

Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information

Work Plan 2020 - 2022

I. Introduction

The United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information was established by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) in 2013 to pursue the implementation of a statistical-geospatial framework that would be applicable in the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, with the understanding it could apply to other censuses, such as agriculture censuses, economic censuses, etc.

A Framework for the world, the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF) enables a range of data to be integrated from both statistical and geospatial communities and, through the application of its five Principles and supporting key elements, permits the production of harmonised and standardised geospatially enabled statistical data. The resulting data can then be integrated with statistical, geospatial, and other information to inform and facilitate data driven and evidence-based decision making to support local, sub-national, national, regional, and global development priorities and agendas, such as the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At its ninth session in August 2019, UN-GGIM adopted the GSGF (decision 9/106) as a common methodology for geospatially enabling statistical and administrative data, and to ensure that data from a range of sources can be integrated with other geospatial information based on 'location'. The GSGF was subsequently endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its fifty-first session in March 2020 (decision 51/123).

Now, there is an urgent and critical need to raise awareness and promote the GSGF as a tool to enable countries to produce geospatially enabled statistical data for national to global decision-making. Therefore, this Work Plan examines the objectives and functions (in section II) as provided in the terms of reference¹ to guide the work of the Expert Group for the 2020-2022 period and details specific activities, including the formation of Task Teams and Work Streams (in section III). This Work Plan was agreed with the Expert Group in principle at its sixth meeting in Manchester, United Kingdom in October 2019. This present Work Plan has been revised in consultation with the Expert Group to better reflect the dynamic short- and long term needs of both the Statistical and Geospatial Communities.

¹ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-item-3u-EG-ISGI-Terms-of-Reference-E.pdf>



II. Objectives and Functions

The objectives of the Expert Group are to:

1. Provide high-level coordination and a forum for dialogue, among representatives of both the statistical and geospatial communities, on global efforts relating to the integration of statistical and geospatial information;
2. Play a leadership role by raising awareness and highlighting the importance of reliable, timely, fit-for-purpose, and integrated statistical and geospatial information to support social, economic, environmental, and resilience policy decision making, including at the sub-national and regional levels;
3. Prioritise and propose Work Plans and guidelines that advance national and global efforts relating to the integration of statistical and geospatial information, particularly those associated with the GSGF, so that there is increased information to support social, economic, environmental, and resilience policy decision making, including at the sub-national and regional levels;
4. Promote and support activities that facilitate the implementation of the GSGF, particularly in the International Rounds of Population Censuses and in other censuses, including agriculture censuses, economic censuses, etc, and in global initiatives, such as the 2030 Agenda; and,
5. Support the United Nations Statistical Commission and UN-GGIM in the development of norms, principles, guides and standards to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable integrated statistical and geospatial information, including any regional capacity development initiatives.

The elaborated functions of the Expert Group are to:

1. Provide a forum for dialogue and coordination between Member States, United Nations System, and other international organisations and experts with a view to:

- i. Undertake activities that foster collaboration between statistical and geospatial communities at national and international levels, including to identify and address common issues associated with the integration of statistical and geospatial information, particularly the implementation of the GSGF;
- ii. Support the development, promotion, and sharing of guidance material and good practice documentation in relation to the GSGF and support the strengthening of the GSGF through its development, *inter-alia*, in the areas of geocoding, common geographies, and interoperability;
- iii. Identify existing capability development programmes in National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and National Geospatial Information Agencies (NGIAs), National Mapping Agencies (NMAs), and other geospatial organisations that could be leveraged; including the ability to promote and standardise geocoding processes, methodologies and frameworks (for example: dynamic linking techniques);
- iv. Promote, foster, and encourage close collaboration between NSOs, NGIAs, NMAs, and other relevant agencies so that the integration of statistical and geospatial information can be achieved, while ensuring its privacy and confidentiality in-line with prevailing guidelines and practices;
- v. Encourage the use of existing, and support, the development of new forms of data, data and metadata standards as well as other standards to enhance the interface of location-based datasets from multiple sources to ensure interoperable and usable data;
- vi. Encourage the development and modernisation of statistical and geospatial capacity within NSOs, NGIAs, and NMAs through capacity building and the promotion of good practices;



- vii. Develop communication mechanisms to increase the visibility of geospatial activities, beyond specialist geospatial units that exist in some national statistics offices and other agencies, to help keep the statistical and geospatial communities aware of the developments coming from the Expert Group's programme of work;
 - viii. Encourage the work of the geospatial community towards the expanding of national data infrastructure, *inter-alia* through the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and working on identifying and strengthening the interlinkage between the work of the Expert Group and the work programmes of the UNSC, UN-GGIM, and the relevant regional bodies to enhance the integration of statistical and geospatial information.
- 2. Bring to the attention of UNSC, UN-GGIM, and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) new developments relating to the integration of geospatial and statistical information, the work on implementing the GSGF, as well as other developments and advancements coming from the Expert Group's programme of work:**
- i. Respond to the dynamic integrated geospatial and statistical data needs demanded by the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As COVID-19 has elevated the importance of integrated geospatial and statistical information, the Expert Group affirms to promote and support activities that can provide Member States with guidance to develop and strengthen their integration efforts;
 - ii. Encourage the implementation of Global agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SAMOA Pathway, Paris Agreement etc; Frameworks, such as the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, the Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters, and other mechanisms that require high-quality, timely and reliable integrated statistical and geospatial information;
- 3. Propose Work Plans to address the main area of focus identified by Member States while ensuring that there are no overlaps or duplication of initiatives with other groups:**
- i. Affirm to frequently review the work plan to ensure that Expert Group and its task teams and work streams remain aligned to the overarching requirements and mandate provided to it by the Statistical Commission and UN-GGIM, while responding to the dynamic and prevailing needs of global agendas and national development priorities.



III. Activities

A. Support the development of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework

- Develop a matrix which maps the interlinkages between the principles and key elements of the GSGF and the Strategic Pathways of the IGIF to further document the relationship between the GSGF and IGIF; and,
- Document the interconnected relationship between the GSGF and IGIF and develop documentation that enables the mutual implementation of both frameworks.

B. Develop a Communications Strategy

- Develop a communication strategy that enables the promotion and awareness raising activities of the outputs of the EG-ISGI to support:
 - Material to assist 'leaders and change agents' with promoting and communicating the work of the EG-ISGI and the GSGF;
 - Guidance to assist with the 2020 Censuses;
 - The development of communication material that can be used to identify the differences between the GSGF and IGIF; and,
 - Provide guidance to assist with the reporting of progress towards the attainment of the SDGs.

C. Establishment of Task Teams

a. Task Team on Capacity Building

The aim of this Task Team is to develop guidance regarding the implementation and strengthening of statistical-geospatial capacity in countries. The objective of this Task Team is for the EG-ISGI to help foster the coordination of capacity building, through a stocktaking of activities in statistical-geospatial integration and to mitigate the potential for duplication (or divergence) of work. Specific tasks include:

- Diagnosing the readiness for implementing the GSGF at the country level;
- Identifying how, where and by whom capacity building is conducted;
- Identify and develop material that enables capacity development;
- Investigate the use of Maturity Models as a tool for the assessment of capacity.

b. Task Team on Privacy and Confidentiality

The aim of this Task Team is to provide a document that develops guidance and recommendations for the management of privacy and confidentiality issues when using, sharing or releasing geospatial data within NSOs.

- Identifying the issues relevant to Privacy and Confidentiality, gather existing material and literature on the topic, develop a methodology to summarise material and literature and extract its very essence;
- Coordinate with relevant groups of the Statistical Commission and UN-GGIM, including the Working Group on Legal and Policy Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management to ensure a common basis is established and that resources are optimally used and distributed;



- Organise the gathered ideas and recommendations and through a consultation within the Expert Group compile a guidance document for the consideration of UNSC and UN-GGIM;
- Attend or organize specific events likely to highlight or fuel the work of the Task Team.

c. Task Team on the Principles of the GSGF

The aim of this Task Team is to help provide guidance to enable countries to implement the GSGF and to help develop the substance of the GSGF, as a living document. This will be achieved through three Work Streams, Geocoding, Common Geographies, and Interoperability.

- *The Work Stream on Geocoding* aims to review the options for geocoding into a guidance paper, providing recommendations for the Expert Group to report to UNSC and UN-GGIM;
- *The Work Stream on Common Geographies* aims to review the options for a common geography into a guidance paper, providing recommendations for the Expert Group to report to UNSC and UN-GGIM; and,
- *The Work Stream on Interoperability* aims to raise awareness of the importance of interoperable standards, promote good practices in interoperability for data processes, amplify the broader work of the international Standards Development Organisations to Statistical Agencies and investigate the mechanisms needed for the GSGF to proceed down a standards path.

D. Consider mechanisms to raise engagement and participation within the work programme of the EG-ISGI by Member States

- Coordinate with UN-GGIM: Europe (and identify complementary work ongoing within the regions), on their work on the integration of statistical and geospatial information;
- Identify potential interlinkages with other groups (including IAEG-SDG: WGGI, the Open Geospatial Consortium's Statistical DWG, the Working Group on Legal and Policy Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management and others) to support the collaboration and delivery of this work programme.

E. Illuminate case studies and examples of good practice in the adoption of the GSGF

- Seek and collate use cases that can be used to support the implementation of the GSGF at the national and regional level;
- Seek and collate use cases that demonstrate how the GSGF has been used to benefit the national, or regional, response to the COVID-19 pandemic, or could have been used if there were available;

IV. Reporting and Working Modalities

The Expert Group will report to both the UNSC and UN-GGIM at their respective annual sessions. This will include the preparation of written reports and related background documents as appropriate. Further working modalities of the Expert Group are within its Terms of Reference².

² <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-item-3u-EG-ISGI-Terms-of-Reference-E.pdf>

