

# The Statement of Shared Guiding Principles for Geospatial Information Management

UN-GGIM Secretariat  
Statistics Division  
Two UN Plaza DC2-1664B, New York, NY 10017  
Tel:(212) 963-3042 or (212) 963-8578  
Fax: (212) 963-9851  
ggim@un.org | ggim.un.org

## Preamble

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management acknowledges:

- a) High quality geospatial information is critical for evidence-based analysis and informed policy decision-making in support of sustainable development, economic growth, poverty eradication, peace and security, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation;
- b) The opportunity to use geospatial information to foster mutual knowledge and cooperation among the Member States and peoples of an increasingly connected world, demanding openness and transparency;
- c) The unwavering trust of the public in the reliability of authoritative geospatial information is essential and depends on recognition of and adherence to a set of fundamental values and principles that, when applied to geospatial information management, support the professional independence and accountability of geospatial information organizations;
- d) The need for precepts, values and beliefs that clarify the distinctive social responsibilities of geospatial information authorities, encourage and support stakeholders at all levels to make the right choices that foster public trust and inspire confidence in geospatial information, and to attract partners and investment;
- e) In order to be effective, it is desirable that guiding principles are incorporated in the institutional frameworks that govern geospatial information organizations and understood at all political levels and by all stakeholders in national authorities.

## Shared Guiding Principles

of a strong, successful and relevant geospatial information organization:

### Innovation

- a) **Geospatial advocacy:** is reinforced by steadfast advocates promoting applications of geospatial information that support sustainable development, economic growth, poverty eradication, peace and security, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation.
- b) **Collaboration and coordination:** encourage national, regional and global collaborations fundamental to the facilitation of improvements in the development, management, use and exchange of geospatial information, as well as the integration of statistical data and other information, in order to create new knowledge and supply products and services meeting user needs.
- c) **Continuous development and recognition of work:** commit to policies and practices that ensure the continuous development, professional competence and ethical practices of geospatial information practitioners.
- d) **Agility and adaptiveness:** address and take advantage of institutional, technological and other advancements in support of the development and delivery of products and services.
- e) **Open data:** where feasible adopt policies that maximize access to and use of open, free and unrestrictive geospatial information for innovation, efficient and effective decision making and a spatially enabled society.

### Governance

- f) **Use of and adherence to geospatial standards:** embrace the development of, adherence to, and use of nationally and internationally recognized geospatial standards and interoperable geo-processing technologies. Utilization of standards and interoperable technologies will facilitate the effective and efficient creation, sharing, exchange



## The Statement of Shared Guiding Principles for Geospatial Information Management

UN-GGIM Secretariat  
Statistics Division  
Two UN Plaza DC2-1664B, New York, NY 10017  
Tel:(212) 963-3042 or (212) 963-8578  
Fax: (212) 963-9851  
ggim@un.org | ggim.un.org

and use of geospatial data, the open transfer of data among organizations, platforms and applications, and encourage innovation, reduce transaction costs, increase transparency, allow international compatibility and cooperation within the marketplace.

- g) **Ownership and accountability:** facilitate trust amongst geospatial data creators, providers and users, create a clear understanding of geospatial data through the publication of metadata, including information on ownership and intellectual property rights, access and usage conditions and technical specifications (in particular currency, data models, quality and accuracy definitions). This will support informed and fit-for-purpose use and interpretation of geospatial data. Data creators and providers are responsible for compliance to the specifications of geospatial data sets made available for consumption and use.
- h) **Transparency:** identify sources and the processes that are used to create and provide official geospatial data.
- i) **Respect and confidentiality:** exhibit high levels of responsibility and consideration to stakeholders in the execution of daily operations. Particular care is to be exercised to protect the confidentiality of geospatial information that may adversely impact an individual, community and/or Member State. Personal data is to be especially respected and protected.
- j) **Standards of service:** employ geospatial information management best practices and solutions, and pursue excellence in the delivery of geospatial data and services. Appropriate access, fairness and equity are to be accorded to all stakeholders.
- k) **Institutional framework:** encourage and create inclusive and participatory legal, policy and administrative frameworks to manage data ownership, data quality, intellectual property and confidentiality issues.
- l) **Expertise:** value national expertise in geospatial information knowledge and experience in order to, where appropriate, comment on and validate the quality of geospatial datasets covering the national territory,

seeking their overall consistency, in order to advise on matters of application, interpretation and use of geospatial information.

- m) **International cooperation and harmonization:** engage in bilateral and multilateral cooperation in geospatial information management to foster effective and efficient geospatial data management systems in all Member States. Harmonization of national geospatial data and services at regional and global levels is encouraged in order to meet the needs of supranational users.

### Compliance

- n) **Sovereignty of Member States:** availability of accurate, assured and authoritative geospatial data, to support public policies and administrative procedures, is an essential requirement of Member States' autonomy, sovereignty and economic development. Such data should be considered and treated as a base infrastructure for each country, to be created and maintained as other base infrastructures.
- o) **Adherence to law:** observe laws, regulations and administrative practices of the Member States, within which they operate, as well as international laws and conventions, avoid conflict of interest and make stakeholders aware of those laws and conventions, which govern and are related to operations. The intellectual property of geospatial data creators and providers is to be acknowledged and protected.

September 2015

