

Tenth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe

Report from Line of Work Data Integration | 07/2022 – 11/2023

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the outcome and findings for months 07/2022 to 11/2023.

In spite of social distancing restrictions due to the Corona pandemic, 40 participants from the UN-GGIM: Europe Working Group on Data Integration got together for a productive and engaged virtual event on 20 June 2022. The meeting focused on adopting the new UN-GGIM: Europe work plan having five new Lines of Work in place.

- Line of Work on Data Integration (DI)
- Line of Work on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
- Line of Work on Data Strategy and Policy (DS&P)
- Line of Work on Geodetic Reference Frame (GRF)
- Line of Work on Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF)

From the organisational point of view the former Working Group on Data Integration has been divided into two Lines of Work (LoW), Data integration and SDG. Germany is responsible and chairs the LoW Data Integration, co-chaired by Austria and Belgium. Portugal is responsible and chairs the LoW SDG, co-chaired by Germany.

In the new working phase 2022-2025 the main function of both LoW is to develop and promote activities on data integration, particularly with other information to address the SDGs. Both LoW function in close interaction with the IAEG-SDG Working Group on Geospatial Information (WG GI), as well as with the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (EG ISGI) and projects from Eurostat. Both LoW provide a relevant context for establishing bridges between geospatial and statistical communities, functioning on request (if feasible) as 'Advisory Group' to contribute to global and regional data integration issues addressed by global and European geospatial data management initiatives, programmes and projects.

The main aim of the LoW Data Integration 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 LoW should also explore ways to contribute and support activities promoting geospatial and statistical data integration, including reinforcing the involvement of the EO community. These activities will be particularly coordinated with the line of work 'Data Policy'.

The expected outputs include:

- To compile and put together use cases and best practices on data integration methods and produce concrete recommendations and guidelines
- To promote the work of this WG with open webinars / guided discussion sessions on specific relevant data integration topics
- To support and promote capacity building and development initiatives on data integration

The Plenary is kindly asked to acknowledge the following call for action by the Line of Work on Data Integration:

Call for action

- 1 The Plenary is kindly requested to approve the ongoing work of the Line of Work on Data Integration within the Work Plan 2022 – 2025
- 2 The Plenary is kindly requested to further promote the function of the Working Group as 'Advisory Group' to continuously contribute to global and regional data integration issues
- 3 The Line of Work on Data Integration is requested to evaluate and assess the issues and obstacles identified within the webinars (at the latest within the physical meeting in Lisbon in April 2024).



1. General management issues

The Line of Work on Data Integration is chaired by Germany. Currently 20 European UN Member States comprising 25-30 National Mapping and Cadastral Authorities or National Statistical Institutes are members of both Lines of Work. Eurostat as well as the Joint Research Centre (JRC) actively cooperates in the Working Group since the beginning in 2014. The European Environment Agency (EEA) joined the Working Group in 2017.

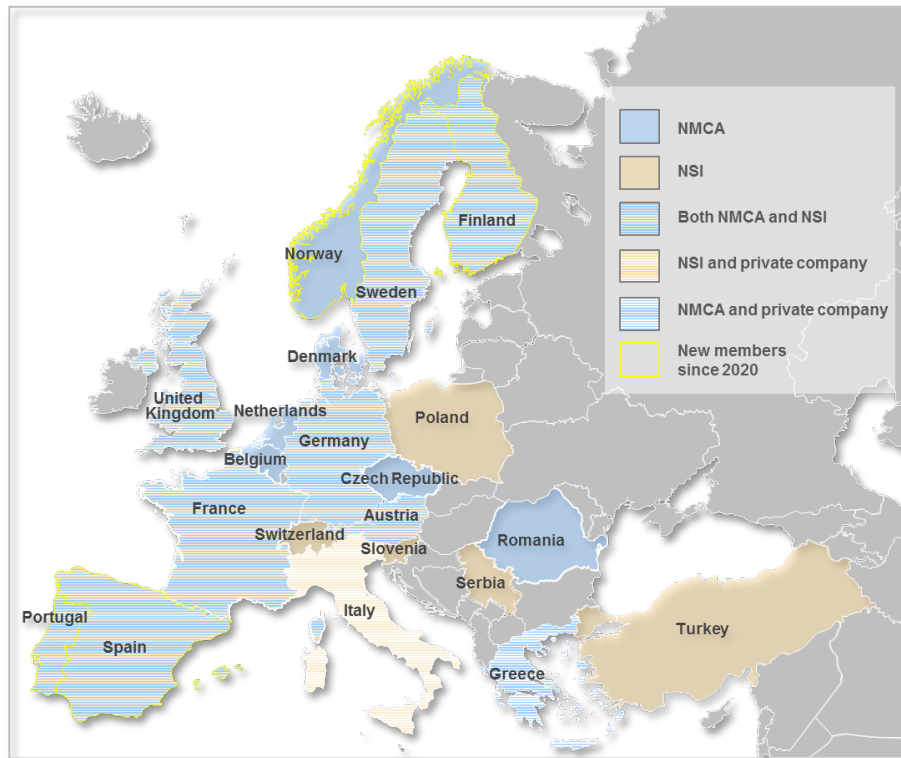


Figure 1: Current members of the UN-GGIM: Europe Working Group on Data Integration

Due to the Corona pandemic the current working phase 2022 - 2025 started virtually and so far, all meetings have been conducted in virtual format. The first physical meeting of this current working phase will be held on 15-16 April 2024 at Statistics Portugal in Lisbon.

Tenth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe

Report from Line of Work Data Integration | 07/2022 – 11/2023

2. Progress according to the new work plan 2022 – 2025

2.1. Line of Work on Data Integration

The Line of Work on Data Integration is chaired by BKG, but is strongly supported by the co-chairs from IGN-Belgium and BEV Austria.

This line of work focuses on Data Integration and follow the defined Terms of Reference (ToR) as well as aims at exploring and highlighting the value of data and geoinformation combination, with a focus on integrating geospatial and statistical data sources for a first step. Data integration and new methods in these dataspace-connecting- working fields follow their characteristics and procedures, which call for its wider consideration in nine pathways (UN-IGIF) to follow the vision of a common geospatial knowledge infrastructure. This LoW of UN-GGIM: Europe follows a pragmatic approach by selected webinars on showcasing the added value of integrating geospatial data and identify existing gaps for a successful implementation guidance.

The following webinars have been planned and conducted. For each webinar a concept note is compiled indicating the main content of the webinar. After the webinar an evaluation report is prepared giving the main outcomes and findings of the webinars.

The webinars are recorded and all material is uploaded to the UN-GGIM: Europe's website.

	Webinar	Contributors	Date	Coordinator
Line of Work Data Integration				
#1	Data integration in Europe – challenges, findings, added value and cost savings	Eurostat DG REGIO JRC	March 15, 1 pm ✓	Cristian Fetie, Hannes Reuter, Bianka Fohgrub (Eurostat)
#2	Linked Data in the European spatial data infrastructure – an operational view	EFGS NLS FI Kadaster NL	7 November, 1 pm ✓	Markus Jobst (BEV Austria)
#3	The way towards a Geospatial Knowledge Infrastructure	Geospatial World EuroSDR swisstopo	19 June, 1 pm ✓	Nathalie Delattre (NGI Belgium)

The Plenary is kindly requested to approve the ongoing work of the Line of Work on Data Integration within the Work Plan 2022 – 2025. It is worth noting, that the new tasks on Data Integration have been continuously cross-checked with the UN-GGIM: Europe Secretariat, other working groups, and ongoing activities (e.g., UNECE, GEO).

From the first evaluation and assessment reports the following issues have been identified to be further elaborated and tackled:

- Use cases and best practices on data integration methods & recommendations and guidelines are still relevant
- Linked data approaches need to be better explained to national statistical offices and geospatial agencies
- Geospatial knowledge is essential
- Geospatial knowledge might help the decision-making process with the perspective of having the right info or to solve a particular problem.
- There is a huge gap between the technical implementation (vocabularies, thessaurii and ontologies) and policy makers for the topics of linked data and geospatial knowledge infrastructures.



Tenth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe

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As a next step, the Line of Work on Data Integration plans to evaluate and assess the issues and obstacles identified within the webinars. At the latest a substantial and intensive discussion will take place within the physical meeting in Lisbon in April 2024. This will include the reference to the work plan as well as to the global UN-GGIM activities.

3. Related Activities of the WG supporting the work plan 2022 – 2025

According to the Work Plan the WG continues to contribute to following activities.

3.1. Contribution to the UN EG ISGI

This consultancy and advice comprise to involve geospatial experts of the LoW for reviews and requests.

At the last virtual meeting on 30 March 2022, one member of the UN EG ISGI gave a presentation about the current status of the global working group.

The Plenary is kindly requested to further promote the function of the Working Group as ‘Advisory Group’ to continuously contribute to global and regional data integration issues addressed by global and European activities.

3.2. Support of European coordination activities

This consultancy and advice comprise the support of European coordination activities towards the implementation of the UN-GGIM Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) and other geospatial activities by the European Commission (mainly Eurostat ones).

Particularly, a regular exchange on activities between the EC unit responsible for EuroGEO and the UN-GGIM: Europe Executive Committee / Secretariat seems to be key. An easy way might be to continue to participate at and provide information through workshops, conferences, and plenary sessions. A good start has already been done:

It includes the participation and presentations at European conferences, workshops:

Conferences	Dates
Working Group on Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information and Joint UN-GGIM: Europe – ESS – UNECE Meeting on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, Luxembourg	06-07 March 2023
Geospatial World Forum 2023, Rotterdam	02-05 May 2023
9th Joint UN-GGIM: Europe - ESS - UNECE Meeting and Workshop on Integrating Statistical and Geospatial Data, Belgrade	03-05 October 2023
INSPIRE Conference 2023, Brussels	28-29 November 2023
Working Group on Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information and Joint UN-GGIM: Europe – ESS – UNECE Meeting on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, Luxembourg	12-13 March 2024
Geospatial World Forum 2024, Rotterdam	13-16 May 2024



4. Attachments

- All documents of the webinars (concept note, presentations, evaluation reports of both Lines of Work) are uploaded to the UN-GGIM: Europe Website: <https://un-ggim-europe.org/working-groups/working-group-data-integration/>

5. Call for action

For the time being a strategical input/vision for the next 10 years cannot be provided without having a closer discussion with other members of the Line of Work. The next physical meeting is planned in April 2024 in Lisbon. This meeting shall provide outcome and findings to derive a strategical vision.

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