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New York, 2–4 August 2023

Item 14 of the provisional agenda*

Policy and legal frameworks, including issues related to authoritative data

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present paper contains the report prepared by the Working Group on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management for consideration by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

At its twelfth session, held from 3 to 5 August 2022, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 12/112, in which it commended the Working Group on its progress and the successful leadership transition. The Committee noted the continuing efforts of the Working Group to align its workplan and activities with the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) through the completion of the policy and legal resource kit, which includes model legal instruments (including an agreement, a policy and legislation) to which Member States could refer and, where appropriate, adapt and tailor to their national circumstances when implementing the Framework and improving data sharing and exchange at the country level.

The Committee noted the progress in addressing the issue of authoritative data, authority and custodianship by exploring the various ways that authoritative data had been described and applied, domain-specific understandings and applications of authoritative data, and policy and legal considerations for developing national authoritative data governance frameworks that respect unique national legal systems and circumstances. The Committee also appreciated the Working Group's consideration of the use of geospatial data in its activities and noted that the data ethics landscape was becoming complex.

The Committee recognized that the policy and legal issues that relate to the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information are complex, and welcomed the Working Group's continuing consideration of feasible solutions to real-world problems and the need for effective policy and legal frameworks that ensure lawful, transparent and real-world solutions in order to create preconditions for trust in the new digital era that characterizes our world today.

In this present report, the Working Group provides information on its progress and activities, including its progress in developing, through a collaborative and inclusive process, the draft paper entitled "Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges". Building on its efforts and progress in previous intersessional periods, the Working Group, in the draft paper, addresses issues related to authoritative data, authority and custodianship. The draft paper underwent a series of reviews within the Working Group and consultation with relevant functional groups of the Committee,

* E/C.20/2023/1

before being subjected to a broad global consultation process involving Member States and relevant stakeholders. In the draft paper, the Working Group explores the different ways in which authoritative data is understood and used in different geospatial domains. Traditionally, many jurisdictions have recognized national mapping, cadastral and land registration authorities as official sources of legal and administrative geospatial information. Some domains have well-established legal traditions and robust frameworks governing authoritative data. In other domains, the designation of authoritative data lacks the same rich legal tradition and is thus less entrenched in law. The draft paper is intended as a policy and legal guide to help geospatially enabled government entities, including national mapping, cadastral and land registration authorities, as well as the private sector and civil society, to better produce, and sustain and govern the usage of, geospatial information that is deemed authoritative. It can be used as a supplement to the UN-IGIF, specifically strategic pathway 2: policy and legal, strategic pathway 4: data, and strategic pathway 5: innovation, on matters relating to authority and authoritative data. In the draft paper, the Working Group highlights the importance of authoritative data and the need to have strong, authoritative data governance frameworks nationally and globally. The draft paper is submitted to the Committee for its consideration and endorsement.

In the report, the Working Group also discusses its consideration of, and its progress in its proposed paper on, geospatial data for public good, ethical use, and related issues of privacy, confidentiality and new technologies. Recognizing that, in the view of the Committee, “ethical use of geospatial data” and “data for the public good” are separate concepts, with “ethical use” more commonly informed by guidance than legislation, while noting that a number of related frameworks and activities are under development, the Working Group proposes that its current efforts be refocused on geospatial data for public good and the drafting of a paper aimed at providing guidance to Member States on the basis of a review of the available case law.

In the report, the Working Group also discusses its review and updating of its workplan, its efforts to address complex policy and legal issues in geospatial information management, and its provision of support to the implementation of the UN-IGIF at the country level. In its updated workplan for 2023–2025, the Working Group seeks to continue its engagement activities, through which it has sought to encourage dialogue and rapport between the Committee and policy and legal professionals. The Working Group also proposes to continue its efforts to address the issue of authoritative data by considering fit-for-purpose authoritative data for crises, as an activity to follow up on the paper entitled “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”.

I. Introduction

1. We live in a historical period, the Information Age. Technology and data have shown to be a powerful tool to lift many out of poverty and enrich lives in many ways. For years to come the emerging data ecosystem will continue to be the main driver for change while technology is its enabler. Geospatial information, which is a fundamental element to optimize such development, is often overlooked. The needed information is often not timely, shared, nor integrated with necessary data. Meanwhile, the rapid development and systems we currently have in place raise new questions and concerns relating to responsible and effective use of data, and also around privacy and cyber security. At the same time the current spatial data infrastructure capability is limited when it comes to addressing the growing global challenges.

2. The Committee of Experts has kept abreast of future trends and opportunities in the application and use of geospatial information, technologies and processes and has developed the necessary global policy guidance to facilitate change where it will benefit most. The Committee considered the ‘future geospatial ecosystem’ at its twelfth session in August 2022 and in making decision 12/102, acknowledged that it was a timely and strategically important topic to consider. As reported separately under Agenda Item 6 at this thirteenth session, there is the need to reflect on and position this work in terms of the vision of the Committee of Experts and the geospatial community moving forward, and within the mandates provided by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Moreover, the Committee urged the need for understanding and clarity on how the future geospatial ecosystem would link to the work already carried out by the Committee, including the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), as a solid base for the future geospatial ecosystem.

3. Appropriate and effective policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management can proactively support the development, management and efficient use of geospatial information in policy and decision-making for the public good. The ultimate goal for any effective policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management is to maximize the utility and value of geospatial information with due consideration for privacy, confidentiality, security and risks. The UN-IGIF includes and advocates for sound and robust policy and legal frameworks, as the second of nine strategic pathways, to achieve the goals around enriched societal value and benefits, effective and integrated geospatial information management, and an economic return on investment.

4. The Working Group’s workplan deliverables for 2023-2025 reflect the views and guidance provided by the Committee of Experts and include a paper on geospatial data for public good. Recognizing the views of the Committee that “ethical use of geospatial data” and “data for the public good” are separate concepts, with “ethical use” more commonly informed by guidance rather than legislation, and whilst noting there are a number of frameworks and activities currently under development, the Working Group proposes a refocusing of its ongoing efforts to geospatial data for public good with a proposed paper aimed at providing guidance to Member States based on a review of available case law.

5. During the intersessional period, the Working Group concluded its efforts to address the issue of authoritative data and has before the Committee of Experts as a background document to this present report, the paper entitled “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”. The paper promotes the concept of a continuum of “Control versus Trust” when considering authoritative data governance frameworks according to national circumstances. The Working Group seeks the Committee’s views and endorsement of the paper and proposes to continue its efforts to address the issue of authoritative data by considering fit-for-purpose authoritative data for crises as a follow-up activity, continuing efforts to address the issue of authoritative data.

6. This present report informs the Committee of Experts on the progress and work of the Working Group, including the global consultation for the paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges” and the review of the work plan for the period 2023 – 2025. The report also discusses the complex policy and legal issues being addressed collaboratively. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the Working Group’s activities and considerations including its intention to continue its efforts to address the issue of authoritative data. Points for discussion and decision are provided in paragraph 29.

II. The paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”

7. At its twelfth session, held from 3 to 5 August 2022, the Committee of Experts noted the progress in addressing the issue of authoritative data, authority and custodianship by exploring the various ways authoritativeness has been described and applied, domain-specific understandings and applications of authoritative data¹, and policy and legal considerations for developing national authoritative data governance frameworks that respect unique national legal systems and circumstances.

8. The paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges” addresses the issue of authoritative data, authoritativeness and custodianship, explores the diverse understandings of these topics held across domains and national contexts. The paper provides an overview and some examples of common understandings, uses and domain applications of authoritative data. The paper also discusses policy and legal challenges associated with authoritative data production, use and distribution, including those related to the designation of authoritativeness and the shifting context and diversity, competition, branding, harmonization, and open access.

9. While the authoritative data designation is commonly used by geospatial practitioners, definitions often differ across domains and between sectors. In a similar vein, the governance of authoritative data and practices for codifying the authoritative data designation are influenced by national (or sub-national) legal systems as well as traditions and customs of Member States who employ them. For these reasons, the paper does not attempt to advance a universal definition of authoritative data, instead proposing a “fit for purpose” frame for decision-makers seeking guidance.

10. Recognizing that in some domains and national contexts, the notion of authoritativeness is formalized and entrenched in law with limited opportunity for non-state involvement, the fit for purpose frame is not meant to replace existing understandings or approaches that are functioning as intended. Rather, for those domains or Member States seeking guidance, the paper suggests a “fit for purpose” frame which considers that designation of data as authoritative is heavily dependent on the intended use of the data. According to this framing, in order for any data asset, process or organization to be designated as authoritative, it must be fit for its intended, predefined purpose(s).

11. Domains with well-established geospatial information management systems with legally entrenched definitions of authoritativeness may already be in a position to offer clear guidance regarding the designation’s use and applications. Under these circumstances, the fit for purpose framing may not apply. Domains or national contexts with less well-defined understandings of authoritative data, however, may find the fit for purpose criterion provides further clarity. For those seeking guidance, the paper applies the fit for purpose approach to identify policy and legal considerations relating to authoritative data governance. For decision-makers seeking direction, the paper offers a list of guidelines for developing an effective authoritative data governance model.

¹ The paper considered land administration, geodesy, geographical names and marine (or hydro) domains

12. In the development phase, the draft paper was first subjected to review within the Working Group, its partners and stakeholders. There were also engagement and consultation with interested functional groups of the Committee of Experts, namely, the Subcommittee on Geodesy, the Expert Group on Land Administration and Management, and the Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information. The paper then underwent a thorough and inclusive global consultation process involving Member States and other relevant stakeholders. The draft paper was circulated to the Committee of Experts and its stakeholder community on 10 March 2023.

13. In addition, the Working Group hosted two global online seminar sessions on 11 April 2023 at two different times (7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time/United States) to provide opportunities for participants to discuss the paper through a live forum. The online seminar sessions included a presentation that provided the overview of the paper, followed by a question and comment segment. The levels of participation² were expected given the specialized nature – legal and policy consideration – of the subject matter.

14. Member States and relevant stakeholders were invited to submit their feedback, comments, suggestions and additional inputs. The deadline for submission was 1 May 2023. While feedback and comments on any aspects of the paper were welcomed, the Working Group requested respondents to give due consideration to the following areas:

- (a) The applicability of the paper and domain perspectives to a variety of national contexts, including those Member States with governance and oversight of these domains that are supported by substantive up-to-date legislations and traditional unwritten legal frameworks;
- (b) Indigenous peoples' perspectives in accordance with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP);
- (c) The balance of content across the various sections and domain perspectives; and
- (d) The flexibility/adaptability of Part 4 of the paper ("The Path Forward – Policy and Legal Considerations"), given the rapid pace of technological advancement and innovation encountered.

15. In total, there were twenty responses, of which sixteen were from national entities of Member States. All feedback and contributions were carefully considered and incorporated into the paper as appropriate. Overall reception of the paper was positive, with constructive feedback provided by Member States and other non-state respondents to refine the content. No significant changes to the paper scope or structure were recommended. Recommendations from respondents were primarily about clarifying and refining the draft to further improve the paper and were integrated into the draft. Significant revisions included the addition of a discussion of the CARE (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics) Principles of Indigenous Data; increased consideration of Indigenous perspectives, including reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); reviewing the language around "potential" data principles and characteristics, indicating that decision-makers are advised to select principles/characteristics that align with their identified data purpose and national circumstances; and replacing of the earlier definition of geospatial data with the definition in UN-IGIF Strategic Pathway 4: Data.

16. The feedback and comments received supports the need to continue to address the issue of authoritative data by exploring applications of the fit-for-purpose frame in crisis use-case scenarios. The Working Group agreed to address these recommendations in a follow-up activity, which has been included in the workplan of the Working Group for the

² Participation peaked at thirty-seven in the morning session and twenty-two in the afternoon session.

period 2023 - 2025. Additionally, respondents identified a need for the Working Group to keep abreast of technological developments which may necessitate a revisiting of authoritative data and associated policy and legal challenges. In addition, some respondents identified a need to consider how progress and innovations in artificial intelligence (AI) may be applied among geospatial practitioners, which may raise new legal considerations, for example, in the areas of security and privacy.

17. The Working Group, at its nineteenth virtual meeting on 20 June 2023 agreed to request the Committee of Experts, at its thirteenth session to consider and endorse its paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”. The paper is presented as a background document E/C.20/2023/16/Add.2 under this present agenda item.

III. Membership and activities

18. The composition of the Working Group during this period comprises expert representatives from thirteen Member States³, four partnering organizations⁴ and two thematic networks⁵ of the Committee of Experts. The Working Group is co-chaired by Canada⁶ during this period. The Working Group conducted its business virtually during this intersessional period, and convened two virtual meetings, its eighteenth on 7 February 2023 and nineteenth on 20 June 2023. In both its virtual meetings, the Working Group focused on working through the decisions, guidance and views of the Committee of Experts and its agreed workplan and activities. At the nineteenth virtual meeting, the Working Group reviewed progress on its paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”, considered feedback and inputs from the global consultation process, and the process undertaken to review and address the feedback and inputs.

19. Also at the nineteenth virtual meeting, the Working Group embarked on the additional considerations of its goals and activities for its updated workplan. The scope of consideration of the Working Group includes the range of policy and legal instruments that span the control-trust continuum. Overall, the scope of the workplan corresponds to the policy and legal elements in the UN-IGIF Strategic Pathway 2 – Policy and Legal. Activities continue to explore and identify policy and legal challenges based on real-world situations, and to contribute practical solutions for the implementation of the UN-IGIF at the country-level.

20. In its updated workplan, the Working Group is continuing policy and legal discussions on: i) geospatial data for public good; ii) appropriate mechanisms to address the issue of authoritative data by considering fit-for-purpose authoritative data for crises; iii) Sustaining and building legal-policy capacity to respond to needs of Member States; connecting legal and geospatial experts, along with the relevant policy community; iv) Continuing to socialize key outcomes, approaches, resources and deliverables and share guidance from current and previous workplans (leveraging UN-IGIF Strategic Pathway 9 – Communication and Engagement), iv) Collaboration with functional groups of the Committee of Experts including the Subcommittee on Geodesy, the Expert Group on Land Administration and Management and the Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information.

21. The workplan connects the Working Group’s nine prioritized areas with the four elements of UN-IGIF Strategic Pathway 2 - Policy and Legal, providing elaborations with respect to the continuum of “Control versus Trust” and a pathway for establishing

³ Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom.

⁴ International Bar Association, Centre for Spatial Law and Policy, Open Geospatial Consortium and EuroGeographics

⁵ Academic Network and Private Sector Network

⁶ Canada Centre for Mapping and Earth Observation, Natural Resources Canada

authoritativeness for data as well as other possible policy and legal analyses. The Working Group continues to implement its workplan for 2023 - 2025 together with Activity Leads as follows:

- (a) Explore, identify, and explain issues related to geospatial data for public good, co-led by the International Bar Association and Canada (Canada Centre for Mapping and Earth Observation);
- (b) Explore, identify, and consider issues related to fit-for-purpose authoritative data for crises, led by Canada (Canada Centre for Mapping and Earth Observation); and
- (c) Continuing to socialize key outcomes, approaches, resources and deliverables and share guidance from current and previous workplans, leveraging guidance under UN-IGIF Strategic Pathway 9 – Communication and Engagement, led by Finland (National Land Surveys).

22. Engagement and communications activities will be embedded within the workplan, leveraging engagement opportunities that may be afforded by meetings and events of the Committee of Experts as well as those of its key partners, in order to share key messages corresponding to the functions and objectives of the Working Group. The updated workplan for the period 2023 – 2025 was agreed by the Working Group at its nineteenth virtual meeting and provided as an annex to this present report.

IV. Considerations and issues

23. The Working Group was to explore and identify policy and legal challenges related to authoritative data, authority and custodianship, including experiences and practices to address crisis and based on one or several real-world problems, as well as explain and develop practical solutions leveraging the UN-IGIF and its implementation guide. The initial part has been addressed via the paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges,” and continuing consideration and efforts will address authoritative “fit for purpose” geospatial data for crises and disasters.

24. This follow-up activity builds on efforts of the functional groups of the Committee of Experts including the Working Group on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters. In particular, this follow-up activity considers the importance of availability, accessibility and integration of fit-for-purpose geospatial data, in near real time to prepare for and respond to disasters. Policy and legal considerations will include exploring challenges related to data sharing and institutional arrangements. Consistent with the paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”, attention will be given to the governance that allows infrastructure and systems to deliver at the particular time of need.

25. The proposed work on the public good explores the many approaches to geospatial data, with a view to proposing practical solutions and options that can be tailored to national circumstances. A review of current approaches to ‘use for public good’ reveals that it is applied case by case; the consideration proposes to interpret ‘legitimate interest’ to identify criteria that can guide countries in their assessment of whether the use of geospatial data can be considered ‘public good’.

V. Summary

26. The Working Group continues to analyze complex policy and legal issues in geospatial information, and to support the implementation of the UN-IGIF. In this regard, the UN-IGIF Implementation Guide assists and provides Member States with guidance and recommended actions to establish, strengthen or organize their national (or sub-national) arrangements towards sound and robust policy and legal frameworks for achieving the

societal, environmental, and economic benefits from geospatial information management. These complex policy and legal issues relate to the availability, accessibility and widest application of geospatial information; authoritative data, authority and custodianship; and public good together with open data, personal data, data privacy, data protection, data licensing, and the security and misuse of data.

27. The [policy and legal resource kit](#) developed by the Working Group to support the implementation of the UN-IGIF at the country-level, endorsed at the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts, as well as the findings related to authoritative data must not be a case of ‘cut-paste-use’. Importantly, these resource materials are meant to be considered together with national legal experts, relevant policy communities, and adapted and tailored to national circumstances including appropriate national (or sub-national) policy and legal frameworks.

28. The Working Group will continue with its virtual meetings in the upcoming period but recognize the value of in-person exchanges and interactions amongst members and relevant stakeholders and wish to consider organizing its next formal expert (in-person) meeting in 2024. The last time the Working Group met formally, and in-person was in November 2018. In this regard, the Working Group welcomes offers to host such a formal meeting.

VI. Points for discussion

29. The Committee of Experts is invited to:

- (a) Take note of the present report, express its views, and provide guidance to the Working Group on its progress and efforts to consider and propose feasible policy and legal guidance for real-world situations;**
- (b) Take note and consider the background paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges” with a view towards its endorsement; and**
- (c) Express its views and provide guidance to the Working Group on its updated workplan for the period 2023 – 2025, as annexed to this present report, including its activity related to geospatial data for public good and authoritative “fit for purpose” geospatial data for crises and disasters.**

**Committee of Experts on
Global Geospatial Information Management
Thirteenth session**

New York, 2–4 August 2023

Item 14 of the provisional agenda*

**Policy and legal frameworks, including issues related to
authoritative data**

Annex

**Working Group on Policy and Legal Frameworks for
Geospatial Information Management**

Workplan for 2023 – 2025

Background

Geospatial information is needed to support decisions and actions to achieve national priorities and development goals as well as global agendas and their goals.

Global Agendas	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development					National priorities, development agendas and transformation programs
	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway	Addis Ababa Action Agenda	Paris Agreement on Climate Change	New Urban Agenda (Habitat III)	

However, there are commonly experienced challenges regarding the availability, accessibility, sharing, use and management of geospatial information, across various levels of society. In addition, there is increasing demand for guidance on governance and related instruments within Member States, and to address regional and international applications in shared areas such as the Arctic and the open seas that are beyond the jurisdiction of individual Member States.

Appropriate and effective policy and legal frameworks on geospatial information management can proactively support the development, management and efficient use of geospatial information in decision-making for the public good. The ultimate goal for any effective policy and legal framework for geospatial information management is to maximize the utility and value of geospatial information with due consideration for privacy, confidentiality, security and risks. The United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) includes and advocates for sound and robust policy and legal frameworks, as the second of nine strategic pathways, to achieve the goals around enriched societal value and benefits, effective geospatial information management, and an economic return on investment.

At its twelfth session, from 3 to 5 August 2022, the Committee of Experts adopted Decision 12/112, in which it commended the progress made and the successful leadership transition from Australia and Sweden to Canada at the beginning of 2022, and in that regard, expressed its appreciation to Australia and Sweden for their leadership and contributions. The Committee of Experts noted the continuing efforts of the Working Group to align its workplan and activities with the UN-IGIF through the completion of the policy and legal resource kit, which includes model legal instruments (including an agreement, a policy and legislation) to which Member States could refer and, where appropriate, adapt and tailor to their national circumstances when implementing the Framework and improving data sharing and exchange at the country level.

* E/C.20/2023/1

The Committee of Experts recognized that the policy and legal issues that relate to the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information are complex, and welcomed the Working Group’s continuing consideration of feasible solutions to real-world problems and the need for effective policy and legal frameworks that ensure lawful, transparent and real-world solutions in order to create preconditions for trust in the new digital era that characterizes our world today.

The Committee of Experts noted the progress in addressing the issue of authoritative data, authority and custodianship by exploring the various ways that authoritative data had been described and applied, domain-specific understandings and applications of authoritative data, and policy and legal considerations for developing national authoritative data governance frameworks that respect unique national circumstances and legal systems.

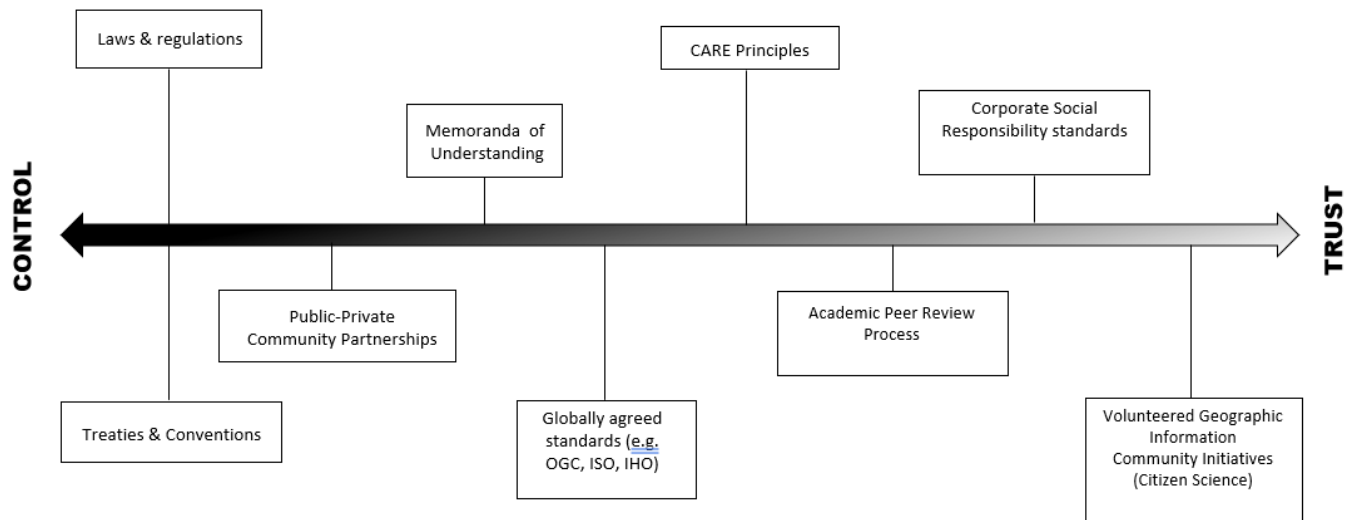
The Committee of Experts also appreciated the Working Group’s consideration of the ethical use of geospatial data in its activities, noted that the data ethics landscape was becoming complex, with a number of frameworks and activities under development, and encouraged further clarity regarding “ethical use of geospatial data” and/or “data for the public good”, which are separate concepts, with ‘ethical use’ more commonly informed by guidance rather than legislation.

Introduction

The workplan deliverables in 2023-2025 reflect the Committee’s views and guidance and include a paper on Geospatial Data for Public Good and related issues on privacy, confidentiality, and new technologies. Recognizing the views of the Committee of Experts that “ethical use of geospatial data” and “data for the public good” are separate concepts, with ‘ethical use’ more commonly informed by guidance rather than legislation whilst noting there are a number of frameworks and activities under development, the Working Group proposes a refocusing of its current efforts to geospatial data for public good and a paper aimed at providing guidance to member states based on a review of available case law.

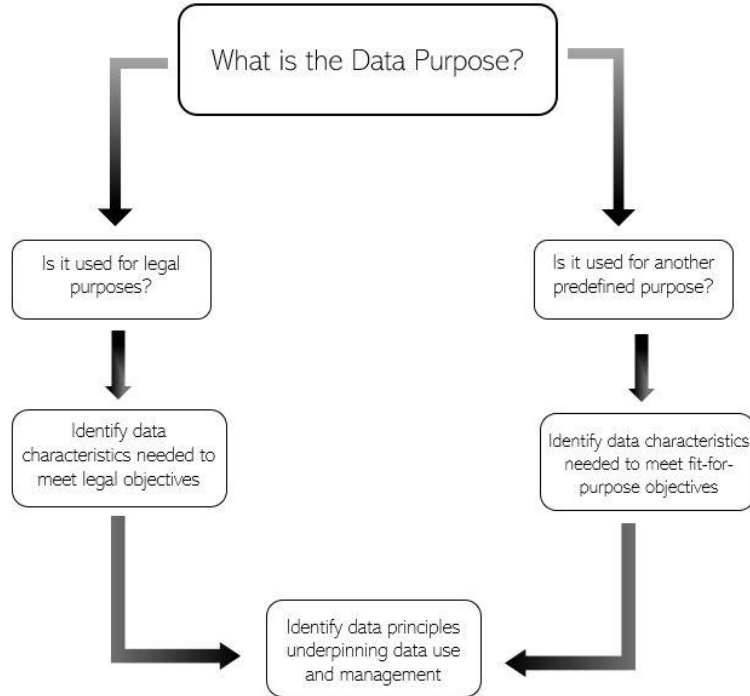
The Working Group proposes to continue its efforts to address the issue of authoritative data by considering fit-for-purpose authoritative data for crises as a follow-on activity from the paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”. The paper promotes the concept of a continuum of “Control versus Trust” (figure below) when considering authoritative data governance frameworks according to national circumstances.

Figure No. 1



A pathway to establishing authoritative data for legal and for other predefined purposes is promoted in the paper. The pathway (figure below) is also relevant when considering geospatial data for public good and possibly providing a pathway for other policy and legal analyses.

Figure No. 2



The present scope of consideration of the Working Group includes the range of policy and legal instruments that span the control-trust continuum, applied to Member States' various domains and priorities.

Overall, the scope of the workplan corresponds to the policy and legal elements in the UN-IGIF Strategic Pathway 2 – Policy and Legal.

Goals and Objectives

For the period covered by this workplan, the goals and objectives of the Working Group are to:

- Explore policy and legal considerations for addressing the issue of geospatial data for public good, taking into consideration that effective policy and legal frameworks will evolve over time, and respond to societal progress and technological developments;
- Address policy and legal considerations of authoritative data by exploring applications of the fit-for-purpose frame in crisis use-case scenarios, authoritative data for crises as a follow-on activity from the paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”;
- Continue to provide relevant expertise and support the Committee of Experts in the development of norms, principles and guides, including any regional capacity development initiatives, to significantly increase the availability and accessibility of geospatial information so as to create high-quality, timely and reliable products and services from geospatial information to address critical local, national, regional and international issues, and support the implementation of UN-IGIF Strategic Pathway 2: Policy and Legal;
- Continue to engage and communicate the value of sound, robust policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management, among and with relevant stakeholders and partners.

Taking into consideration the objectives and goals, the workplan would focus on –

	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Connection to elements of IGIF Strategic Pathway 2: Policy and Legal</i>	<i>Focus</i>
G1	Effective policy and legal considerations to respond to evolving needs, societal progress and technological development	Improved governance and accountability in geospatial information management Responsive to changes and progress	Consider geospatial data for public good
G2	Appropriate mechanisms to address the issue of authoritative data by considering fit-for-purpose authoritative data for crises	Sound and robust legislations, policies, norms and/or guides towards an enabling policy and legal environment	Address policy and legal considerations concerning geospatial data for crises through the fit-for-purpose frame, as a follow-on activity from the paper “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges”
G3	Sustaining and building legal-policy capacity to respond to needs of Member State and UN-GGIM functional groups	Improved collaboration and exchange of experience among geospatial and legal experts, UN-GGIM functional groups and relevant stakeholders	Identify and engage in activities/projects that raise awareness, share information, exchange experiences, develop trust, clarify concerns among relevant stakeholders and partners, including the legal profession
G4	Effective communication and engagement with relevant stakeholders and partners (advocate for sound, robust and responsive policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management)	Improved awareness, knowledge, governance and accountability Responsive to changes and progress	Targeted activities to raise awareness, share information, exchange experiences, develop trust, clarify concerns among relevant stakeholders and partners, including the legal profession.

Deliverables and activities

This workplan responds to Member States’ needs for effective policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management. A policy and legal framework is sound when it favors the public good while recognizing the perspectives and interests of stakeholders and partners, and when conducted with fairness and due process.

Through its workplan, the Working Group produces policy and legal norms, approaches, resources and guidance that address real world challenges in an evolving environment. How this is implemented may vary from country to country, and case to case. Member states are thus advised to adapt guidance to their national and local circumstances and legal contexts, in consultation and collaboration with their geospatial experts, legal practitioners and relevant policy communities.

	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Deliverables/ Engagement and communication component</i>
G1 and G3	Paper on geospatial data for public good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and table a paper for UN-GGIM endorsement • Develop abstract with key messages • Present paper, share results at meetings, via collaborations including the International Bar Association
G2 and G3	Authoritative “fit for purpose” geospatial data for crises and disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and table a paper for UN-GGIM endorsement • Develop abstract with key messages • Present paper, share results at meetings, with functional groups, via collaborations including the International Bar Association

	Activities	<i>Deliverables/ Engagement and communication component</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider linkage with relevant work items within the Committee of Experts programme or work; providing policy/legal perspective and decision support tools/instruments to operationalize and meet identified technical requirements
G3 and G4	Sustaining and building legal-policy capacity to respond to needs of Member State; connecting legal and geospatial experts, along with the relevant policy community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to share/champion key outcomes, approaches, resources and deliverables Considering how to support collaborative, flexible policy and legal instruments that are responsive to changing technologies and norms Continuing to engage the legal profession when addressing policy and legal issues in geospatial information management Advocating engagement with relevant policy communities to improve value and uptake in decision-making
G4	Continuing to socialize key outcomes, approaches, resources and deliverables and share guidance from current and previous workplans (leveraging UN-IGIF Strategic Pathway 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and sharing key messages corresponding to Working Group objectives, and each workplan item (e.g., policy and legal resource kit, paper on authoritative data) Collaboration with key partners, attending key events, including the annual conferences of the International Bar Association Strategically leveraging UN-GGIM meetings, events and activities
G3 And G4	Collaboration with UN-GGIM functional groups including the Subcommittee on Geodesy, the Expert Group on Land Administration and Management and the Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share key outcomes, approaches, resources and guidance at meetings functional groups as appropriate Collaborate on work items as needed and where appropriate

In exploring, identifying and developing its understanding, guidance and proposed solutions, the Working Group may conduct information gathering, tabletop exercises, roundtables, workshops, and expert group meetings that may also involve the broader geospatial community and relevant stakeholders and partners.

Reporting and proposed meetings

The indicative timings and deadlines based on known reporting opportunities and activities under the Committee of Experts are:

<i>2023</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Indicative timing and Deadline</i>
Reporting to the Committee of Experts	Summary of the report to 13th Session of UN-GGIM	May 5, 2023
	Report to the 13th Session of UN-GGIM	June 23, 2023
	Background documents for the 13th Session of UN-GGIM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Authoritative Data in an Evolving Geospatial Landscape: An Exploration of Policy and Legal Challenges” Refreshed workplan 	July 7, 2023
	Side meeting on “Authoritative Data in an Evolving Geospatial Landscape: An	August 1, 2023

2023	Activity	Indicative timing and Deadline
	Exploration of Policy and Legal Challenges” (Part I)	
Meetings of the Working Group	18th virtual meeting	Feb.7, 2023
	Global Webinar on “Authoritative Data in an Evolving Geospatial Landscape: An Exploration of Policy and Legal Challenges” (Part I)	April 11, 2023
	19th virtual meeting	June 20, 2023
	13th Session of UN-GGIM, UNHQ New York	2-4 August 2023
	Open meeting of the Working Group (at the 13th Session)	August 2, 2023
	20th virtual meeting	October 2023
Forums	IBA Annual Conference 2023 in Paris, France	29 October – 3 November 2023
	Other events (TBD)	

2024	Activity	Indicative timing and Deadline
Reporting to the Committee of experts	Summary for the report to the 14th Session of UN-GGIM	First week of May 2024
	Report to the 14th Session	Last week of June 2024
	Background documents for the 14th Session of UN-GGIM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper on geospatial data for public good 	First week of July 2024
	Side event/open meeting on the margins of the 14 th Session of UN-GGIM	First week of August 2024
	Side event on the margins of the 14 th Session of UN-GGIM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper on geospatial data for public good Preliminary results of the paper on “Authoritative, fit for purpose data for crises” (Part II) 	August 2024
	Global consultation and refinement of paper on “Authoritative, fit for purpose data for crises” (Part II)	October 2024 – April 2025
Meetings of the Working Group	21st virtual meeting	February/March 2024
	22nd virtual meeting	May/June 2024
	23rd virtual meeting	October 2024
	2nd expert meeting of the Working Group (in-person)	TBD
Forums	TBD	TBD

<i>2025</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Indicative timing and Deadline</i>
Reporting to the Committee of experts	Summary of the report to the 15th Session of UN-GGIM	First week of May 2025
	Report to the 15th Session of UN-GGIM	Last week of June 2025
	Background documents for the 15th Session of UN-GGIM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Authoritative, fit for purpose data for crises” (Part II) 	First week of July 2025
	Side event/open meeting on the margins of the 15 th Session of UN-GGIM: presentation of the “Authoritative, fit for purpose data for crises” (Part II)	August 2025
Meetings of the Working Group	24th virtual meeting	February/March 2025
	25th virtual meeting	May/June 2025
Forums	TBD	TBD

*Nineteenth virtual meeting of the Working Group on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management
20 June 2023*