UNITED NATIONS
United Nations Statistical Commission
Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics
GWG Bureau meeting

Thirty sixth meeting – 12 September 2019, 09:00 EST
By video conferencing
Minutes

Participants

Canada Alice Born
UAE Latifa Al-Shehhi, Hatem El-Sherif
Indonesia Titi Kanti Lestari
UK Heather Savory, Mark Craddock
AfDB Momar Kouta
UNSD Ronald Jansen, Ivo Havinga, Karoly Kovacs

Agenda

Agenda item (1) Minutes of the 35th meeting
Agenda item (2) Update on the Task Teams
Agenda item (3) Update on the UN Global Platform and its Advisory Board
Agenda item (4) Newsletter
Agenda item (5) New contacts, opportunities and participation in events
Agenda item (6) Other business

Action Points

⇒ Statistics Denmark to follow up on the work of the GWG Task Teams
⇒ Send articles to the UN GWG newsletter
⇒ Send potential opportunities to UNSD or ONS for inclusion in Zoho
Minutes

AGENDA ITEM (1) – MINUTES OF THE 35TH MEETING

Follow up on action points:

- Teleconference with the management of FCSA resulted in the participation of UAE in the Advisory Board meeting
- Advisory Board meeting took place on 11 September

No comments were received on the background document. Comments from the deliberations at the Advisory Board meetings may still be incorporated in this document, which will be circulated to all Chief Statisticians later this year.

AGENDA ITEM (2) – UPDATE ON THE TASK TEAMS

Niels Ploug of Statistics Denmark was able to follow some of the conversation at this meeting but was not able to fully participate. In that sense, only a short report on the activities of the EO task team was provided with the following points:

- The Task Team on EO/Agriculture meets bi-weekly. Whereas it is active in making algorithms (on crop identification) available on the Global Platform, more engagement from NSOs and FAO is needed to stimulate the production of methods, algorithms and potentially some training materials.
- Given the time investment from the side of Statistics Canada, a discussion has started on possibly merging the EO/Agriculture task team with the EO/Land cover, land use task team.
- Discussions are also ongoing with ESRI, which has offered to make its GEO AI virtual machine available to the UN Global Platform. The EO task teams should evaluate the usefulness of that tool to determine, if it should be acquired by the UN Global Platform.
- The EO task teams (especially the Land-cover / land-use team) are looking for use cases. In that respect, the Data-for-Now initiative of GPSDD, SDSN, World Bank and UNSD may be useful, since they will set up (before the end of this year) 8 pilot projects, of which certainly several will use EO data, and they intend to use the UN Global Platform to execute those projects.

The work of the other Task Teams will be discussed on the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM (3) – UPDATE ON THE UN GLOBAL PLATFORM AND ITS ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board of the UN Global Platform is chaired by Tom Smith, Director of the ONS Data Science Campus. In the first meeting of the Advisory Board the senior managers of all the hubs expressed full support and commitment in making the UN Global Platform into a success. The
platform consists of 5 hubs: the Global Platform institute and the regional hubs in China, Rwanda, UAE and Brazil. The hubs will be moving on their own pace in the preparation of the Memorandums of Understandings and the preparation of service level agreements, but they are committed to the signing of these MOUs at the UN Statistical Commission in March 2020.

Heather Savory is putting in a lot of effort to get the Global Platform Institute, which has been incorporated as a UK Charity, off the ground by networking with potential investors, who like the setup under the UN and are impressed that that it is already working. Links have made but funds have not come in yet.

**AGENDA ITEM (4) NEWSLETTER**

The first newsletter of the UN Global Platform was sent to more than 800 contacts and was opened more than 700 times. The exact frequency and review of the newsletter will be further discussed. Suggestions for content of the newsletter can be sent directly to Mark.

**AGENDA ITEM (5) NEW CONTACTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS**

Zoho is a customer management tool which contains contacts, opportunities and campaigns. Zoho currently contains about 1000 contacts and about 60-70 opportunities. These opportunities need to be distributed among task teams and (in the future) the hubs. Zoho offers possibilities to prepare reports, which could be used at Bureau meetings to take decisions, if the GWG should get involved with some of these opportunities. For now, members are encouraged to send potential opportunities to UNSD or Mark, who will then add these to Zoho.

**AGENDA ITEM (6) OTHER BUSINESS**

AfDB gave information about a new unit for data innovation within the statistics department of AfDB and that they are working closely with Statistics Canada on this. UNSD informed that the GWG has been invited to organize 2 sessions at the AI for Good summit by ITU (May 2020): one on case studies of the GWG and one on the operations of all the hubs of the UN Global Platform.