

# 13th September 2018 - Online Meeting Summary Report

## Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information

Online meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018

### Summary Report

#### **Introduction**

The following summary reports the discussions and follow-on actions required from the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (EG-ISGI), convened over video conference, facilitated by the UN-GGIM Secretariat on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018. This covered updates since the previous online meeting and the informal meeting held on the margins of the Eighth Session of the Committee of Experts, on 31<sup>st</sup> July, in New York. This also covered updates on the mechanisms of work of the EG-ISGI, an ongoing proposal with the OGC to create a Statistical Domain Working Group, the relationship with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators: Working Group on Geospatial Information (IAEG-SDGs: WGGI), and preparations for the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC), the meeting of the Expert Group on the margins of UNWGIC, and future business of the Expert Group.

The meeting was attended by participants from Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, and the United States of America, as well as by representatives from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the UN-GGIM Secretariat, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Martin Brady (Australia) and Ms. Paloma Merodio (Mexico).

#### **Review of the EG-ISGI Side Event and Meeting at the Eighth Session of UN-GGIM**

##### **Lead: Martin Brady, Australia**

Australia provided an overview of the work carried out to-date and points of interest for the EG-ISGI:

- The Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) are now considering the proposal to establish a Statistical Domain Working Group (DWG). This proposal is in active discussion at their meeting in Frankfurt, happening in parallel. Ian Coody from United Kingdom updated the EG-ISGI with notes included as an annex to this report;
- The side event on Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information at the Eighth Session of UN-GGIM was successful in communicating the wider work of the EG-ISGI to the broader geospatial community. Mexico and Sweden updated the progress of the IAEG-SDGs: WGGI. Updates from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Eurostat were also of interest and underlined the importance of regional participation within the EG-ISGI. Presentations on the Federated Information Systems for the Sustainable Development Goals (FIS4SDGs) generated substantial interests from participants;
- During the main session of UN-GGIM, there were many interventions for the agenda item on the integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information. All were very positive and there were no expressed concerns. This underlines the relevance and interest of the work of the EG-ISGI. There was strong support for the EG's work programmes, in particular regarding the need to strengthen the relationship between the EG-ISGI and the IAEG-SDGs: WGGI;
- There was a lot of progress between the Principle Task Team leads, regarding the finalisation of the Five Principles of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF) into a consolidated GSGF Principle document. Finland is also looking at how to harmonize and improve consistency across the GSGF Principle documents;
- UNSD is undertaking work to better enable the presentation of knowledge by the EG-ISGI, this includes the GSGF and other associated generated knowledge;
- The EG-ISGI needs to work together to finalize the GSGF Principle documents by UNWGIC, towards the aim of a consolidated document that will be the body for the GSGF. The target is that we get this ready prior to the meeting. At the informal meeting during the Eighth Session of UN-GGIM, EG-ISGI considered accomplishing this by the middle of September - but now we need to look to encouraging GSGF Principle Task Team leads to produce early versions by the first week of October.

Sweden strongly supported the need for the EG-ISGI to finalise the GSGF Principle documents into one consolidated GSGF Principles document. Sweden further noted that they are in the process of finalising their GeoStat 3 report, which also discusses the implementation guide for Europe. There is a need to align the GeoStat 3 and the Principles of the GSGF. This was met with broad agreement by the EG-ISGI.

The UN-GGIM Secretariat noted the upcoming reporting timelines that the EG-ISGI should consider, with respect to reporting the outcomes of the consolidated GSGF Principle documents and the work of the EG-ISGI generally. For information for the EG-ISGI, the reporting timeline to the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM is May/June. There is also an opportunity to report the consolidated Principle document as a draft to the next United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), at its 50<sup>th</sup> Session in March 2019. With this timeline, there would be time to finalise the GSGF Principle documents into one consolidated document, but consideration will need to be undertaken regarding whether the report of the EG-ISGI to the UNSC at its 50<sup>th</sup> Session is for information only or information and discussion. Furthermore, there is a need for the EG-ISGI to conduct a global consultation on the consolidated GSGF Principles document. As the reporting for the UNSC 50<sup>th</sup> Session has now begun, and considering the UNWGIC timeline, time is tight. A potential scenario sequence is that the consolidated GSGF Principles document is adopted at the Ninth Session of Committee of Experts of UN-GGIM, then presented for endorsement at UNSC at its 51<sup>st</sup> session in 2020, with the potential of a draft of the consolidated GSGF Principles document being presented for information only at the 50<sup>th</sup> session of UNSC in 2019. This would also enable a global consultation of finalised documents. This is for consideration of the EG-ISGI.

Australia concurred with the Secretariat, observing that there are comments from the broader EG-ISGI on the GSGF Principle documents regarding their consistency and the need for editorial guidance. A realistic consideration for the consolidated GSGF Principle document is its endorsement at the Ninth Session of UN-GGIM in 2019, then at UNSC at its 51<sup>st</sup> session in 2020. But, with respect to this timeline, we as the EG-ISGI need to consider the volunteer efforts of the EG-ISGI members. Mexico concurred, further noting the need to consider the next milestones, deliverables and timelines and for broad agreement amongst the EG-ISGI. Sweden further echoed these remarks, remarking that discussion can be opened with Eurostat regarding how guidelines like GeoStat 3 will be updated in the future and how we can support countries with the definition of indicators.

Australia summarised the discussion, which was met with broad agreement by the EG-ISGI:

- By November the EG-ISGI should have a clear document of the principles that underpin the GSGF;
- During December through to February 2019, the consolidated GSGF principle document would need to undergo editing and harmonisation;
- The EG-ISGI can table the consolidated GSGF principles document at the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the UNSC as a draft document for comments and begin the global consultation phase;
- The consolidated GSGF principle document would then have a 3-month consultation period, providing an opportunity for the EG-ISGI to subsequently finalize the consolidated GSGF principle document that should have responded to the points of concern raised by the global consultation;
- Following the completion of the consultation process, the finalised, consolidated, and reviewed GSGF Principle document will be presented at the Ninth Session of UN-GGIM in 2019 for endorsement, then if endorsed, presented to the UNSC at its 51<sup>st</sup> session in 2020 for endorsement; however,
- There are questions that still need to be answered, specifically regarding the editorial needs that the documents will require.

The Secretariat noted the need for editorial efforts and will investigate internal opportunities with respect to the editorial and harmonization needs, noting that there are lessons learned from the development of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF). This will be discussed at the next meeting of the EG-ISGI on the margins of UNWGIC in November.

#### **5th Meeting of the EG-ISGI at the UNWGIC**

**Lead: Martin Brady, Australia**

Australia noted that the duration of the next meeting, the fifth meeting of the EG-ISGI, will be one and a half days, with one day focused on the finalisation of GSGF Principle documents. The agenda will be further augmented by segments which will: regard the IGIF and the linkages between the IGIF and the GSGF; identify mechanisms to resource the editorial needs of the GSGF Principle documents; support with the broader interoperability work, including developments with the proposed OGC Statistical DWG; and, discuss the future work program of the EG-ISGI, including the need to look beyond this work program, and furthermore ensure that the GSGF is promoted and adopted globally. Sweden stressed the need to the EG-ISGI to set aside enough time for the principles document at its next meeting.

#### **Strengthening the relationship and collaboration with the IAEG-SDGs WGGI**

**Lead: Paloma Merodio, Mexico**

Mexico introduced the work of the IAEG-SDGs: WGGI noting that it is chaired by two members of the EG-ISGI, Sweden and Mexico. The IAEG-SDGs: WGGI has two task streams<sup>[1]</sup>:

1. Disaggregation by geographic location and aggregation of geocoded unit level; and,
2. Leverage partnerships with space agencies active in EO4SDG initiative of GEO to develop appropriate means to allow NSOs to uptake appropriate analysis or production ready satellite earth observation time series data contributed by space agencies and will include feasibility study, pilot projects, guidance on methodology and training.

This presents a unique opportunity for much needed deeper collaboration between the EG-ISGI and IAEG-SDGs: WGGI, specifically regarding the work of GSGF Principle 3. Mexico noted that they co-chair both EG-ISGI and IAEG-SDGs: WGGI and underlined the strong need to ensure that the right communication channels in discussing the work of both groups. There should be a WebEx to investigate how to collaborate the broader work of both the EG-ISGI and IAEG-SDGs: WGGI and identify specific targets that we want to address that would mutually benefit both groups. There is an opportunity to use the margins of the UNWGIC to further foster awareness and collaboration between the EG-ISGI and the IAEG-SDGs: WGGI. The prior work of the IAEG-SDGs, in identifying SDG indicators through a geographic lens is one area of interest. Currently, the IAEG-SDG has identified 24 indicators and members are carrying out national assessments through a 'traffic lights' system to understand progress.

Sweden reinforced this message noting that as co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs: WGGI, there is further work needed on the collaboration of work between the groups. The IAEG-SDGs: WGGI has identified that while the GSGF assists countries with data aggregation, there is a need to investigate disaggregation techniques. But, for some countries, this is not possible. Therefore, we could have one task stream for aggregation and disaggregation. The other task stream can focus on Earth Observation, but we should recognise that there are many initiatives within countries aligned with this stream, with many relevant items and overlap. The concern of the IAEG-SDGs: WGGI is that ongoing work needs to be harnessed to provide solid guidance to NSOs. Accordingly, we need to consider the skills within a National Statistical Office (NSO) and whether there is the capacity within an NSO to achieve this. This is of special concern to lesser developed countries.

South Africa observed the utility of this approach, especially considering the role of South Africa's national planning development. Current work within Statistics South Africa includes efforts towards, understanding how to disaggregate economic data into the lower levels of geography. Furthermore, there is a need for us to consider how to combine terminologies too.

Sweden observed the need to consider that we all come with various perspectives and request that the EG-ISGI provide principles and guidance that will support the SDGs. This was echoed by Australia in recognising that there is no clear picture, especially amongst the advanced NSOs - therefore translating this unclear picture for the wider world is very challenging. There is a need to tap into the UN-GGIM Academic Network to help address these challenges.

The UN-GGIM Secretariat commented that the definition of common terminologies will be complex, especially with respect to how the geospatial and statistical communities are coming together. For example, we know that the statistical and geospatial communities work well with aggregation, but disaggregation can be challenging. We need to consider how the UN-GGIM: Academic and Private Sector Networks can engage with Expert/Working Groups to respond to their needs and requirements considering both practical and theoretical approaches. There is a need to consider how to guide research and work to align with our challenges. Furthermore, at UNWGIC, there will also be a session on disaggregation methods, this will provide opportunities to connect with practitioners and other users/developers to further inform on this area.

Sweden noted that there are efforts in testing the GSGF through projects with three SDG indicators 11.2.1 (Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities), 11.3.1 (Ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate), and 11.7.1 (Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities). Sweden is documenting positive experiences that describe how the GSGF is supporting the creation of the indicators and noted that there is other similar work ongoing in Europe and Colombia. Sweden recognises that EG-ISGI can facilitate the sharing of experiences and inspiration that provides exemplars of how the GSGF can be used to support the Global Indicator Frameworks. Norway echoed this, noting that they will present the results of their work regarding the GSGF in Helsinki at Geostat Work Package 2 workshop in October.

## **AOB**

Australia noted that there will be a "Statistical-Geospatial Integration: in support of the Sustainable Development Agenda and the 2020 Round of Population Censuses" session at UNWGIC in China which will be combined with a case study from Sierra Leone.

## **Meeting Ended**

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## **Annex: Verbatim Notes from Ian Coady, Office of National Statistics, United Kingdom**

- An ad hoc meeting of the Statistical Domain Working Group was held at the OGC Technical Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> September
- The meeting was well attended with 20 members of OGC in the room plus additional dialled in to the meeting online
- It provided an overview of progress since March with the focus being the consultation on the charter and the side event at the Committee of Experts
- 3 comments were provided to the consultation highlighting some topics of interest, requesting engagement with the geospatial and statistical ISO communities and rewording some text that was a little ambiguous
- Several areas of interest for a potential DWG work programme were discussed and these include:
  - Discrete Global Grid Systems
  - Statistical-Geospatial Data Integration (Table Joining Service, WFS 3.0 etc)
  - GeoPackage
  - Spatial Data on the Web/Linked Data
  - Disclosure/Privacy
  - Metadata linking
  - Data Cubes
  - Partitioning statistical data
- There was some discussion around engagement with the need to both think about which events we can use to promote this work (World Data Forum, WGIC, EFGS, IAEG-SDGs etc) and also how we can build a critical mass of national statistical offices within OGC to support this work
- The ad hoc meeting passed a unanimous motion to propose the establishment of a DWG based on the charter to the Technical Committee.
- The OGC Plenary voted unanimously to formally establish the Statistical Domain Working Group.
- This is a great achievement in a short amount of time and reflects the broad support for this work.

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[1] [http://ggim.un.org/documents/Work-Plan\\_2018-2019.pdf](http://ggim.un.org/documents/Work-Plan_2018-2019.pdf)