Work Plan 2020/2021

I. Introduction

In September 2015, Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and tasked the United Nations Statistical Commission to develop the global indicator framework. The overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is "that no one will be left behind"[1].

The follow-up and review processes at all levels will be "rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts"[2], and to "exploit the contribution to be made by a wide range of data, including Earth observation and geospatial information, while ensuring national ownership in supporting and tracking progress"[3].

In July 2019, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), updated the Terms of Reference[4] for its Working Group on Geospatial Information (WGGI) to achieve a greater working relationship, synergy and coordination between the statistical and geospatial information communities. The Terms of Reference, approved by the IAEG-SDGs at its 10th meeting in Addis Ababa in October 2019, provide the objectives, governance, tasks and membership of the WGGI. They established the next phase of the work of the WGGI, and enables it to build on its existing contributions, including the use of geospatial tools for the analysis, production and dissemination of a number of indicators of the global indicator framework.

II. Objectives and Tasks

The overarching aim of the WGGI is to ensure from a statistical and geospatial perspective that one of the key principles of the 2030 Agenda, to leave no one behind, is reflected in the global indicator framework.

Specific objectives are to:

1. Provide expertise and advice to the IAEG-SDGs, custodian agencies and the larger statistical community as to how geospatial information, Earth observations and other new location-based data sources can reliably and consistently contribute to the production and dissemination of the indicators;
2. Review options and provide guidance to the IAEG-SDGs, as to the role of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in considering the use and application of geospatial data and Earth observations, as a mean to contribute to and validate datasets as part of official statistics for SDG indicators.

Tasks will include to:

1. Identify and share:

- Common standards required for the use of geospatial data as a source in the production of official statistics;
- National and regional level experiences, guidelines and best practices in geospatial data production and analysis to measure leaving no one behind;

[1] Preamble, A/RES/70/1 "Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"
[2] Paragraph 74 (g), A/RES/70/1 "Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"
[3] Paragraph 76, A/RES/70/1 "Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"
[4] http://ggim.un.org/documents/WGGI_Terms%20of%20Reference_updated%20July%202019.pdf

- Frameworks and tools for linking statistical and geospatial data for further contributing to the effort of advancing the use of Geospatial Information System (GIS) for the SDGs; and,
- Guidelines and international standards on existing geospatial information platforms to facilitate data exchange and maximize interoperability (Open Geospatial Consortium standards, SDMX information model, etc.).

2. **Showcase how geospatial information can contribute to the indicators and metadata:**
   - As the basic data for the production of the indicator itself;
   - To support and augment statistical data;
   - To improve the production process of statistical data;
   - To validate national statistical data inputs;
   - To communicate and visualize the geographic dimensions and context of the indicators where appropriate; and,
   - To provide granularity and disaggregation of the indicators where appropriate.
3. **Work in close cooperation:**
   - With the custodian agencies and other actors, including the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building (HLG), to propose strategies for undertaking methodological work on specific areas for improving either the calculation of some indicators or disaggregation by geographic location concepts for national and sub-national reporting;
   - Build on existing and ongoing working mechanisms among stakeholders, especially the work of custodian agencies and that of the working groups of the IAEG-SDGs; and
   - Consult widely regarding the status of methodologies and geospatial data collection and input tools as a starting point.
4. **Review the agreed indicators and metadata:**
   - Through a 'geographic location' lens and identify existing geospatial data gaps, methodological and measurements issues, as well as advise on the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs; and,
   - For the initial indicator analysis of geospatial inputs and metadata presented to the IAEG-SDGs by the WGGI (Initial Shortlist), assess what progress exists and where further work needs to be focused.
5. **Support data disaggregation**
   - The IAEG-SDGs has identified data disaggregation as one of its main areas of work for 2020. Through its dedicated work stream on data disaggregation, it will revise and update the technical documentation and guidelines on data disaggregation, and liaise with other working groups and with existing mechanisms for the work on data disaggregation;
   - The WGGI will initiate a process to support the efforts of the IAEG-SDGs work stream on data disaggregation to develop dimensions and categories of data disaggregation for the global SDG indicator framework – specifically for those indicators that require disaggregation by geographic location; and,
   - Identify indicators that require geographic information for disaggregation.

III. Activities

Noting the crucial and urgent need to progress geospatial information within the work of the IAEG-SDGs, and informed by its revised Terms of Reference, the WGGI proposes the following activities, in order of prioritisation, and with timeframes for their completion.

Immediate Activities

For the immediate 6-month period following the tenth meeting of the IAEG-SDGs, the WGGI aims to:

1. **Review the 'shortlist' of SDG Indicators where geospatial information, including Earth observations can contribute to the production of the indicator or its disaggregation:**
    - The original list of 24 indicators was developed in early 2017. The Tiers within the indicators have changed considerably since then, with many elevated from Tier 3 and Tier 2 to Tier 1; and
    - Review the list of indicators, including the noting the revised classification indicators, the updated indicator metadata, and the outcomes of the Work Stream on Disaggregation[5].
2. **Develop and provide guidance to the IAEG-SDGs regarding the outcomes of this review, towards developing a "long list" of SDG indicators:**
    - Elaborate on the revised short list to reflect the revised global indicator framework, prevailing good practices and updated metadata; and,
    - Identify key indicators, where geospatial information, including Earth observations can inform the production of global and national indicators.
3. **Strengthen communication and coordination within the international statistical and geospatial information communities and the IAEG-SDGs:**
    - Develop a communications and coordination mechanism for the WGGI to showcase its work;
    - Promote national, regional, and global efforts for the calculation of SDG indicators using geospatial information, and participate where resources and capacity allow;
    - Engage in efforts to integrate and raise awareness of knowledge related to the WGGI's specific tasks, work, and outcomes;
    - Develop *story telling documents*[6] that detail 2 - 3 indicators, identified as part of the outcomes of III.2, to better visualize, communicate, promote and disseminate progress of the work of the WGGI as widely as possible; and
    - Consider work items or tasks commissioned by the IAEG-SDGs, and means to work with custodian agencies, particularly in the methodological aspect.
4. **Capability inventory:**
    - Consider, review and document types of processes and methodologies that provide real world examples and proven practices in applying geospatial information and Earth observations to produce indicators; and

[5] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-09/BG-Item3a-Data-Disaggregation-E.pdf , table 1

[6] These story telling documents could be through Storymaps, such as those developed by Ireland's GeoHive (https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie) including its Voluntary National Review (https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie/app/ireland-voluntary-national-review-2018) or Mexico's Storymap "Breaking the poverty chains and bringing out untapped potential" (https://arcg.is/Kyb8y)

- Propose recommendations to the IAEG-SDGs of cases which highlight real world examples and proven good practices.

Through reviewing the 'shortlist' of SDG indicators, and evaluating the revised global indicator framework to produce a 'long list', it is aimed that the WGGI can comprehensively identify current progress and gaps, support the methodological development of indicators, and inform countries on methodological good practices for the production of indicators. These packages are sequential and will require the co-Chairs and Secretariat to work closely with the WGGI.

Longer-term Activities

Over the longer-term, following the initial 6 months of activities detailed above, the WGGI will aim to:

5. **WGGI SDGs Geospatial Roadmap:**
    - Develop a WGGI '***SDGs Geospatial Roadmap***' as a strategic information and communications mechanism that 'builds the bridge' between the statistical and geospatial actors working within the global indicator framework;
    - A vision is to see geospatial and location-based information being recognized and accepted as official data for the SDGs and includes key strategic messages and facts;
    - Key Question: Who do we do this with and for? Who is the audience? IAEG-SDGs, which then captures the custodian agencies and Member States. Targeted at key stakeholder engagement and understanding. What is our role, is it in coordination of the geospatial aspects for the IAEG-SDGs?
    - Develop 'story-telling' mechanisms to better visualize, communicate, promote and disseminate progress of the work of the WGGI as widely as possible; and
    - Enhance the awareness of geospatial information and Earth observations, and related data products and tools that can inform the SDGs through its indicators.
6. **Interlinkages among relevant groups:**
    - Identify and foster key interlinkages among relevant groups. Reach out to and initiate virtual meetings with co-chairs/principals of groups to identify interlinkages between relevant aspects of the work items of various entities within the statistical and geospatial community. Groups may include the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics, UN-GGIM: Europe, GEO (EO4SDGs), and other relevant groups - for example the EG-ISGI;
    - Reach out to the IAEG-SDGs work stream on data disaggregation to support the available and required disaggregation dimensions and categories for the global indicator framework – specifically for those indicators related to disaggregation by geographic location. This will be conducted through proposing a quarterly meeting between the WGGI co-chairs and the IAEG-SDGs' work stream on data disaggregation group.
7. **Toolkits and methodologies:**
    - Showcase proven toolkits and agreed methodologies, including tutorials and real-world examples, that will support Member States to improve their application of geospatial information and Earth observations for the production of indicators; and,
    - Consider work items or tasks commissioned by the IAEG-SDGs, and means to work with custodian agencies, particularly in methodological aspects.

8. **Guidance and recommendations:**

- Develop guidance and recommendations for the IAEG-SDGs regarding the use of proven toolkits (including the GEO EO4SDGs Toolkits) and frameworks (including the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) and the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF), among other relevant frameworks) to demonstrate how they relate to the development and use of geospatial information for the production of indicators;
- Identify 4-5 cases studies where SDG indicators derived from geospatial information have been used to support policy and decision making;
- Enable broad consultation and promotion of the outputs of the WGGI, while ensuring the needs of the IAEG-SDGs are being achieved and communicated; and
- Consider the challenges in understanding and use of "official and non-official" data.

These actions will build on the work achieved through the immediate actions. It is aimed that this will strengthen the integration of the work of the WGGI with the broader work of the IAEG-SDGs. Considering the urgency of these tasks, the proposed timeline will be prior to the planned 11th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs in November 2020.

IV. Organisation of Work

This work will be delivered primarily through electronic exchanges, online meetings and, only when opportunity presents, face-to-face meetings. The work will be conducted in an open and participatory manner, and the co-Chairs may invite additional subject matter experts to participate in its work.

The WGGI will agree on its main deliverables and milestones, and conduct its activities until completion of its tasks, these deliverables and milestones will be communicated to the IAEG-SDGs for their endorsement.

V. Reporting

The WGGI will provide status report of its work to the IAEG-SDGs at its plenary meetings, and may, as appropriate, prepare papers, to the IAEG-SDGs, to the Statistical Commission and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) as appropriate.

As agreed at the sixth expert meeting of the Working Group on Geospatial Information,
Mexico City,
March 2020