated by Statistics Division, DESA and related organizations to develop a global network of interoperable and country-led SDG data hubs (i.e., SDG Data Alliance).
- Foster communities of practice for exploring and sharing information and transferring capacities and specialized knowledge through training and materials.
- Link and promote collaborative modalities of actions within the global UN-GGIM community through the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), its Implementation Guide, and Country-level Action Plans.

Innovation and technology hub

- Leverage enabling technologies towards the implementation of a system-of-systems approach to assist countries in monitoring and reporting on the SDGs within reliable, secure and scalable platforms.
- Establish links with appropriate research institutes, think tanks, the UN-GGIM Thematic Networks (Geospatial Societies, Academic Network, Private Sector Network, and UN Geospatial Network), and other Centre's of Excellence to be established in order to advance the critical role of geospatial information in global development, and convene international fora, symposia and seminars.
- Develop specific innovation projects on selected topics and countries to implement new concepts and methods in geospatial information for the SDGs, including in the disaggregation of data by geographic location – integrating geography and statistics.

V. Governance

The IAC is responsible for providing strategic and substantive orientations to the Centre. It reports regularly to the Steering Committee, and shall regularly share progress with UN-GGIM . The Steering Committee, responsible for the overall programmatic management of the Centre, can propose new strategic orientations for the IAC to consider.



VI. Membership and Composition

The membership of the IAC shall comprise international geospatial experts, with balanced geographical representation and diversity, from UN-GGIM at the highest executive leadership level and will include a co-Chair of UN-GGIM, and at least one of the Co-Chairs of the High-Level Group on the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF). Total membership of the IAC shall not exceed 24 members. Additionally, the Director of the Centre will be an ex-officio member of the IAC.

Given the nature of the global technical leadership, coordination and oversight requirements of the IAC, membership shall embrace experts with demonstrated experience in the development and/or strengthening and implementation of national to global geospatial information management arrangements, including the UN-IGIF and SDG Data Alliance, and being willing and able to contribute to advance and support the key priorities of the Centre.

Membership is to be reviewed every two years. The review shall be based on actual participation and contribution from the members as demonstrated through interactions with, and activity reports to, the Steering Committee, IAC members, IAC meetings, the Director of the Centre, and associated fora. In normal circumstances, a member should not serve more than two consecutive two (2) year periods.

VII. Co-Chairs

The IAC shall elect two (2) co-Chairs to serve for a 2-year period, with co-Chair elections occurring biennially, such that one new co-Chair is elected every two years to ensure continuity. The co-Chairs shall be selected from the members as defined in Section VI above, such that consideration of the equity between developed and developing countries occurs. As a co-Chair, the particular member will not be subjected to the maximum of two consecutive two (2) year periods provided in Section VI above.

The co-Chairs shall provide leadership and coordination including setting priorities for the full functioning of the IAC. After the expiry of their term, former co-Chairs shall be encouraged to provide support to the newly selected co-Chairs to facilitate continuity.

VIII. Secretariat

The Centre, with the support of the UN-GGIM Secretariat, shall serve as the permanent Secretariat of the IAC. They shall provide the day-to-day management and coordination when necessary; undertake internal and external communications on behalf of the IAC; and support the IAC with substantive guidance when appropriate and requested.

In coordination with the co-Chairs, the Secretariat shall prepare the agenda and organize the meetings of the IAC, issue notices and any other support activities as deemed necessary.

IX. Methods of Work

The IAC shall work through electronic exchanges with an annual meeting hosted by the Centre. Where feasible, the annual meeting of the IAC will be conducted in conjunction with an international peer-to-peer knowledge and innovation exchange or capacity development event



organized by the Centre. The IAC can also conduct online meetings, form specific task groups and/or organize ad hoc meetings as needed.

X. Reporting

The co-Chairs, with support from the Secretariat and Director of the Centre, shall coordinate, monitor, and report on the activities of the IAC to the Steering Committee. The Centre shall formally report on the implementation and progress of the programme of work of the Centre to the annual sessions of UN-GGIM, through the preparation of written reports and background documents, under the standing agenda item ‘Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements.’

XI. Review of the Terms of Reference

In consultation with the Steering Committee, the IAC may review these current terms of reference as the need arises, to ensure that the IAC carries out its functions efficiently and effectively based on its mandate.

18 April 2024

