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 (GGC 2012) Update

GGC 2012 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." The call for abstracts closed at the end of November and reviewers have now notified authors of papers that were accepted for presentation at the conference. Keep an eye on the Programme section of the conference web site for more information on the detailed programme, at http://www.gsdi.org/gsdiconf/gsdi13/prog_overvie w.html. Four of the five workshops that are held in the morning session of Monday, 14 May, prior to the opening plenary, are led by GSDI Association Committees:

➢ Harmonizing Licences across the Globe for Geographic Data (Legal & Socioeconomic Committee)
➢ SDI Best Practices in the Developing World (Societal Impacts Committee)
➢ Technical Challenges and Solutions in Building Spatial Data Infrastructure (Technical Committee)
➢ GSDI and IGS Membership: Benefits and Opportunities (Outreach & Membership Committee)

We are now only 3 ½ months away from start of the conference, and registration is open at http://www.gsdi.org/gsdiconf/gsdi13/register.html. Note that the Early Bird Registration fee ends on 1 March 2012. Visit the GGC 2012 web site at http://www.gsdi.org/gsdi13 for the latest news and updates.

Public Workshop on Ethical Use of Geodata

A Canadian project financed by the GEOIDE Network will be holding a one-day workshop on the day following GGC 2012 (18 May), to which GSDI Association and IGS members are invited. The workshop, titled "International workshop on geospatial data quality: Legal, ethical and technical aspects", will present results of the work undertaken in this 4-year project. The workshop fee will be announced shortly on the conference web site, where you will then also find a link to more information on the project. Several of the project's Canadian and international researchers are GSDI Association and/or IGS members.

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. All current Committee members are encouraged to send their news to the Editor (ral@alum.mit.edu) for including in future issues of the monthly Newsletter.

Outreach & Membership Committee

Committee Chair, Steven Ramage (OGC) was a panellist at the session on "Network of Networks beyond Information Technology" at the "Eye on Earth Summit" (www.eyeonearthsummit.org/) held on 12-15 December 2011 in Abu Dhabi. Steven also participated in a survey conducted under the Digital Agenda for Europe Action 23 relating to ICT procurement standards for public authorities and attended numerous other SDI-related events. Vice-Chair Roger Longhorn continued participation in development of the pan-European SDI (INSPIRE) thematic working group data specifications and liaison with the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in regard to future Marine SDI initiatives. Both Steven and Roger will present papers at the GSDI-13 conference in May and will co-host a 90-minute workshop relating to the current and future activities of the Outreach

& Membership Committee. Watch the GSDI 13 conference web site for news – and please attend! The GSDI Association LinkedIn group has also been active in the past months and we encourage all readers to join the group at www.LinkedIn.com.

Legal & Socioeconomic Committee

L&SE Committee co-Chair, Dr Bastiaan van Loenen, provided the January 2012 GSDI column for the GIM International geomatics magazine (see below).

Societal Impacts Committee

The GSDI Association is pleased to announce that 14 projects from around the developing world have been selected to receive a 2011-12 GSDI Small Grant award. Of the 14 projects, five have also received an offer of volunteer geospatial assistance from the GISCorps of The Urban and Regional Infrastructure Systems Association (URISA). A list of projects will be made available shortly on the Small Grants Program web page at http://www.gsdi.org/sic1.

Readers may also be interested in viewing the final reports from some of the past projects, which are accessible from the web site:

➢ 2010-11: Zimbabwe - National Spatial Data Infrastructure (ZNSDI): Making NSDI a Reality by Raising Awareness through National Workshops and Publication of an NSDI Newsletter, Primary Contact: University of Zimbabwe.

➢ 2010-11: India - Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) of Western Ghats of India-Capacity Building for stake holders for developing Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI), Primary Contact: Open Source Geospatial - India (OSGeo-India).

➢ 2009-10: Malawi - Addressing the needs in terms of geographic information and GIS capacities to support HIV/AIDS monitoring, evaluation and response in Malawi, Primary Contact: National Spatial Data Centre (NSDC) under the umbrella of the Malawi Geographic Information Council (MAGIC).

As always, we express the Association's grateful thanks for the support of the US Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and the URISA GISCorps for making the grants programme possible.

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.

News from IGS Members

Latin American Community of Spatial Data Infrastructure (Latin SDI)

The Latin American Community of Spatial Data Infrastructure (Latin SDI) [http://latinide.cedia.org.ec] was created in 2011. The Latin SDI is an online Community that gathers researchers from 13 institutions from 7 countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru), regarding academic and research work on Spatial Data Infrastructures. The Latin SDI uses the Internet Advanced "Red Clara", which comprises the NREN's (National Research and Education Network) for the operation of the Community and through these links to universities in Latin America.

The Latin SDI originated as a proposal from the University of Cuenca (Ecuador) based on previous experiences of SDI's supported by the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AECID) from 2008 to 2011. These initiatives where directed by Villie Morocho (PhD) of the University of Cuenca, Ecuador, and by Pilar Garcia-Almirall (PhD) of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Spain.

In their teaching and research activities universities generate geospatial information, but it is not generally available through SDIs in Latin America. So geoportals are being implemented through the Latin SDI Community in each of the universities' members. The Latin SDI Community also seeks complementary objectives, such as addressing issues of common interest of the universities in the region, training, generation of research lines regarding SDIs, exchange of experiences with other regions of the world and calls for joint

presentations funding of R&D. However, the main theme in the Community is at present the use of SDI to deal with information for the management and prevention of natural disasters.

As members of the Latin SDI Community and the International Geospatial Society (IGS), we wish to share with all of you this initiative, which is open for other universities of Latin America to join.

Article submitted by Villie Morocho, IGS member - Leader of the Latin SDI Community (Project Manager - University of Cuenca, Ecuador) and Mabel Alvarez, IGS President - Responsible of Latin SDI Group at the National University of Patagonia San Juan Bosco, Argentina.

IGS Member Subscriptions to GIM International

As a member benefit of IGS, you may receive a free subscription of GIM International. GIM International is carrying GSDI news, including IGS news, on a monthly page. If you want to stay up to date with this column and read up on other developments in geomatics, please follow this link and subscribe if you are not already receiving a hard copy of the magazine: http://www.gim-international.com/GSDI

IGS Members at GSDI-13 Conference

Many IGS members have had papers or extended abstracts selected for presentation at the GSDI-13 Conference in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, on 14-17 May 2012, and will also participate in several of the workshops offered on the opening day of the conference.

IGS Reminders

IGS members are also reminded that information is uploaded this year in GIKNet in the Society Web Forum:

- Topics of general interest (English) http://www.giknet.org/forum/post.php?topic= 41,
- Topics of general interest (Spanish), http://www.giknet.org/forum/post.php?topic= 42,
- Task 5. Promote the work of IGS members as a network sharing information, knowledge and publications among IGS members"

http://www.giknet.org/forum/post.php?topic= 12

Members are invited to actively participate in the Society Web Forum, as a means of sharing news,

And if you have not already signed up for the IGS sub-group on LinkedIn (see December Newsletter), please do so ASAP! If you are already a member of the GSDI group, then you can request to join from the *Subgroups* page by clicking "Groups" at the top of your home page. Then click the parent group's name (GSDI). Under the "More" dropdown menu, select *Subgroups*. The click "Join this subgroup." You can view the status of your membership from the Your Groups page at http://www.linkedin.com/myGroups.

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 Álvarez or vice-President Lilia Patricia Aria, who can be contacted via the IGS web site - or directly to me, Roger Longhorn, Editor GSDI & IGS Monthly News at roger (a) alum.mit.edu.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS' NEWS

OGC Business Value Committee Survey

The Open Geospatial Consortium, Inc. (OGC) Business Value Committee (BVC) ran an

international survey on the "Business Value of Standards" in December 2011 and announced the winners of the random prize draw on 31 January 2012:

- Nick Lawrence, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, Australia
- Luc Donéa, Intergraph Corporation, Belgium
- Satyanarayanan Raghavendran, Pixel Softek, India

OGC BVC congratulates the survey respondents and thanks everyone who took the time to help them understand more about open standards development and business value. Thanks also to OGC members Kexin Zhao (University of North Carolina - Charlotte) and Mu Xia (Santa Clara University) for their help with the survey, and their pending review of the overall results. Preliminary results will be presented by OGC's Steven Ramage (and GSDI Outreach & Membership Committee Chair) at the India Geospatial Forum in Gurgaon, India. Final results will hopefully be available for the BVC session at the OGC Technical Committee meeting in Austin, TX. For more information on the OGC Business Value Committee, visit the web site at:
http://www.opengeospatial.org/projects/groups/businessvalue.

NSDI Feasibility Reports for Uganda and Jordan

Esri Canada announced the completion of feasibility studies for creating NSDI in Uganda and the Kingdom of Jordan. The results and recommendations from each study have been published by infoDev, as part of a World Bank project on using SDIs to monitor development outcomes. To access the full reports, visit http://www.infodev.org/sdi. infoDev is a global partnership program in the Financial and Private Sector Development Network of the World Bank Group. Its mission is to enable innovative entrepreneurship for sustainable, inclusive growth and employment in developing countries.

NLS Finland Opens Data

Jarmo Ratia, Director General Central administration of the National Land Survey of Finland, announced the opening of all topographic datasets from March 2012. His blog entry reads:

The National Land Survey of Finland (NLS) will open its topographic datasets to the public and to companies to be used freely and free of charge. Thus, the NLS implements the objectives set in the Programme of Prime Minister Katainen's Government for making public databanks available to all interested parties.

This also allows attaining one of the most substantial strategic objectives of the NLS, to use topographic data as widely as possible. Hundreds of millions of euros have been invested during the last decades in the digital databank. We believe that making the data available provides the society with the most considerable total economic benefits of these investments. We think that information on roads, addresses, buildings, arable land and waterways will be of interest to citizens and companies. We also expect that digital basic and topographic maps as well as aerial images and orthophotos will be in great demand.

Free map services on the Internet have exponentially emerged to the awareness and use of the general public, which as such is very good. Mostly these services are used by those, who are not skilled in the art of maps. They may not always notice that the quality of the maps leaves room for improvement, particularly in respect of positioning accuracy, up-to-date information and contents.
What always has to be considered is the risk to link other information to datasets that are easily available and to use such data as a basis for various spatial data systems, which then continuous to be in use with other inadequate systems.

The NLS hopes that the Topographic database will be used as basic data after 1 May 2012 in all spatial data systems and ecosystems derived from them. The Topographic database is the most extensive, up-to-date and accurate database of Finland, and also extremely well documented. The use of a coherent basis could facilitate the combination of data as well as the joint use of the data and entire systems, which might also reduce costs and improve productivity. Making data available to the public will according to the NLS create new businesses based on innovative ideas particularly among small and medium-sized companies. In addition, the data will benefit education and academic research.

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

Dr. Bastiaan van Loenen, co-Chair of the GSDI Legal and Socioeconomic Committee, provided the January 2012 GSDI column for GIM International magazine, re-printed here with their permission.

Open Data

The open data virus is clearly spreading throughout the world. In Europe, EU Commissioner Kroes published new measures to stimulate the reuse of public sector data at the end of November 2011. Open data portals are increasingly filled with public data, often including public sector geographic data. Recently, the Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and Environment announced that by 1st January 2015 all of this ministry's data, including many geographic data sets, will be made available in line with an open data policy. As of 1st January 2012, this policy already applies to the Dutch topographic data set 1:10,000.

In addition, discussions continue on the scope of open data and the implementation of such a policy. A workshop in The Netherlands, organised by Geonovum, concluded that legal frameworks often provide sufficient space for open data initiatives to flourish. However, privacy legislation may prove to be a major barrier for opening up access to public sector data. Research in the UK and US shows that technology has advanced to the extent that, even if data is 'anonymised' by aggregation, it can still be traced to individuals, making the data subject to privacy legislation. The question remains to what extent this reasoning impacts upon open data initiatives and whether current privacy legislation, in Europe at least, is too strict, outdated and insufficiently geared towards anticipating new technological developments.

In addition to the legal issues discussed, it was concluded during the workshop that practical obstacles still remain which should not be overlooked or underestimated. Users of public sector data still spend a great deal of their time on finding public data. If and when the data is found, the assessment of that data is time-consuming, either because metadata is not present or because access to the data is not straightforward. Finally, the assessment of the permissible use is often unclear. For open data, the notice that there are no usage restrictions is very helpful. Creative Commons Public Domain Mark, CC0 Public Domain Dedication or, for the UK, the OpenGovernmentLicence (OGL) are examples of how this legal transparency could be increased. The OpenGeospatialConsortium has published a new suite of use conditions that provides a first step towards the harmonisation of more restrictive licence provisions. In addition, the GSDI Legal and Socio-Economic Working Group is working on a framework for harmonising existing licenses. The GSDI Legal and Socio-Economic Working Group will continue to play its role in these debates, and aims to bring the key players together at its workshop on the harmonisation of licences to be held at the GSDI-13 Conference of 2012 in Quebec City, Canada.

To overcome practical barriers in the short term, we would urge public sector providers of geographic data to publish their (open) data in an (open) data portal and be sure to publish the conditions that apply, even if there are no usage conditions! Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Remetey-Fülöpp Gábor for his excellent work as chair of the GSDI Legal and Socio-Economic Working Group.

See the original article at http://www.gim-international.com/issues/articles/id1822-Open_Data.html.

THE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (GIKNETWORK)

During November, the user interface to the GIKNetwork was updated, permitting easier delivery of documents to the system. The main categories under which documents can be referenced now include: GI Science: Education & Training; GI Science: Research; and SDI/GIS: Practice and Applications. The network is being strongly promoted on the Association's e-mail lists and the LinkedIn GSDI Group. All members of the GSDI Association and IGS are encouraged to sign up for GIKNetwork and to submit documents relevant to any aspect of SDI development and deployment, globally.

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. 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 Documents Depot, which provides a search facility for locating information and documents submitted by GIKNetwork members. A comprehensive list of GI/SDI related discussion lists can be accessed from a single reference page. Access the GIKNetwork at this link: http://www.giknet.org/.

PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL SDI PROJECTS

Eye of Earth Summit Report

This important global summit meeting, held 12-15 December 2011 in Abu Dhabi, UAE, (www.eyeonearthsummit.org), was attended by several GSDI Association members, as well as being hosted by member Abu Dhabi Systems and Information Centre. An excellent post-Summit report has been prepared by IIAD - the Canadian-based International Institute for Sustainable Development, available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic (in PDF and html formats) at www.iisd.ca/ymb/uncsd/eoes/. GSDI Association President, Abbas Rajabifard, moderated the panel on 'Open Collaboration' that comprised the co-chairs of the five working groups convened to identify and frame the most challenging environmental data and information issues. GSDI Executive Director Prof Harlan Onsrud, Co-Chair, Working Group on Technical Infrastructure, noted that the working group agreed on several ways to advance technological development, but stressed the need for better handling of concepts within systems to improve information- and knowledge-sharing, where improved technical standards should be matched by legal advancements. He also stressed the need to acquire metadata for crowdsourced data, to help put it in context, and reported that his working group concluded that it was more important to gain access to existing data than to develop new technologies. When Rajabifard asked the co-chairs to identify major opportunities for cross collaboration, Onsrud urged keeping open the channels that had been established to plan the Summit so that the dialogue could continue. During the Summit, Harlan Onsrud also chaired the panel on "Network of Networks: Beyond Information Technology".

EuroGEOSS

The EU-funded EuroGEOSS Project held a conference in Madrid on 25-27 January 2012, attended by several GSDI Association and IGS members, including keynote speakers. "EuroGEOSS: advancing the vision of GEOSS" provided a forum for developers, users and decision-makers working with advanced multi-disciplinary information systems to improve science and decisions for complex societal issues. Details of the programme and presentations are available from this link: http://www.eurogeoss2012.eu/.

UN-SPIDER Conference

UN-SPIDER organised the "United Nations Conference on Space-based Technologies for Disaster Management - Best Practices for Risk Reduction and Rapid Response Mapping" on 22-25 November 2011. The conference brought together 128 participants from 42 countries representing 93 national, regional and international organizations, non-government organizations, the private sector and academia representing all the continents. Participants represented civil protection agencies, emergency management organizations, space agencies, remote sensing agencies, research institutions, ministries of environment and natural resources, science and technology bureaus, and other government and non-government agencies. The conference covered a range of topics including advancements in technology, best practices in disaster risk management, experiences in rapid response mapping, etc. All information on the conference, presentations, the report, etc. can be accessed here: http://www.un-spider.org/conference-beijing-2011

spatial@gov

The spatial@gov web site is an Australian initiative established to provide information on how location based capabilities can benefit all levels of government. The spatial@gov 2011 Conference was held on 15 - 17 November 2011 at the National Convention Centre Canberra in Australia. The presentations are now online and can be seen at: http://www.2011.cebit.com.au/2011/conferences/spatial-at-gov/presentations.html.

Other Global Programs

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

➢ Group on Earth Observations (GEO) building the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) – see www.earthobservations.org/ag_partorg.shtml
➢ 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.

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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