

Maximising Geospatial Information After UN-GGIM



What does a modern national spatial data infrastructure look like? As I covered in my last column, to see geographic information supporting a growth in UK productivity, we need both the underlying foundations (tools) and investment in innovation. An infrastructure is often thought of as being just the technical elements of that foundation, a set of servers and a geoportal (!) for example. But we know that it's more than this. It's about the broader environment to enable maximum productivity gains from the use of geospatial.

Our UK delegation to the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management' (UN-GGIM) has recently returned from the annual meeting in New York in August. Amongst other activities, the UK has supported and been involved in the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, which was adopted at that meeting. The

framework is an excellent example of a rounded view of the elements that should be considered to maximise the benefits of geospatial information for a nation.

Under the vision statement: "The efficient use of geospatial information by all countries to effectively measure, monitor and achieve sustainable social, economic and environmental development – leaving no one behind" sit nine strategic pathways. These cover elements from data, standards, innovation to legal and policy, finance and engagement. Developed in collaboration between the UN and the World Bank, the framework was originally intended to guide developing nations but it certainly seems to be a framework that would be beneficial worldwide in considering national arrangements for geospatial.

In the UK we're already viewed as a world leader in geographic information – but this is a position which we need to continue to both maintain and develop. The world around us is moving quickly. We need to take a cohesive view on our ambitions for geographic information in the UK and how we will move forward together.

A series of AGI workshops and events around the recent Geospatial Commission Call for Evidence are well underway. It has been an opportunity to hear from our members on what they believe are the key considerations as we move towards the development of a UK Geospatial Strategy in 2019. AGI Council members have ensured that we meet with members across the UK as we compile our response. It's clear there is a recognition that we must look beyond just the availability of data and government agencies to develop an effective route to maximising the benefits of geospatial information for and in the UK.

We're now weeks away from our AGI Annual Conference, GeoCom. A dedicated team are bringing together a range of inspirational speakers to lead us in a day of exploring the theme of 'Solving the Productivity Puzzle'. Together, our community can consider our aspirations for important work in 2019 and beyond. It will be one of my last significant calendar appointments as AGI Chair, a role which has been a real privilege to serve in and see first-hand the step change in perceptions of geospatial information in the UK over the last two years. I have no doubt this is an incredibly exciting time for all of us as we come together in November.

This is also my last column for GIS Professional. AGI Council were sad to hear that this will be the last issue and greatly appreciate the support and dedication of the publication teams over the life of the magazine in supporting AGI and bringing readers the latest news and innovations. I'd like to thank them all and wish them the best for the future. You can rest assured that you will continue to hear regularly from the AGI Chair, and AGI will ensure that our members continue to be well informed through alternative and new channels. Visit our website, join us as a member – and thank you as always for your support.

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