



Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)

UN-GGIM Academic Network Background Report

(September 2024 - August 2025)

July 11, 2025



Introduction

The [UN-GGIM Academic Network](#) is a coalition of recognized universities and research and education centres engaged in geospatial, land information, and related fields. The Network operates on a volunteer basis and is dedicated to supporting the aims and objectives of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). Its mission is to facilitate global access to research and education capabilities to help UN-GGIM and affiliated members address emerging challenges and opportunities.

The Network's Executive Committee and Advisory Board continue to meet regularly to discuss strategies, plan activities, collaborate with UN-GGIM regional committees, functional groups, thematic networks, and new UN centres, and organize side events, workshops, and seminars (including webinars). The Network aims to work closely with all UN-GGIM bodies and academic communities to build capacity and develop educational programs aligned with UN-GGIM priorities, with a particular focus on raising awareness and supporting the implementation of the UN Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF).

Meetings and Administration

The officers and board members for the period of January 2025 - December 2026 are as follows:

Executive Committee:

- Chair: Songnian Li, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada
- Deputy Chair: Georg Gartner, Vienna University of Technology, Austria
- Secretary: Jie Shen, Nanjing Normal University, China

Advisory Board:

- Maria Antonia Brovelli, Politecnico di Milano, Italy (Past Chair)
- Rosario Casanova, Universidad de la República, Uruguay
- Jonathan Li, University of Waterloo, Canada
- Saeid Pirastesh, Shaoxing University, China
- Abbas Rajabifard, University of Melbourne, Australia
- Tarun Pratap Singh, Symbiosis International University, India
- Vidhya Mathivanan, Anna University, India



UN-GGIM
ACADEMIC NETWORK

Reginal Representatives:

- Africa: Vacant
- Americas: Rosario Casanova, Universidad dela República, Uruguay
- Asia-Pacific: Huayi Wu, Wuhan University, China
- Europe: Vacant

Governance Operation (January - June 2025):

The newly elected Executive Committee and Advisory Board began their term in January 2025 and outlined a plan of activities for 2025–2026, including a planned revision of the Network's Terms of Reference (ToRs).

Membership

As of July 2025, the Network currently has 76 members from 40 countries. The details of the members are available on the Network [website](#). Since September 2024, the Academic Network has admitted 6 new members, with 8 additional applications pending. Members actively promote the Network and its activities through events highlighted on the Network's [website](#).



Figure 1. Geographical distribution of the Network members



Members volunteer to represent the Network in UN-GGIM regional bodies, functional groups, and thematic networks.

Activities

During this reporting period, the Network focused on:

- 1) developing capacity-building and educational initiatives within the UN-GGIM context, particularly supporting IGIF and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and
- 2) organizing in-person and virtual seminars and workshops to engage members.

Regular board meetings were held to plan and coordinate activities.

The Network co-organized a joint side event titled “Geospatial Data Analytics and GeoAI Accelerating the SDGs and Impacting National Priorities” with all thematic networks during the fourteenth UN-GGIM Session and contributed to the panel discussion of the Forum on Integrated Geospatial Information Management, entitled “Integrated Geospatial Information Management to 2030 and Beyond”.

Additional activities included:

- Organized the UN-GGIM Panel at the ISPRS TC IV Mid-term Symposium in Fremantle, Australia, 22–25 October 2024.
- Participated in the United Nations Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Week 2024, Deqing, China, 21–24 October 2024.
- Organized an online members' meeting to gather ideas on supporting UN-GGIM's mission, 7 November 2024.
- Participated in the 5th Plenary Meeting of the HLG-IGIF, the Expanded Bureau meeting, and the 12th Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM Arab States in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 2–6 February 2025.
- Met with the Directors of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGIKC) and the Moganshan Geospatial Information Laboratory to discuss potential collaborations, 19 May 2025.



Communications and Promotion

The Network communicates with its members through its official email account: unggim.academicnetwork@gmail.com.

Updates on member news and events are posted on the website: <http://unggim.academicnetwork.org/newsevents/>

Members actively promote the Network and its initiatives within their professional networks.

Future Plan

In 2023–2024, the Network focused on GeoAI to support UN-GGIM efforts. The newly elected Executive Committee has engaged with UN-GGIM Co-Chairs and other partners to explore future collaborations aimed at strengthening global geospatial information management. The Network has also already started exploring collaborations with the UN Centres of Excellence, e.g., the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGIKC).

Looking ahead, the Network will:

- Encourage member states to expand education and capacity-building initiatives in support of the strategic goals of UN-GGIM, with an emphasis on fostering scholarship opportunities for women and underrepresented groups in collaboration with professional societies and thematic networks.
- Welcome the progress achieved by the UN Centres of Excellence, advocate for further support of the member states for excellence programs and promote academic collaboration.
- Address knowledge gaps that hinder the effective implementation of IGIF and SDGs by calling for the creation of targeted educational and training programs.
- Advocate for establishing a Centre of Excellence dedicated to promoting trustworthiness in geospatial data, its processing, and map production.

The Network will continue to recruit and engage new members and young professionals (including students) to support its strategic goals.