

H. Strengthening the geospatial information management capacities of developing countries for better policymaking at the national, regional and international levels

Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (\$400,000)

Background

36. High-quality information and analyses are a prerequisite for good policymaking. In this respect, recent advances in technology have seen the emergence of location-based (geospatial) information as a major contributor to better policy formulation and responses to many of the current humanitarian, environmental and socio-economic problems facing the world, given its ability to integrate both quantitative and qualitative data across sectors and present such information to decision makers in innovative formats.
37. A number of international and regional initiatives have devoted attention and resources to assisting countries in building their national spatial data infrastructures. However, relatively little attention has been paid to the challenges developing countries face in effectively collecting and producing data, and in building and strengthening their national capacities, which often reside with the national mapping agencies. This imbalance was discussed in the Eighteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific in 2009, and the forty-first session of the Statistical Commission in 2010. In both events, the Member States recognized that increased international cooperation could help to develop greater potential of geospatial information and the underlying technologies, and make this more useful and accessible to a wide range of users and policymakers. Member States recommended reviewing the existing mechanisms and exploring the possibility of creating a global forum to better coordinate activities of United Nations bodies and other international organizations in this field, to exchange experiences of geospatial information management and to help countries in need to build their capacities. In light of this recommendation, the project will improve accessibility of national, regional and global geospatial data infrastructures by developing common standards and helping to establish a global coordination mechanism.
38. Strong accessibility to geospatial data is a fundamental requirement of good governance. An important implication of the project is that the increased exposure to country data of the public at large and the feedback and scrutiny to which the data will be subject, will have positive effects that can significantly enhance the quality and availability of national statistical and geospatial information required for development planning and for monitoring progress towards the internationally agreed development goals. The project will be executed by the United Nations Statistics Division in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the African Centre for Statistics of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Europe.

<p>Objective of the Organization: To improve accessibility of timely, reliable and policy-relevant geospatial data for users, especially policy decision makers and researchers at the national, regional and international levels</p>	<p>Summary budget (Thousands of United States dollars)</p> <table> <tr> <td>General temporary assistance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">18.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consultants</td> <td style="text-align: right;">55.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Experts</td> <td style="text-align: right;">25.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Travel</td> <td style="text-align: right;">76.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Operating expenses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Study tours</td> <td style="text-align: right;">24.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Workshops</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>197.5</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">400.0</td> </tr> </table>	General temporary assistance	18.0	Consultants	55.0	Experts	25.0	Travel	76.0	Operating expenses	4.5	Study tours	24.0	Workshops	<u>197.5</u>	Total	400.0
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<p>Relationship to the strategic framework for the period 2012-2013 and the Millennium Development Goals: Economic and social affairs subprogramme 5 (Statistics); Economic and social development in Africa subprogramme 9 (Statistics); Economic development in Europe subprogramme 3 (Statistics); Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean subprogramme 11 (Statistics); Economic and social development in Western Asia subprogramme 5 (Statistics for evidence-based policymaking)</p>																	

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
<p>(a) Improved availability of national geospatial data provided to governmental organizations and other data producers by national statistical offices and national mapping agencies</p>	<p>(a) Increased number of trained country professionals who can use geospatial tools which can help to improve availability of geospatial data and information for tracking spatial distribution of social, economic and environmental indicators and guide policy decisions in many areas, such as regional development, service provision and resource planning</p>
<p>(b) Improved accessibility to national, regional and global geospatial data infrastructures of a wide range of users and policymakers by developing common standards and establishing a global coordination mechanism</p>	<p>(b) Increased number of countries participating in the United Nations global geospatial information initiatives and the development of accessible geospatial datasets, including the United Nations Second Administrative Level Boundaries project</p>

Main activities

39. The main activities of the project will include:
- (a) Develop guidelines on best practices of national, regional and international bodies dealing with legal instruments, management models and technical standards for building spatial data infrastructures;
 - (b) Conduct an expert group meeting to review and validate the guidelines on best practices in spatial data infrastructure;
 - (c) Organize, in close cooperation with United Nations regional commissions, five regional training workshops for staff of national statistical offices and national mapping agencies to improve their national technical capabilities to create, disseminate and communicate statistical and geospatial information;
 - (d) Develop, in close cooperation with the respective national statistical offices and/or national mapping agencies of two selected developing countries, a prototype of a national geographic

database of key Millennium Development Goals development indicators and statistics. The database will be disseminated via the websites of the national statistical offices and linked to the United Nations data portal;

- (e) Organize study tours for geospatially “less developed” countries to learn and draw from the strengths and achievements of countries more advanced in geospatial information management.