

GSDI AND IGS GLOBAL NEWS

News from the GSDI Association and the International Geospatial Society

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

Global Geospatial Conference 2012 – Call for Papers Reminder – Due Date is 15 November!

This event combines the GSDI 13 World Conference, the 14th GEOIDE Annual Scientific Conference, the 7th 3D GeoInfo Conference and the Canadian Geomatics Conference 2012. The conference theme is “Spatially Enabling Government, Industry, and Citizens”, providing numerous opportunities for workshops, oral presentations, posters, ‘Lightning Round’ talks and both refereed and non-refereed publication outlets (Proceedings, journal articles and book chapters). The Call for Papers may be found at <http://www.gsdi.org/gsdiconf/gsdi13/papers.html> and the deadline for abstracts and/or papers for the refereed and non-refereed publications is November 15. The conference web site is at <http://www.gsdi.org/gsdi13>.

Small Grants Program Awards 2012 Update

The GSDI Association reminds us that applications for the Small Grants Program for the year 2011-12 are due by 31 October 2011. Proposals should lead to national or sub-national activities that foster partnerships, develop in-country technical capacity, improve data compatibility and access, and increase political support for spatial data infrastructure or earth observations application development. Awards are for \$2500 USD in cash and/or contributed volunteer professional services for the winning projects. Awards are expected to be announced in January or February 2012. The call for proposals for the 2012 GSDI Small Grants Program closed on 31 October. A total of 35 proposals were received from all regions, which will be reviewed by a panel of experts. The awards will be announced in February 2012 and posted on the small grants web page - <http://www.gsdi.org/sic1>.

GSDI COMMITTEE NEWS

GSDI Standing Committees recommend programs of action to the GSDI Council and Board and carry out specific tasks as set out in the GSDI bylaws or as requested by the Council or the Board. Individuals interested in contributing to the work of committees should contact the committee chairs, via the GSDI Committees web site at <http://www.gsdi.org/standingcomm>.

Outreach & Membership Committee News

Committee Chair, Steven Ramage, presented at the LISA (Icelandic GI Association) Annual Conference in Iceland on 20 October, where they also discussed use of open standards for emergency and disaster management and the leading role that Iceland (National Land Survey Iceland) is playing in the Arctic SDI. Steven is also involved in the emerging OGC Nordic Forum being led by Jari Reini from GSDI member National Land Survey (NLS) Finland who are driving or coordinating the NSDI in Finland. Steven has also been keeping the GSDI LinkedIn Group active with various postings in the past month, as well as providing the GSDI Column to GIM International magazine’s October issue “Human Aspects of SDI: Looking at Data Sharing”

Committee vice-Chair for Communications, Roger Longhorn, was at the Esri European User Conference in Madrid, Spain, 25-28 October, attending the many presentations in the SDI and Education tracks that have now become a feature of Esri conferences around the globe. Esri are active Members of the GSDI Association. Roger also attended the EUROGI/eSDI-Net sub-national SDIs Best Practice Awards event (<http://www.eurogi.org/esdinet/awards/2011>) in Brussels on 12 October, presided over by GSDI Board Member, Bruce McCormack, President of EUROGI. This was followed by the final conference of the Plan4all (www.plan4all.eu) EU-funded project on 13 October, also attended by several GSDI Association members.



Both Steven and Roger are active on the GSDI LinkedIn Group, plus other SDI and NSDI groups that have now been formed on LinkedIn. We encourage GSDI Association members and others to join the GSDI LinkedIn Group and contribute to the discussions.

Legal and Socioeconomic Committee

The L&SE Committee conducted a virtual meeting concerning the Committee's activities on 18 October, at which it was confirmed that the Committee will present a workshop on harmonising licenses at the GSDI-13 Conference in Quebec City, Canada, in May 2012.

Societal Impacts Committee

A major activity of the Committee is managing the GSDI Association Small Grants Awards (see announcement at the beginning of this Newsletter). Information on winners of prior year Small Grants Awards and their projects can be found at <http://www.gsdi.org/sic1>.

THE INTERNATIONAL GEOSPATIAL SOCIETY (IGS)

The International Geospatial Society (IGS) is the individual membership arm of the GSDI Association whose members have geospatial, SDI, GIS or related professional or specialist interests. The Society enhances communications globally among individuals that are actively involved in promoting, developing, or advancing spatial data infrastructure and related concepts. The IGS web site is at <http://www.igeoss.org>.

Article of the Month

In this month's IGS News, we publish an article from IGS Founding Member (and GSDI Association President Elect) Prof David Coleman, which also appeared in the November issue of GIM International magazine's GSDI Column.

"SDI Hard Times: When to Reinforce and When to Question Our Values?"

In October's GIM International GSDI column, Steven Ramage, Chair of the GSDI Association's Outreach & Membership Committee, stressed the importance of the human aspects surrounding effective

planning, implementation and management of an SDI. He was right. Part of the challenge faced by SDI programme managers worldwide is that - regardless of how much we all think the benefits of data sharing have been articulated and confirmed - one should never assume that any amount of communication is enough to keep people convinced

What may seem repetitive and 'just common sense' to us may not be appreciated by programme managers, public accountants and politicians who are two or more generations removed from when today's SDI programmes were launched. There have also been so many developments in SDI around legislation, crowdsourcing and other areas that it pays to keep people informed anyway.

Precepts and values that underpin SDI programmes worldwide and were originally taken for granted, such as 'collect once, use many times' and 'datasets are more useful when they can be integrated', may be far from obvious to end users and need to be continually reinforced. There are at least three reasons for this:

- 1) Costs of spatial data collection and management are now well-hidden within larger overall programme costs.
- 2) Data sharing is rarely part of any organisation's core mission.
- 3) In some cases, it may indeed be cheaper to just revisit and re-collect certain features or attributes over and over again in real time, rather than set up all the processes and agreements required to permit routine sharing of data.

As mentioned in the October column, public accounting practices do not lend themselves to identifying the benefits of shared data across different organisations. These are the intangible benefits we need to be able to describe and communicate.

As a society, we have taken for granted much of the infrastructure developed over the past 60 years, whether it is national highways power grids or communication services. Our attention has been focused on building services on top of those



infrastructures. It is only when elements of those infrastructures become congested or fail altogether that we are forced to re-examine what was originally built and why it was put in place.

Senior SDI programme executives have, for the most part, been genuinely adept at reframing and communicating the benefits of their SDIs in terms of what is important to politicians and governments today. Their managers and supporters must be prepared to follow up by re-examining their own initiatives in light of changing technologies, organisational circumstances, economic conditions and prevailing government policies. Where do the advantages still hold? What no longer makes sense? What is no longer required to be undertaken within government? What may no longer be required at all?

The answers to all these questions then need to be communicated - consistently, persuasively and repeatedly. New generations of producers, users, financial analysts and public policy architects all need to know.

Note: This article and others by IGS Members can be found in the "Member's Corner" of the IGS web site at <http://www.igeoss.org/>!

IGS Reminders

Remember that individuals in low and very low income nations can apply to join the International Geospatial Society (IGS) by providing specific information of value to the global community in lieu of annual cash dues. The listing of low and very-low income nations may be found at <http://www.gsdi.org/RankingTable>. To join for free, simply add your professional profile to the growing interconnected network of geospatial specialists across the globe on the Geographic Information Knowledge Network (GIKNet) at <http://giknet.org> and then apply for membership in IGS at <http://www.igeoss.org/join>. To maintain your free membership, simply update your professional profile each year on or about December or January. You have the ability to view, edit, or delete your individual profile at any time.

IGS Members – submit your news, please, so that we can learn more about what our membership is doing! There are nearly 200 of you out there now,

so please communicate with us. News can be sent by e-mail either to the IGS officers - President Mabel Alvarez or vice-President Lilia Patricia Aria, who can be contacted via the IGS web site - or directly to the Editor, Roger Longhorn, roger@alum.mit.edu.

THE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (GIKNET)

The aim of the Geographic Information Knowledge Network (GIKNet) is to enhance communication and freely share knowledge among professionals in the global geographic information community. This is a participatory, user created and maintained information commons. The GIKNet Community Registry permits individuals, government agencies, NGOs, companies and other institutions to record and publish details about themselves and submit relevant documents to the Spatial Docs Depot. SDI implementation experiences from all levels of government can be published. GIKNet information can be searched and accessed via a search facility in the Spatial Docs Depot. A comprehensive list of GI/SDI related discussion lists can be accessed from a single reference page. Access the GIKNet at this link: <http://www.giknet.org/>.

During November, the user interface to the GIKNet will be updated permitting easier delivery of documents to the system. Following the update and final testing, stronger promotion of the GIKNet will begin via various GI/GIS/SDI e-mail lists and the LinkedIn GSDI Group.

MEMBERS' CORNER

Mark Reichardt, president and CEO of the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC®) and GSDI Association Board Member, presented at the UN GGIM forum (see next article) as part of a session on "Developing Common Frameworks and Methodologies". He spoke on the topic of "Standards for Cross Community Understanding and Decision-making," emphasizing that there are no borders any more when it comes to information sharing with respect to natural hazards and disasters, and that standards are a critical component of cross boundary sharing. His three recommendations were:

1. Consolidate, prepare and promote **best**



practices to align policy for data sharing and to guide the deployment of interoperable data collection, maintenance and distribution capabilities.

2. Organize **pilot projects** to validate the use of geospatial information, technologies, procedures and policies based on real world, user scenarios.
3. Stay agile in adopting new methods, technologies and standards through active involvement in SDOs.

PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL SDI PROJECTS

Various members of the GSDI Association Committees, Board and/or members were involved in the High-Level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM), conducted under the new UN-GGIM initiative, endorsed by ECOSOC (the UN Economic and Social Council) Resolution 2011/L.53 in July 2011.

GSDI Association and the UN GGIM Initiative

Location referenced databases are increasingly important to societies all over the world. Geospatial data and associated policies at regional and global levels are important tools for addressing current cross-border problems across a wide range of disciplines and sectors. In response to these challenges, and following several years of preparatory work on a UN SDI strategy, the United Nations officially launched the Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) initiative (ggim.un.org) with Resolution 2011/24 of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in July 2011. The Resolution creates a formal mechanism for discussing key issues and potential action relating to SDI developments at national, regional and global levels, involving UN member states as the key players.

The GGIM web site contains links to all relevant background documentation and 'scoping papers' from several nations and major regional (trans-national) and international organisations, including the GSDI Association and GSDI member EUROGI (European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information). The initiative is also supported by GSDI member EuroGeographics and several mapping and cadastral agency members.

High-Level Forum on GGIM

The First High Level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM), held in Seoul from 24 to 26 October 2011, brought together 350 participants from 90 countries, 22 United Nations representatives, and 37 representatives from international organizations and the private sector.

Representatives from GSDI Association members Natural Resources Canada, National Land Survey Finland and the Open Geospatial Consortium participated in the Panel Discussions, while other participants included representatives from GSDI members EUROGI and Esri, plus the GSDI President, Dr Abbas Rajabifard.

The Forum was opened by Prime Minister Kim Hwang-Sik of the Republic of Korea, United Nations Under-Secretary-General Mr. Sha Zukang, and Prof. Cartwright, President of the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies. At the conclusion of the forum meeting, participants adopted the "Seoul Declaration on GGIM", available from this link:

<http://ggim.un.org/docs/meetings/High%20level%20forum/Seoul%20Declaration%20on%20GGIM-25%20Oct.pdf>

An excellent summary of the meeting, from the Chair, is available for download from this link:

<http://ggim.un.org/docs/meetings/High%20level%20forum/GGIM-chairman%20summary%20HLF-26.pdf>

Several Technical Papers were prepared for the meeting from regional (trans-national) SDI organisations, including those listed below, all of which can be accessed from the Forum web site (ggim.un.org/forum1.html):

- Policy Formulation and Institutional Arrangements - PC-IDEA
- Asia-Pacific Experiences in Developing Common Frameworks and Methodologies - PCGIAP
- Addressing Global Challenges Underwritten by Geospatial Data Management - Joint Board GIS
- Guiding Framework for the Development of Capacity in Geospatial Information Management: the case of Africa - CODIST/ECA
- Common Frameworks for Geospatial Data: The EU Approach (INSPIRE) - European Commission



- Arctic Spatial Data Infrastructure - Iceland
- Capacity Building Experiences in Global Mapping – Japan

The Exchange Forum

Prior to the main forum meeting, an Exchange Forum (http://ggim.un.org/forum_exchange.html) with the Geospatial Industry was organized on 23 October 2011 in Seoul, to facilitate the involvement of the geospatial industry at the most senior levels in the discussions surrounding GGIM. There were more than 75 participants from 36 countries' national bodies, 6 international geo-related organisations, 17 industry companies and 4 UN agencies. The attendees included several GSDI Association member organisations, with presentations made by members Esri, Inc., GIS Development (Geospatial World), OGC, NR Canada, State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping of China (SBSM) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

The UN has taken an initiative to actively engage geospatial industry in the discussions surrounding key issues both of policy and technology. The search for solutions is best found through partnerships and the geospatial industry has a key role to play in this respect.

Over the past few decades the geospatial industry has played a significant role in promoting and providing technology and solutions to create, manage, analyse and utilize geospatial information worldwide. The geospatial industry provides technology and solutions and has been the creator and/or the custodian of large amounts of geospatial information, made available to society through the internet, increasing awareness of the potential of geospatial information to people all over the world.

The Forum programme included sessions on:

- Challenges in Geospatial Policy Formulation and Institutional Arrangement
- Developing Common Frameworks and Methodologies
- International Coordination and Cooperation in Meeting Global Needs
- Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer

Presentations were made by representatives from the following organisations (including GSDI Association members) from industry (data and technology providers), publishing, open source, national and UN agencies:

- Data World (South Africa)
- Digital Globe
- Esri, Inc.
- Google, Inc.
- Hexagon Geosystems
- Infotech Enterprises Ltd (APAC)
- Intermap Technologies
- MDA Information Systems
- NIIT GIS Ltd (Esri India)
- Oracle Inc.
- OSGeo (Open Source Geospatial Foundation)
- SamSung SDS
- Trimble Inc.
- Geospatial World
- IBGE - Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
- Ministry of Lands and Human Settlements Development, Tanzania
- NR Canada
- Ordnance Survey GB
- UN Dept of Field Support, Cartographic Section
- UN-ECA, ICTs and Science & Technology Division
- UN-SPIDER
- UN Statistics Division

The presentations are available from this link - http://www.unggim2011.org/bbs/board.php?bo_table=material

A 'Concept Note' relating to the Exchange Forum can be downloaded from the Forum web site is available at: http://ggim.un.org/forum_exchange.html

Statistics and GI Seminar

Following the Forum, on 27 October, there was a seminar on the 'Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information', co-organized by Statistics Korea, U.S. Census Bureau, Eurostat and the Statistics Division (UNSD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA). Paul Cheung, Director of UNSD chaired the seminar, which included presentations from national statistical offices, Eurostat and industry partners,



including GSDI Association members Esri, Inc. and Singapore Land Authority (SLA). Details and a copy of the (draft) programme can be found at this link: http://ggim.un.org/seminar_27oct2011.html

GGIM Country Reports

On the GGIM Committee of Experts web site (http://ggim.un.org/ggim_committee.html), 24 countries have provided 'Country Reports' relating to the initiative. The site also provides links to all the relevant GGIM background documents (UN Decisions, Resolutions, Terms of Reference, etc.).

The Second Session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management will be held at the UN in New York from 13 - 15 August 2012.

The next GSDI and IGS Global News newsletter will contain summaries of interviews from Association members who were and are directly involved in this important and valuable global SDI initiative, which supports so many of the same goals and desired outcomes as those proposed by the GSDI Association from its beginning.

Other Global Programs

Various members of the GSDI Association Committees, Council and Board are involved in the following global initiatives or programmes on an on-going basis:

- Eye on Earth Summit, 12-15 December 2011 – see <http://www.eyearthsummit.org/>
- World Bank – Spatial Data Infrastructure for Millennium Development Goals Project.
- Group on Earth Observations (GEO) building the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) – see http://www.earthobservations.org/ag_partorg.shtml
- EuroGEOSS (EU-funded project supporting GEO/GEOSS) – Socio-economic Benefits of Earth Observation project.
- UNESCO IOC – Marine/Coastal Spatial Data Infrastructure training and development (Ocean Teacher Academy) – visit www.iode.org.
- UNSDI – UN-GGIM (Global Geospatial Information Management) – visit ggim.un.org.
- UN-SPIDER (United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response) - visit <http://www.un-spider.org> for October and November events.
- spatial@gov2011

GSDI DISCUSSION FORUMS UPDATES

To see the latest news from the different e-mail forums maintained by the GSDI Committees (4) and the regional SDI Newsletters (5), visit the web site at <http://www.gsdi.org/discussionlists>, choose the forum of interest and select the 'Archives' option. All discussion lists are open to anyone who is interested in participating, and joining instructions are at the web site above.

For more information on any of these items, visit the **GSDI Association** web site at <http://www.gsdi.org>.

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