

PAIGH U.S. National Section Monthly Meeting – June Meeting Notes

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Meeting attendees: Bhumika Bakshi, Manuel Castro, Roger Payne, Tom Sandoval, Tim Trainor, Lynda Liptrap, Ivan Ramirez, Charlotte Smith, Erick Langer, Emily Carlson, Lidia Lopez, Julia Lopez

1) Welcome and Introductions

- Lynda welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced special guest Bhumika Bakshi, Manager of the Canadian Spatial Data Infrastructure from the Canadian Center for Mapping and Earth Observation and the Department of Natural Resources. Bhumika mentioned that Canada is exploring the possibility of renewing their PAIGH membership status. She is attending the meeting as an observer of the discussions at National Section meetings.
- Lynda also welcomed new members of the U.S. National Section: Manuel Castro and Tom Sandoval, both from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA).
- Deirdre welcomed Bhumika and the new members of PAIGH and encouraged questions. She also mentioned PAIGH President Patricia Solís and Secretary General Antonio Campuzano will be visiting Washington D.C. for meetings at the Organization of American States. She will have an opportunity to meet with them and stated that if anyone had topics that they want her to bring up with them to let her know before noon on June 20, 2023.

2) Introductory Presentation on the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), a key umbrella framework for the many activities under the purview of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)

- Emily Carlson provided a background on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF). While the world is more connected than ever, the world also faces shared global challenges such as climate change, inequality, disease, poverty, food insecurity, access to education, political instability, etc.
- In 2015, the United Nations member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which laid out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that brought attention to global challenges and encourages nations to address these challenges by 2030.
 - This is an important area of focus for the Americas. Many Central American countries currently participate in the SDG Alliance.
 - Some progress has been made on these goals since 2015, but not enough.
- The IGIF will help geo-enable countries to help support the SDGs for a better future.
 - Geo-enabling involves taking statistical data (e.g., population, race, gender, housing) and combining with geospatial data (e.g., addresses, legal boundaries, imagery, reference frames) to create powerful tools, such as maps, charts, graphics, etc., to inform decision making and measure progress.
 - The IGIF is endorsed by the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts.
- There are three component parts of the IGIF:
 - Part 1: Overarching strategy.
 - This provides the overall vision of the IGIF and explains the importance of the framework. The strategy highlights the strategic drivers, underpinning principles, and goals of the IGIF.

- The strategy also includes a mission statement that promotes and supports innovation and provides necessary leadership, coordination, and standards to deliver integrated geospatial information.
 - Part 2: Implementation guide.
 - The guide describes actions that will strengthen geospatial information management and includes resources materials, best practices, guiding principles, and recommended actions/outcomes.
 - There are nine strategic pathways that serve as the roadmap for implementing the IGIF: Governance and Institutions, Policy and Legal, Financial, Data, Innovation, Standards, Partnerships, Capacity and Education, and Communication and Engagement.
 - Part 3: Country-level Action Plan.
 - Details how actions will be carried out, when, and by whom.
 - Contains processes, resource materials, sample templates, and examples.
 - Country-level Action Plans align with national priorities and circumstances.
 - The UN provides guidance on how to implement the IGIF and develop a Country-level Action Plan.
- The High-Level group of the IGIF (HLG-IGIF), comprised of 22 member states, was formed in 2021 to provide strategic leadership, promotion, coordination, and oversight to implement the IGIF globally. Deirdre Bishop is the Co-Chair of the HLG-IGIF by appointment of the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts.
- In April 2022, the HLG-IGIF established three working groups. The Capacity Development working group is led by Sweden and Argentina, the Communications working group is led by the United Kingdom and Indonesia, and the Sustainable Funding working group is led by South Africa and Jamaica. Paul Riley took over to discuss the working group activities:
 - The Communications working group is identifying important IGIF stakeholders and working to develop targeted messaging on the importance of the IGIF. They are also creating communication materials and case studies to support the implementation of the IGIF.
 - The Capacity Development working group is working on translating documents and materials related to the IGIF that are needed for implementation. They are also developing an IGIF training plan and e-learning tools.
 - The Sustainable Funding working group is helping to identify potential sources of funding for the IGIF and promote the benefits of implementation.
- The first member states began advancement of the IGIF in 2018 and momentum continues to grow with the help of the UN Secretariat, the World Bank, Kartverket and other supporting organizations. There are currently over 40 member states working to advance the IGIF in their countries, including the most recent addition of 17 countries that are part of the SDG Data Alliance.
- The IGIF has resulted in increased partnerships and communications, improved geospatial information management, improved governance and policy planning, and improved government response, and innovation among many other benefits.
- Regarding the Americas, the IGIF is a crucial overarching framework for achievement of national development priorities and advancement of the 2030 SDGs. The IGIF provides a framework for more effective integration of information that helps to improve disaster management, impacts of climate change, improve health care delivery and response, and support the joint action plan of the Aguascalientes declaration.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic in Central America, the IGIF provided the framework for integrating statistical and geospatial data to determine vulnerability to COVID-19. For example, Costa Rica mapped vulnerability scores for each district complete with overlaid hospital locations. This led to a series of powerful maps, dashboard, and StoryMaps that helped inform response to the rapidly spreading pandemic.
 - Six of the strategic pathways were utilized throughout this project. Four were discussed during the meeting.
 - Partnerships—there was a partnership collaboration in each country as well as across countries between geospatial agencies, statistical agencies, health ministries, and emergency responders, as well as collaboration with outside partners such as PAIGH and UN-GGIM to name a few.
 - Data—to effectively respond to the pandemic, countries needed to integrate health, population, and geographic data.
 - Standards—to enable sharing of data amongst agencies and ministries within the country as well as across borders, a standard data structure was developed and implemented. This also allowed for increased data quality and more efficient data analysis.
 - Innovation—the integrated data was uploaded to a centralized geoportal and tools and applications were created to easily calculate vulnerability based on different variables. The geoportal helped countries to easily visualize and interpret the data.
 - This project showed the importance of the IGIF and highlighted the importance of the strategic pathways.
- The IGIF has gained a lot of support from various organizations in recent years.
 - UN-GGIM: Americas has aligned its 2021-2025 development plan to align with the UN-GGIM global framework and regional implementation of the IGIF across the Americas, including the Caribbean.
 - During the 23rd General Assembly in Quito, Ecuador, PAIGH passed a resolution in support of the regional implementation of the IGIF and in support of the HLG-IGIF activities.
 - The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is also supporting implementation of the IGIF.
 - The Geodetic Reference Systems for the Americas (SIRGAS) has utilized suggested concepts, principles, and ideologies of the IGIF to develop an interoperable geodetic reference frame in the Americas.
- Tim Trainor added that from his experience working with countries in the SDG alliance, when one looks at the relationship between statistical and geospatial organizations, often there is no geographic framework. As a result, data typically gets delineated at the national level which isn't as helpful as data delineated to smaller geographies.

3) Walk-On Items

- Lynda mentioned that Erick Van Praag is interested in setting up an in-person meeting at the Esri User Conference (UC) for U.S. National Members if there is enough attendance.
Action item: U.S. National Section members should let Lynda Liptrap know if they are planning to attend the Esri UC, held in San Diego, CA from July 10-14, 2023.