

A Statement of Shared Guiding Principles for Geospatial Information Management

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, disaster risk reduction, addressing the adverse impact of climate change and peace and security;
- (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 essential trust of the public in the reliability of authoritative geospatial information is essential and depends on recognition of and adherence to fundamental values and principles that are the basis of any society. In this context, professional independence and accountability of geospatial organizations are crucial;
- (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 data, and to attract partners and investment;
- (e) In order to be effective, guiding principles have to be enshrined in the institutional frameworks that govern geospatial information organizations and understood at all political levels and by all stakeholders in national agencies.

Shared Guiding Principles

Innovation

1. **Geospatial advocacy:** A strong and successful geospatial information organization is reinforced by steadfast advocates. Geospatial information organizations will promote applications of geospatial information that support sustainable development, economic growth, poverty eradication, disaster risk reduction, addressing the adverse impact of climate change and peace and security.
2. **Collaboration and coordination:** Geospatial information organizations will encourage national, regional and global collaborations fundamental to the facilitation of improvements in the development, management and use of geospatial data and the integration of statistical data.
3. **Continuous development and recognition of work:** Geospatial information organizations are committed to policies and practices that ensure the continuous development, professional competence and ethical practices of geospatial information practitioners.
4. **Agility and adaptiveness:** Geospatial information organizations must position themselves to address and take advantage of institutional, technological and other advancements in support of their development and delivery of products and services.
5. **Open data access:** Geospatial information organizations are encouraged to adopt access policies which maximize the use of geospatial information, and promote efficiency and effectiveness of decision making.

Governance

6. **Use of and adherence to geospatial standards:** Geospatial information organizations shall as far as possible embrace the development of, adherence to, and use of nationally and internationally recognized geospatial standards. Utilization of standards will facilitate the effective and efficient creation, sharing, exchange and use of geospatial data, the open transfer of data among organizations, platforms and applications, and encourage innovation, reduce transaction costs, increase transparency and allow international compatibility within the marketplace.

7. **Ownership and accountability:** Geospatial data creators and providers will facilitate trust, a clear understanding and use of geospatial data through the publication of metadata, including ownership information and technical specifications (i.e. in particular currency, data models, quality and accuracy definitions). This will support informed and fit-for-purpose use and interpretation of data. Data creators and providers are responsible for compliance to the specifications of data sets made available for consumption and use.

8. **Transparency:** Geospatial information organizations should identify sources and the processes that are used to create and provide official geospatial data.

9. **Respect and confidentiality:** Geospatial information organizations are to exhibit high levels of regard and consideration to their stakeholders in the execution of their daily operations. Particular care is to be exercised to protect the confidentiality of geospatial information that may adversely impact an individual, community and/or countries. Personal data is to be especially respected and protected.

10. **Standards of service:** Geospatial information organizations are to employ geospatial information management best practices and solutions, and to pursue excellence in the delivery of geospatial data and services. Appropriate access, fairness (value for money) and equity are to be accorded to all stakeholders.

11. **Institutional framework:** National geospatial information organizations are encouraged to create inclusive and participatory legal, policy and administrative frameworks to manage data ownership, data quality, intellectual property and confidentiality issues.

International Cooperation: bilateral and multilateral cooperation in geospatial information management contributes to the improvement of authoritative geospatial management systems in all countries.

Compliance

12. **Sovereignty of Member States:** The availability of authoritative geospatial data, that is, official and accurate data, used to support public policies and administrative procedures, is an essential requirement of Member States' autonomy, sovereignty and economic development. These data should be considered and treated as a base infrastructure for each country, to be created and maintained as other base infrastructures.

13. **Adherence to law:** Geospatial information organizations must observe the laws, regulations and administrative practices of the Member States, within which they operate, as well as international laws and conventions, and their stakeholders made aware of those laws and conventions which govern and are related to their operations. The intellectual property of geospatial data creators are to be protected and geospatial data received from non-primary sources must be acknowledged.