

Paper for Consideration by IRCC9
Proposed UN GGIM Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information

Submitted by:	USA
Executive Summary:	This document seeks to promote the importance of the proposed GGIM Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information and seeks IHO member state participation
Related Documents:	Draft Concept Note to Establish a Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information
Related Projects:	MSDIWG and UNSDG14

Introduction / Background

The United States will propose the establishment of the UN-GGIM Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information (WG-MGI) during the seventh session of the UN-GGIM on August 2-4 in New York City (<http://ggim.un.org/>). As the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management's (UN-GGIM) group of experts moves forward with their effort to coordinate geographic information, it is important that they consider IHO standards as foundational to the United Nations ability to accomplish the milestones outlined in Strategic Development Goal 14. The current lack of marine domain awareness in the UN-GGIM weakens the UN's ability to take advantage of IHO members' standards and data.

Analysis / Discussion

The UN-GGIM is working to set the agenda for the development of global geospatial information and to promote its use to address key global challenges. It provides a forum to liaise and coordinate among member states, and between member states and international organizations.

The UN-GGIM executes its mission through specialized work groups that focus on topics like the global geodetic reference frame, integrating statistics and other information, determining fundamental datasets, and land administration and management. It does not have an expert working group on marine geospatial information, and land administrations or national statistic bureaus represent the majority of the UN-GGIM's participants. It is time for ocean mapping to be part of their agenda.

The United States will propose a concept note to establish the WG-MGI in August 2017 at the United Nations. This proposal aims to make the marine environment a regular part of the UN-GGIM's agenda through;

- (a) Playing a leading role at the policy level by raising political awareness and highlighting the importance of reliable, timely, and fit-for-purpose marine geospatial information to support the administration, management, and governance of the marine and ocean environment;
- (b) Encouraging the use of internationally agreed upon geospatial information frameworks, schemas, systems and established standards to improve the growing interdependent relationships between people and the marine environment; and

(c) Supporting the Committee of Experts in the development of norms, principles, guides, and standards to increase significantly the availability of high quality, timely, and reliable marine geospatial information including any regional capacity development initiatives.

Conclusions

A key work program of UN-GGIM is to significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable geospatial information including for the marine environment in support of national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Marine geospatial information will be needed to meet the demand for critical analysis when questions of governance, management and coordination pertaining to our seas and oceans and resources arise. These include spaces for recreation, telecommunication, transportation and natural resources yielding food, medicine, energy and minerals. In addition, this information will play a vital role in measuring, monitoring and mitigating climate risk in our seas and oceans. While honoring technologically good practices and currently adopted standards and schemas, the WG-MGI will work to agree upon appropriate marine spatial data infrastructures, including inland hydrography and the oceans, and their integration with terrestrial spatial data.

The WG-MGI will not be approved without IHO member state support. Furthermore, it will not be successful without the participation of member state hydrographic offices.

Justification and Impacts

The WG-MGI will help to represent IHO interests at the UN-GGIM and will highlight the importance of the marine domain throughout the world. Without it, ocean mapping will continue to be absent from the UN-GGIM's agenda. The adoption of standards and marine geospatial support of the UN sustainable development goals will not include a marine perspective without the WG-MGI.

Recommendations

Support the establishment of the WG-MGI by encouraging MS to co-sponsor the working group and attend the UN-GGIM. Request hydrographic office representatives work with their representatives to the UN-GGIM to highlight the importance of the marine domain. Consider participating in the UN-GGIM as part of national delegations.

Action required of IRCC9

The IRCC9 is invited to:

- a. note this paper,
- b. encourage member states to support the establishment of the UN-GGIM WG-MGI by working with their representatives to the UN-GGIM to offer interventions in favor of the WG-MGI during the August 2017 UN-GGIM,
- c. encourage member states to consider co-sponsoring the establishment of the WG-MGI,
- d. encourage hydrographic office representatives to attend the UN-GGIM in August 2017