



# Background Report 13<sup>th</sup> Session UN-GGIM

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## 1. Summary

1.1 This document provides a background report from UNGGIM Private Sector Network (PSN) to the Thirteenth Session of the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, 2023.

## 2. UN-GGIM PSN: Purpose

2.1 The UN-GGIM Private Sector Network (PSN) aims to connect and facilitate communication between private companies and Member States. This collaboration will support global geospatial initiatives and improve the world's capacity to benefit from geospatial information. The PSN will encourage ongoing collaboration among UN-GGIM members and PSN participants to enhance countries' geospatial information, technologies, and services. The PSN recognizes the private sector's expertise and will provide opportunities for their input in developing national, regional, and global policies, processes, practices, capacities, and recommendations for geospatial information infrastructure.

## 3. PSN Board Vision

3.1 An active Private Sector Network (PSN) of representatives working in a collaboration with the members of UN-GGIM to play a leading role in setting the agenda for the development of global geospatial information and in promoting its use to address key global challenges, enable citizen services and support the initiatives of the United Nations, particularly the global development agenda.

3.2 PSN believes in the importance of SDG's and the role of geospatial for the benefit of current and future generations and PSN offers the collective experience of the commercial companies that are developing cutting edge tech that can help member nations and strengthen the goal for achieving SDGs.

## 4. PSN Board

4.1 The Private Sector Network elected a new Board for a three-year period, which approved its strategic roadmap for the first year of its tenure towards strengthening partnerships with regional committees and other thematic networks of the Committee. The Board also acknowledged the contribution of the former Chair, Mr Sanjay Kumar, and Retiring Board members for their services.

**Chair:** Dr Zaffar Sadiq Mohamed-Ghouse, Director, Advisory & Innovation, Woolpert, Australia

**Deputy Chair:** Ms Valrie Grant, Founder/Chairwomen, GeoTechVision, Jamaica

**PSN Secretary:** Mr Peter Ter Haar, Ter Haar Geoinnovation, United Kingdom

### 4.1 PSN Representatives to UN-GGIM Regional Entities

**UN-GGIM Asia Pacific:** Dr. Zaffar Sadiq Mohamed-Ghouse, Director, Advisory & Innovation, Woolpert, Australia

**UN-GGIM Americas:** Valrie Grant, Founder/Chairwomen, GeoTechVision, Jamaica

**UN-GGIM Europe:** Peter Ter Haar, Ter Haar Geoinnovation, United Kingdom

**UN-GGIM Arab States:** Dr. Saad Alhamlan, CEO, Gravity Geospatial Services, Saudi Arabia

**UN-GGIM Africa:** Mr. Willy Govender, CEO, Terra Analytics, South Africa

### 4.2 Other Board Members

Dr. Nadine Alameh, CEO, Open Geospatial Consortium, United States of America

Dr. Kumar Nuvulur, Sr. Director, Global Industry Business Development, Maxar Technologies, USA

Ms. Devleena Bhattacharjee, CEO, Numer8 Analytics Pvt. Ltd, India

Ms. Anamika Das, Vice President – Product Management, Geospatial World, India

Mr. Ben Addou Idrissi Kamal, CEO, ETAFAT, Morocco

Mr. Peter Baumann, CEO, Rasdaman GmbH, Bremen

Mr. Felix Orina, Managing Director, Orbital Africa, Kenya

### 4.3 Secretariat

Dr. Shivangi Somvanshi, Geospatial World, India

## 5. UN-GGIM PSN Members

5.1 The UNGGIM: PSN comprises one hundred eighty-three member organizations, including twenty-one founding members. This network highlights the diversity in company size, offerings, and geospatial application categories and their global distribution.

## 6. Activities and Areas of Work

- 6.1 The UN-GGIM PSN elected a new Board for three years, which commenced in January 2023.
- 6.2 The Board has **approved a strategic roadmap** for the first year to strengthen its partnership with thematic networks and UN-GGIM Regional networks.
- 6.3 During the 2nd United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UN-WGIC), PSN partnered with the UN Geospatial Network and UN Academic Network to organize two side events. These events aimed to facilitate interaction, engagement, and support for geospatial technology in various priority programs.
  - 6.3.1 On 10 Oct 2022, PSN co-organized **Bridging Academia and Industry in Geospatial Research, Education, and Training**, a side event with the Academic Network that focused on the challenges, opportunities, and expectations of collaboration between academic and research communities and private sectors.
  - 6.3.2 On 13 Oct 2022, PSN organized **Geospatial Industry: Empowering United Nations' Programs** with the Geospatial Network. This event emphasized the need for private sector participation and support to geo-enable UN programs.
- 6.4 The PSN Board prioritized creating a paper to increase the involvement of the thematic network in strengthening IGIF. The paper focuses on the role of UN-GGIM PSN in supporting the development and implementation of IGIF.
- 6.5 PSN has partnered with the UN-GGIM: Academic Sector to survey the skills and capacity required for GeoAI. The survey questionnaire was circulated to all the members of PSN on 13 Jun 2023 to collect information on GeoAI capacity building. The results of the survey will be presented during a session in the UN-GGIM 13th session.

## 7. Region-wise Activities

- 7.1 **UNGGIM – Africa Region**  
PSN Africa region representative met with the Africa Chair of UN-GGIM to discuss how they can contribute to UNGGIM's initiatives. Two areas identified for assistance were improving the implementation of IGIF in Africa and helping compile Country Level Action Plans. PSN in the Africa region plans to promote these activities by hosting a joint session at the 9th Session of UN-GGIM Africa in Cape Town in 2023 and organizing a workshop at the ICC Conference.
- 7.2 **UNGGIM – Americas Region**  
The PSN in the Americas worked to attract more members from the region, promote diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, and actively participate in UNGGIM Americas activities and working groups. To achieve these goals, the PSN closely collaborated with the Academic Network Americas and participated in various workshops and web events, such as the Trimble Days in the Caribbean from 29-30 Sept 2022. This event allowed Caribbean representatives to share their knowledge on geospatial solutions that can benefit the region. Moreover, the PSN became a crucial contributor to the Caribbean Geospatial Development Initiative (CARIGEO), which supports Caribbean member states to participate in geospatial initiatives and establish an Integrated Geospatial Information Framework. Esri, a member of UNGGIM Americas PSN, manages CARIGEO's web portal. The PSN in the Americas

also played an essential role in planning, executing, and sponsoring the UN-IGIF Workshop in the Caribbean from 19-21 Apr 2023, which aimed to guide the advancement of IGIF initiatives in the region. Thirteen countries and regional entities participated in the workshop, and the PSN was instrumental in gaining the support of regional partners, such as the OECS Commission. The PSN also promoted using geospatial information to address priority challenges in the Caribbean, such as the Sargassum Project. This project aims to create a Sargassum Early Warning System for Caribbean member countries, using satellite data and drone imagery to monitor and manage Sargassum's impact. The system can estimate the volume of Sargassum strains using aerial images, gather other environmental factors into a georeferenced database, calculate the trajectory, and provide real-time information on potential Sargassum events through a geoportal. The solution is currently in its beta pilot phase.

### 7.3 UNGGIM\_Europe

Working collaboratively with the Extended Executive Board Meetings of UN-GGIM Europe.

### 7.4 UNGGIM – Arab States

Since August 2022, the UNGGIM Arab States Private Sector Network (PSN) has organized several events, including a virtual workshop on 15 Dec 2022 titled "Developing the Arab States Geospatial Private Sector." Attendees at the workshop included representatives from UNGGIM Arab States members, the UNGGIM Arab States President, the UNGGIM PSN Chair, and the UNGGIM Arab State Chair. The workshop generated various ideas for advancing the geospatial private sector in the Arab States. Additionally, the PSN Chair presented a paper during the UNGGIM Arab State meeting in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on 15 Feb 2023, highlighting the activities and challenges faced by the private geospatial sector in the Arab States and ways to overcome these challenges. Furthermore, a panel discussion took place during the Geospatial Saudi Authority (GeoSA) workshop on the National Geospatial Act in Saudi Arabia on 15 May 2023, where Chair PSN Arab States emphasized the significance of the geospatial private sector in Saudi Arabia and the need to empower it. The PSN's role in empowering the private geospatial industry in the Arab States was also presented.

### 7.5 UNGGIM – Asia Pacific

The Chair of UNGGIM Asia Pacific (AP) PSN region has actively attended and presented at the UNGGIM-AP Extended Executive Board Meetings. The former Chair of PSN presented at the Plenary of the UNGGIM-AP meeting held in Hyderabad in October alongside the UN World Geospatial Information Congress. The UNGGIM\_PSN participated and presented the private sector perspective at the UN-ESCAP Workshop on enhancing the sharing of geospatial information and support to the users in developing, held in December 2022. The PSN Asia Pacific Chair attended the UN-GGIM AP Extended Board Meeting in Singapore held on 13 March 2023 at Singapore Land Authority. The Asia Pacific PSN was well represented at the "Geo-Enabled Effective Land Administration" on March 14, 2023, hosted by Singapore Land Authority in Singapore. The members of the PSN also attended the Global Webinar on The Future Geospatial Ecosystem: What is the Role of UN-GGIM?

## 8. Future Plans

- 8.1 PSN is committed to prioritizing its involvement in UN-GGIM activities. Therefore, the PSN Board suggests nominating PSN representatives in the following initiatives: IGIF, Geodesy, Global Statistical Framework, Land Administration, Disasters, and Marine.

- 8.2 PSN is dedicated to enhancing the Geospatial ecosystem by collaborating with other technology companies, user agencies, think tanks, research communities, and the general public through its diverse initiatives.
- 8.3 PSN plans to contact the various UN-GGIM regions for their input on supporting IGIF. The information gathered will be analyzed by region and compiled into a paper presented to the UN-GGIM. The preliminary framework of the paper will be discussed at an upcoming session in New York. After receiving feedback, it will be revised and submitted to the UN-GGIM Secretariat. The paper aims to provide a region-specific perspective on how PSN can strengthen IGIF and identify the requirements for PSN involvement. These requirements will be included in the implementation roadmap for the remaining two years of the PSN Board.
- 8.4 Besides the focus paper, the Board has requested the PSN regional chairs to be involved in a dialogue with respective UN-GGIM regional activities where possible.
- 8.5 The PSN will proactively engage with these UN agencies to strengthen its connections with the broader UN geospatial ecosystem, like FAO, ICAO, IFAD, and WHO.
- 8.6 The PSN shall work towards developing a body of knowledge to support the UN-GGIM mission as well as the programs and activities of other UN entities.
- 8.7 PSN will create a LinkedIn page to share updates and gather more participation from the Geospatial private sector worldwide.