

UN-GGIM: Europe Work Plan 2022

Introduction

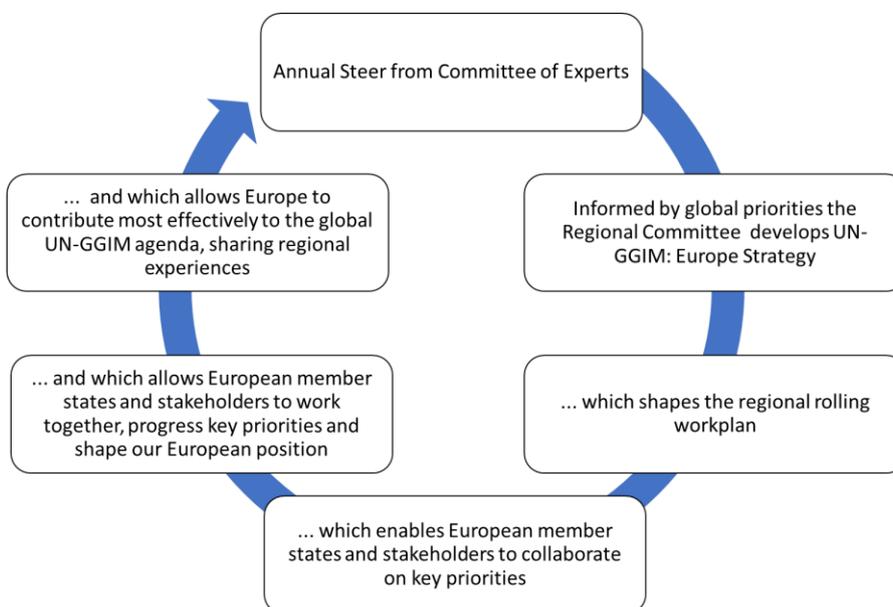
The aim of UN-GGIM: Europe is to contribute to the more effective management and availability of geospatial information in Europe and ensuring that the work of the Regional Committee is aligned to the global UN-GGIM programme¹.

At its eighth plenary meeting in October 2021 the Regional Committee approved and adopted a renewed [strategy of UN-GGIM: Europe](#). The renewed strategy outlines the mission of UN-GGIM: Europe, which is to *maximise the use of geospatial information in Europe for a safer and more sustainable world*. Which will be achieved *through identifying opportunities, understanding and solving common challenges across the Europe Region. By collaborating with partners to enhance the use of geospatial data and its integration with statistics to inform and drive action*².

This renewed and adopted strategy is structured around three main strategic pillars: Sharing Knowledge, Raising Awareness and Strategic Leadership. The aims and goals of UN-GGIM: Europe are laid out and put into practice through a rolling work plan that is approved by the Regional Committee at the annual plenary meeting.

The figure below [Figure 1] illustrates the circular process that ensures that the work of UN-GGIM: Europe remains aligned with the global programme of the Committee of Experts, focusses on the needs and priorities of our region, and ultimately contributes back to the global UN-GGIM agenda by allowing Europe to share its regional experiences.

Figure 1 – Aligning the regional priorities with the global programme



¹ Article 2 - Purpose and Activities of the [Rules and Articles of UN-GGIM: Europe](#)

² Vision and Mission outlined in the [UN-GGIM: Europe Strategy](#)



Establishing the main lines of work

The [2021 work plan](#), also approved by the Regional Committee at its eighth plenary session, identified five key priority areas that meet the strategic alignment of the needs and requirements of Europe within the global programme of the Committee of Experts:

- Integrated Geospatial Information Framework
- Geodetic Reference Frames
- Data Integration
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Data Strategy and Policy

The rationale and aims supporting the proposed activities were outlined in this work plan and these five key priority areas were translated into the main lines of work that the Regional Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe planned to focus on for the next three to five years starting from 2022.

The inter-plenary interval between the eighth and ninth plenary was a period of transition. While the regional working groups delivered the final outputs from the rolling work plan which was agreed and approved at the seventh regional plenary meeting in 2020, the Executive Committee and a dedicated Strategy Project Team³ started setting and implementing the 2021 work plan.

The 2021 work plan provided the rationale for identifying the priority areas together with a high-level outline of the lines of work that the Regional Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe aimed to focus on. The Executive Committee did not wish to prepare and prescribe how the work should be carried out or identify the deliverables for each line of work. The intention was for Member States and observers to express their interest in participating in the various lines of work outlined below and to collaborate together to deliver on these key regional priorities.

Following the agreement and adoption of the 2021 work plan in October 2021, the Project Team designed a questionnaire to communicate and to engage the participation in the work plan. The primary aim of the survey, which was circulated at the end of January 2022, was to gauge the relevance of the lines of work with the members of UN-GGIM: Europe and to identify the Member States and observers interested in taking part in implementing these. The questionnaire asked members to state their level of engagement for each of the lines of work, the options being to lead, participate or to stay informed.

In total 66 responses from 37⁴ Member States were received, 33 responses from National Mapping and Cadastral Authorities, 21 from National Statistical Organisations, one joint response from both the national organisations and three responses from national entities other

³ The Strategy Project Team was led by Portugal, United Kingdom and the UN-GGIM: Europe Secretariat with additional input from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden.

⁴ Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Serbia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom



than geospatial or statistical. The remaining eight responses were from observer organisations that included academia, regional organisations, the private sector and the European Commission⁵.

What was encouraging about the questionnaire results is that responses were received from both the statistical and geospatial communities, and that 38% of the responses were from Member States or organisations that had not previously been involved in the work of UN-GGIM: Europe.

The survey asked members how relevant they considered each line of work for the continuation of the activities of the work plan of UN-GGIM: Europe [Figure 2]. The priority area that generated most interest to members is Data Integration with 87% respondents indicating that this line of work is relevant to very relevant. The least, though still with a high majority of 65% respondents considering the line of work relevant to very relevant, was Geodetic Reference Frame. An understandable response taking into consideration that this topic is of lower interest to the statistical community than to the geospatial community. These results demonstrate that the members responded positively to all the identified lines of work, and indicate that the work plan is suited for steering the activities for the priority topics in Europe. The lines of work are listed in descending order to their relevance to the members, as indicated by average value: Data Integration, Sustainable Development Goals, Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, Data Strategy and Policy and Geodetic Reference Frame.

Figure 2 – Relevance of the lines of work

	1 - not at all relevant	2	3	4	5	6 - very relevant	Average
Data Integration	0.0	0.0	6.6	6.6	45.9	41.0	5.21
	0.0		13.1			86.9	
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	0.0	3.4	5.1	23.7	30.5	47.3	4.93
	3.4		28.8			67.8	
Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF)	1.6	4.9	6.6	13.1	36.1	37.7	4.90
	6.6		19.7			73.8	
Data Strategy and Policy	1.7	0.0	10.2	15.3	45.8	27.1	4.85
	1.7		25.5			72.9	
Global Geodetic Reference Frame (GGRF)	1.8	7.0	8.8	17.5	36.8	28.1	4.65
	8.8		26.3			64.9	

Source: UN-GGIM: Europe Questionnaire to Regional Members on Implementing the UN-GGIM: Europe work plan.

Following this analysis of the survey results the Strategic Project Team proposed a plan of action to the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe in order to launch the first phase of implementing the work plan.

⁵ Academia (Vienna University of Technology, Politecnico Di Milano and Karabük University - Turkey), regional organisations (EuroGeographics and EuroSDR), the private sector (ESRI and ConsultingWhere) and the European Commission (Eurostat).



Developing the Concept Notes

Facilitated by leads from the Executive Committee and assisted by the Strategic Project Team, kick-off meetings for each of the lines of work were held at the end of March 2022. The meeting participants included the members who indicated their interest in the questionnaire in participating in the line work. Each meeting outlined the rationale of the line of work, its relevance to the region, its link with the global programme of UN-GGIM and included a roundtable discussion on how the high-level objectives of each line of work can be implemented and delivered by the members of UN-GGIM: Europe.

From these kick-off meetings the level of regional work and involvement for each line of work was established, either as a Working Group (WG), with more practical objectives and activities, or as Communities of Interest (CoI) a 'light touch' group which is more of a liaison between the interests of UN-GGIM: Europe and existing global and regional activities in topic area. It has always been a primary concern of UN-GGIM: Europe not to duplicate existing work.

In addition, the discussions at the kick-off meetings helped to develop the concept notes, objectives, outputs and short to medium term actions for each of the lines of work.

These are provided as part of this work plan. The concept notes have been created to identify the primary objectives of each line of work with a set of outputs to support these objectives. These objectives and outputs will be regularly reviewed by ExCom, and the ExCom leads as set out in the Governance section at the end of the document.



Data Integration

Background

Since 2014, UN-GGIM: Europe has had a functioning Working Group on Data Integration actively working and producing relevant inputs and [deliverables on data integration](#).

The refreshed strategy for UN-GGIM: Europe sees that Data Integration is a central issue in the current European landscape focus on data strategy, increasing data interoperability, standardization and quality are key points in this framework of moving towards data driven-innovation and evidence-based decisions and policies.

Many opportunities and challenges remain to be dealt with on this topic in order to increase the scope of data integration, and particularly between geospatial and statistical data: relevant issues include geocoding, common geographies, standards, consistent time-series data, persistent unique identifiers, linking methods and linked data, metadata and data quality, data protection and security and interinstitutional collaboration.

Several initiatives are taking place at European level – the New EU Space Programme, with its initiatives like Copernicus and Galileo, will continue to enhance the contribution of Earth Observation to Europe’s digital and green transitions priority policies.

Exploring EO data sources and how they can be integrated with other data is a topic being addressed also within the European Statistical System (MoU), and the ESS is also working on a strategy on the integration of geospatial data and statistics.

Within UN-GGIM there are already in place other relevant related data integration activities which include the work being developed by the [Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information](#).

Objectives

The line of work on Data Integration will function as a Working Group (WG), following the defined Terms of Reference (ToR) [to be drafted].

The main aim of this WG is to maintain the active contribution on data methods and on showcasing the added value of integrating geospatial data with other data, and further exploring requirements and practices on the use and integration of EO data. The WG should also explore ways to contribute and support activities promoting geospatial and statistical data integration, including reinforcing the involvement of the EO community.

Outputs

The expected outputs include:

- To compile and put together use cases/discussion papers on best practices on data integration methods and produce recommendations and guidelines
- To promote and conduct webinars on specific relevant data integration topics
- To support and promote capacity building and development initiatives on data integration



Short- to Medium-term actions

- Consolidate the scope of the work and the activities to be developed
- Review and update the structure and content of the wiki working page

Timetable 2022 to 2024

The work is expected to be developed in a time-frame of 2 years.

SDG

Sustainable Development Goals

Background

Since 2017, UN-GGIM: Europe has been actively addressing and providing operational and technical guidance for the calculation of specific [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\) indicators](#).

It is widely recognised that Sustainable Development will continue to be a high priority on global agendas and, as 2030 approaches, measuring progress towards the SDGs will become increasingly important, with geospatial data playing an critical role to provide context and deliver data to operationalize indicators.

If it has been clear that since the beginning the various countries of the world (and of course the different countries of Europe) were at different stages of sustainable development and of their ability to track and implement the indicator framework for the monitoring of the 17 SDGs, the COVID-19 pandemic brought additional challenges, aggravating, and potentially delaying, the progress towards achieving the SDGs.

The contribution of geospatial information has been highlighted by recent developments – the publication of the '[SDGs Geospatial Roadmap](#)', the recently launched 'Data Alliance' and, within the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Working Group on Geospatial Information ([IAEG SDG WG GI](#)) and its focus on providing guidance to the statistical community (including the SDGs Custodian Agencies) on approaches to the review and validation of data emanating from the use of Earth observations. Other initiatives have been showcasing the added value of EO for SDG, as the one developed by GEO group (EO4SDG) and at the European programmes, such as the Copernicus, have also shed light on the potential of satellite imagery data to address environment related topics.

Objectives

The line of work on SDG will function as a subgroup of the WG on Data Integration, following the defined Terms of Reference (ToR) [to be drafted].

The main aim of this line of work is to maintain the active contribution of UN-GGIM: Europe on showcasing the added value of integrating geospatial data with other data to address SDG indicators, by building on the previous deliverables and focus on common problems and



technical and methodological solutions. The work also intends to further explore requirements and practices on the use and integration of Earth Observation data, maintaining a close articulation with the IAEG-SDG WG GI.

Outputs

The expected outputs include:

- To compile and put together use cases and operational examples and produce concrete recommendations and guidelines on the calculation of SDG indicators
- To promote and webinars / guided discussion sessions on specific SDG indicators and/or methodological issues and solutions
- To support and promote capacity building and development initiatives on SDG indicators calculation

Short- to Medium-term actions

- Consolidate the scope of the work and the activities to be developed
- Review and update the structure and content of the wiki working page

Timetable 2022 to 2024

The work is expected to be developed in a time-frame of 2 years.

IGIF

Integrated Geospatial Information Framework - Europe

Background

The Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) provides a basis and guides for developing, integrating, strengthening, and maximising geospatial information management and related resources in all countries.

It has quickly become the 'umbrella framework' for UN-GGIM through which many of the existing activities are linked to. It is also an operational framework, and many nations (including several in Europe) are already using the IGIF to develop and strengthen their national capabilities.

The IGIF is still being developed to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose and has the right focus and resourcing to ensure its implementation. This is being led at the global level by the High-level Group on IGIF (HLG-IGIF). This Working Group has been set-up to support the European members of the HLG-IGIF, to contribute to the global tasks, and to raise the profile and relevance of IGIF to member of the European Region.

Objectives

- Provide support and input to the European Members of the HLG-IGIF, as and when required.



- Contribute to global tasks of the HLG-IGIF, making sure regional concerns and issues are raised and addressed.
- Understand the issues and obstacles that Regional Members may face when looking to implement IGIF develop regionally focused outputs.

Outputs

The expected outputs include:

- That the HLG-IGIF has a wider pool of experts available to contribute to its work, and that European Members contribute where relevant.
- The avoidance of duplication of effort – making sure that activities at the regional level support the global activities, and the outputs are transferrable in to UN-GGIM: Europe.
- Act as a convening body for UN-GGIM: Europe, hosting knowledge share and development activities such as webinars, workshops, or seminars.
- Providing Regional use cases and examples of Member States developing Country-level Action Plans.

Short- to Medium-term actions

- Define the structure and set up of the Working Group
- Initiate discussions with European Members of HLG-IGIF and the HLG-IGIF Work Plan leads to identify areas for engagement.

Timetable 2022 to 2024

Initially the work is expected to align with the timescales and objectives of the HLG-IGIF. This is in recognition that the HLG-IGIF are still in process of determining their activities and priorities.

Data Strategy and Policy

Background

In Europe, the political programmes and the European Green Deal establish a green transformation in the light on the UN SDGs. The [European strategy for data](#) adopted in early 2021 has the ambition of a ‘society empowered by data’, anchoring data as the basis for better decision making. Policies and legislations that support [open public sector data](#), [common data spaces](#), [data governance](#), the ethical use of [artificial intelligence](#), and concepts towards a geospatially enabled ‘knowledge infrastructure’ have an impact on data integration and its provision throughout the region. While the European Union is a subset of the region covered by UN-GGIM: Europe, its data policies and legislation have a broader regional impact.

Large volumes of data are produced daily from multiple data sources based on different types of devices and technologies. How information is collected, managed, stored, used and reused in



an efficient, transparent and accessible way are critical issues that need to be addressed strategically in order to maximise the value of geospatial data to produce meaningful and location-based relevant information.

Within UN-GGIM there are already in place relevant related activities with this line part and, particularly, the [IGIF strategic pathways](#) on Policy and Legal, Data and Standards, and the Working Group on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management.

Objectives

The line of work on Data Strategy and Policy will function as a Community of Interest (CoI), following the defined Terms of Reference (ToR) [to be drafted].

The main aim of this CoI is to contribute to the development of relevant policy and data strategies regarding the management and use of geospatial data to maximise its value in addressing the challenges of a green, sustainable and digital Europe, on the one hand, and to understand the linkages of European policy with the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF).

Outputs

The expected outputs include:

- To coordinate and liaise with agencies and stakeholders to bring the relevant actors together
- To provide expertise and consultation to the activities of UN-GGIM: Europe and to the ExCom
- To establish a forum for exchange of expertise and experiences
- To support and promote capacity building and development initiatives

Short- to Medium-term actions

- Consolidate the scope of the work and the activities to be developed
- Define and set up a wiki working page as a share-point for documentation

Timetable 2022 to 2024

The work is expected to be developed in a time-frame of 2 years.

GRF

Geodetic Reference Frames - Europe

Background

Geodesy and geodetic networks play a crucial, but often invisible, role in the collection and management of geospatial information. There are many programmes and projects at national



and international levels related to geodesy yet there is not a Regional Activity within UN-GGIM: Europe.

The UN-GGIM Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence will be established and hosted by the Government of Germany, and this Community of Interest will provide support and activities to the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence. The Community of Interest will provide a distinct forum to bring the perspective of UN-GGIM: Europe members and contribute to the overarching global discussions and activities.

Objectives

- The Community of Interest will contribute to the activities of the Subcommittee on Geodesy
- Focus on growing and sustaining the geodesy profession
- Act as a coordination body liaising with and between established domestic and international programmes and bringing different communities together.

Outputs

The activities will be linked to the GGRF Position Paper and GCoE objectives providing a connection to national experts as and where relevant.

There will be a focus on the 'geodetic profession' looking as sustaining and growing the geodetic profession rather than technical development. This is recognised as a potential gap in existing projects and programmes.

Short- to Medium-term actions

- Define the structure and set up of a wiki working page
- To be developed in alignment with the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence

Timetable 2022 to 2024

The work is expected to be developed in a time-frame of 2 years.

Putting the lines of work into practice

UN-GGIM: Europe has been in a transition phase since the eighth plenary meeting in October 2021. It has continued to deliver the 2021 work plan as well as preparing to launch the 2022. We are pleased to announce that the tasks and outcomes from previous work plan have been delivered and those remaining activities will conclude by the end of 2022, and be reported at a future plenary session.

Focus now turn to the implementation and delivery of the 2022 work plan, which will be the Regional Committees focus for the next two to three years and will see the outcomes and deliverables identified in the five lines of work delivered in across this timeframe.



Governance

It has to be stressed that the lines of work are not siloed, there is significant overlap and interaction between the lines of work. It is the task of the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe, the UN-GGIM: Europe Secretariat, and Regional Committee (though working groups and communities of interest) to implement the work plan.

The overarching role of the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe is to provide guidance and oversight in the implementation of the work plan in accordance of the UN-GGIM: Europe Strategy. In addition, it is the task of the Regional Executive Committee to assume an overarching role ensuring synergies and communications, both vertically and horizontally, between and across working groups, project teams and other regional fora.

The Regional Secretariat supports the Regional Executive Committee in the exercise of its function and assistance in the overall achievement of activities of UN-GGIM: Europe work plan. While also actively communicating the UN-GGIM: Europe activities and achievements to all relevant stakeholders across multiple channels.

The concept notes included in this work plan outline the high-level aims and objectives of each of the lines of work. The implementation of the lines of work and the priority areas is through the contribution and active input of the members of UN-GGIM: Europe. Each line of work already has a group of interested members who have expressed an interest in collaborating together to develop the terms of reference and to deliver on the key regional priorities

The Regional Committee promotes and encourages the collaboration between national mapping and cadastral authorities and national statistical institutes in the European Region, along with European Institutions and observer bodies. Members States and observers are therefore invited to express their interest and join the UN-GGIM: Europe activities and in participating in the lines of work.

Action proposal and next steps

The Executive Committee proposes that it be given the mandate to implement this Work Plan and to decide on how best to coordinate the regional work on the different topic areas and lines of work.

The work plan is presented to the Members of UN-GGIM: Europe for their consideration and discussion.