

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For discussion and
recommendations

Meeting of the 2022/2023 Bureau
Cork (Ireland), 12-13 October 2022

Item V (d) of the Provisional
Agenda

FUTURE WORK WITH THE GEOSPATIAL COMMUNITY

Prepared by the Secretariat

During the joint CES and UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session in June 2022, the two secretariats were requested to continue the current collaboration in areas of mutual strategic importance for the statistical and geospatial communities, including the preparation of an extension to the current collaboration agreement and organizing another joint plenary session in 2024.

The Bureau is invited to review the planned next steps and advise on further work with the geospatial community

I. BACKGROUND

1. Collaboration between the statistical and geospatial communities has been gradually increasing over recent years across the UNECE region and beyond. This has resulted in a series of collaboration agreements and joint activities between the Secretariat and various subsidiary bodies of the Conference of European Statisticians on the one hand, and different groups within the geospatial community on the other. In the United Nations context, the key partner in the geospatial community in the UNECE region is the European group of the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM: Europe). This partnership has resulted in various joint expert-level and capacity development activities, culminating in the joint plenary sessions of CES and UN-GGIM: Europe in 2020 and 2022.

II. SUPPORT FROM EUROSTAT

2. Until now, the ability of the UNECE Secretariat to engage further in activities relating to the integration of statistical and geospatial data has been constrained by lack of resources. However, in September 2022, a new project was started, financed mainly by a grant from Eurostat. This project will allow the Secretariat to commit more resources to further developing the relationships between the statistical and geospatial communities, and to explore and resolve some of the barriers to the integration of statistical and geospatial data.

3. The project, which will run until early 2024, aims to “foster stronger links between the statistical and geospatial communities across the UNECE region, facilitating greater collaboration and encouraging greater integration of geospatial and statistical information by promoting stronger institutional partnerships and the use of common standards”. It will support existing Eurostat and joint activities to strengthen the integration of statistical and geospatial data in target countries - Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

4. The expected results of the project are:

- Raised awareness and increased knowledge about the methodology (its application, implementation, use cases, etc.) by communication activities: preparation of electronic or printed information materials on the subject (such as narratives, videos, brochures, blogs, posters, focusing on good practices), creation of websites, translation of existing documentation, etc.
- Description of the main issues and obstacles hampering the further integration of geospatial and statistical data, as well as of the solutions proposed for overcoming them;
- Identification of domains where the greater integration of data is hampered by the lack of common standards, and of priorities for standards harmonisation work;
- Description and testing (or formal establishment) of sustainable cooperation mechanisms between the statistical and geospatial communities;
- Organization of on-line training workshops and/or other dedicated events (conferences, seminars) and support to the participation of national administrations in these events;
- Online consultations to support country activities;
- Creation of dedicated joint groups with other relevant national/international institutions to discuss improvements in the interoperability of statistical and geospatial information (including organization of regular meetings, coordination with other relevant international groups and initiatives) and providing advice on the way forward (list of priorities, actions to be undertaken, with realistic schedule);
- Organization of a joint UNECE / Eurostat / UN-GGIM: Europe Workshop on Integrating Statistical and Geospatial Data in 2023, providing financial support for participation of delegates from target countries, focusing on the results so far of the activities undertaken under the project;
- Support participation of a limited number of delegates from target countries to the 2023 meeting of the European Forum for Geography and Statistics (EFGS), to help to develop capacities in the integration of statistical and geospatial information in these countries;
- Publishing methodological guidelines in support of country implementation of the recommended action.

5. The Bureau will be kept informed as the project progresses.

III. NEXT STEPS

6. As discussed at the Joint Plenary Session in June, the current partnership agreement between UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe is due for renewal at the end of 2022. The contents of the new agreement are expected to be closely aligned with the project described above. However, the new agreement is expected to cover the period until the end of 2025, so it will also include activities after the project. The three main activities foreseen for the whole period of the agreement are:

- (a) The proposed third Joint CES / UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session in June 2024;
- (b) Continuation of the annual joint Eurostat / UN-GGIM: Europe / UNECE workshops on integrating statistical and geospatial information;
- (c) Continued collaboration in the area of capacity development.

IV. ACTION REQUESTED FROM THE BUREAU

7. The Bureau is requested to reflect on the growing collaboration between the statistical and geospatial communities, to review the planned next steps and advise on further work with the geospatial community.

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