

**Joint Action Plan (2021 - 2024):
Outcomes of the Aguascalientes Declaration**
Version 1.0

Prepared by:



Preface

The first Joint Action Plan was signed at the 44th Directive Council of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 2012. It was elaborated in a coordinated and effective manner by PAIGH, SIRGAS, CP-IDEA, and GEOSUR. The objective of this first initiative focused on strengthening, harmonizing, and accelerating the development of the Americas Spatial Data Infrastructure.

In 2015, this Plan was updated with a vision to 2020, incorporating some efforts to build the Integrated Map of Central America (MIAC) and prepare the Integrated Map of South America (MIAS).

The second version of the Joint Action Plan was carried out in the Sixth Session of the UN-GGIM Expert Committee held in New York in 2016. As an update of the second version, we considered the [Aguascalientes Declaration](#), signed on the 18th of September 2020. The Declaration stated that the regional organizations in the Americas should work together to define further joint work strategies and programs to mutually advance regional integration to build a Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) composed of diverse information resources, such as **Earth Observations (EO), geographic, statistical and other thematic information (hereafter referred to as geospatial data)**.

This Joint Action plan was developed through contributions of the Member States of regional organizations, such as the PAIGH, the United Nations Regional Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas), AmeriGEO, the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas (SIRGAS), the Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks (RedCLARA) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The document sections were designed to address the dimensions of the implementation of the aforementioned Declaration and align to the three founded working groups:

1. Capacity Development (CD),
2. Communication, Cooperation, and Coordination (CCC),
3. Data, Information, and Knowledge Sharing (DIKS).

This input from the three working groups is consolidated in this document, called the “**Joint Action Plan: Outcomes of the Aguascalientes Declaration.**”

This Joint Action Plan welcomes the contribution of resources and critical competencies that these stakeholders may provide to strengthen capacities essential for integrating the broad panoply of regional data to promote informed, data-driven, evidence-based decision-making and support national development in the countries and territories of the Americas.

Introduction

The intent of this Joint Action Plan is to improve coordination and dialogue among the Member States and relevant international organizations to share experiences in the application of geospatial data to establish good practices and the adoption and use of technologies to support the decision-making process. The organizations involved have the same goal to increase Member States' capacity to develop and establish user-driven mechanisms for the efficient acquisition, management, and use of geospatial data for a shared and better future. To reduce the geospatial information divide by fostering effective cross-sector and interdisciplinary global, regional and local collaboration and partnerships. All this in support of national development priorities; improving cooperation among governments, academia, industry, the private sector and civil society. Through establishing relationships and cooperation mechanisms with other programs, this action plan aims to promote the integration of geospatial data to formulate a comprehensive approach to solving national and regional issues and challenges.

To support the activities outlined in this document, this Action Plan shall serve as the general terms of reference for the three Working Groups established before informing the drafting of the "Aguascalientes Declaration." The three established Working Groups are:

- 1) Capacity Development (CD),
- 2) Communication, Cooperation, and Coordination (CCC),
- 3) Data, Information, and Knowledge Sharing (DIKS).

Purpose: To improve coordination and dialogue among strategic regional partners to share experiences in the application of geospatial data and to promote and achieve the goals outlined in the Aguascalientes Declaration, signed on the 18th of September during the 2020 Americas Symposium.

¹Values: *Inclusive, Collaborative, Respectful, Relevant, and Influential:*

- i. We will work inclusively and collaboratively, aiming at consensus-building and harmony;*
- ii. We will protect and uphold the integrity of our outcomes, demonstrating respect, expertise, professionalism, and political neutrality;*
- iii. Our products and outcomes will be solution-oriented, relevant, user-friendly, innovative, and fully and equitably accessible, and promote open licenses by default.*
- iv. We will share our knowledge, offer education, and plan for success.*

Duties:

- 1) Work together to further define joint work strategies and programs to mutually advance regional integration of geospatial data in order to build the Americas SDI;
- 2) Support the creation of a common geospatial knowledge repository containing relevant regional projects, initiatives, technology, methods, models, good practices, legislation, policies and experts that are accessible and available to support the work of stakeholders;
- 3) Advance the interoperability, integration and exploitation of geospatial data to reduce the digital divide and foster effective cross-sector and multidisciplinary collaboration in support of national/regional development priorities;

¹ Extracted from the UNGEGN Draft Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2019-2028 (to be adopted at its 2nd session)

- 4) Promote cooperation, partnership, and collaboration among all relevant regional stakeholders in strengthening existing regional capacity-building frameworks;
- 5) Establish effective communication strategies that will strengthen and promote continued exchange among the various working groups;
- 6) Establish coordination mechanisms between the groups; support the implementation of the working plans of the groups; and
- 7) Define mechanisms that invite other national and regional agencies and stakeholders to participate in the Joint Action Plan and other regional initiatives.

Leadership: Each Working Group shall establish the appropriate method for identifying the leadership structure for the respective group.

Contributing Members and Organizations: PAIGH, AmeriGEO, ECLAC, the Regional Committee of UN-GGIM: Americas, SIRGAS, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), RedCLARA, and Esri. This is a living list, and, therefore, the members invite other regional organizations to participate in this Joint Action Plan.

Review: This Joint Action Plan is intended to be a living document and will be continuously updated at regular intervals by the organizations involved and may evolve through updates or be expanded as needed.

Reporting: The Working Groups shall provide an annual report to the leadership of the contributing members and organizations. This report shall be presented in the context of geospatial expert meetings.

Working groups

A. Capacity Development

Description: This group comprises universities and education centers, government agencies, the private sector, and civil society. The group seeks to advance the implementation and evaluation of capacity development activities and to strengthen training and education in the use, management, and exploitation of geospatial data, via common resources such as the Inter-American Academy of Geosciences & Applications, the UN-GGIM Academic Network, or the Pan American Professional Networking of the PAIGH.

Strategic Objective(s):

- 1) Increase the capacity to use and develop geospatial data relevant to the needs and priorities of the Region.
- 2) Promote cooperation among all relevant regional geospatial data stakeholders in developing and/or strengthening existing regional capacity-building frameworks, common standards; the application of good practices for advancing regional and national integration, national development priorities, and sustainable development.

Working Group Activities:

- 1) Identification of relevant training opportunities to be featured through the Inter-American Academy.
- 2) Systematically evaluate the needs of each sub-region.
- 3) Develop and provide specific courses and applications based on regional, national and sub-national needs/priorities.

- 4) Strengthen capacity to use and exploit geospatial data supporting the Sustainable Development Goals, Sendai Framework, and Paris Accord.
- 5) Develop pilot projects involving common needs from multiple countries/stakeholders.

B. Communication, Cooperation, and Coordination

Description: This group aims to provide sustainable support for entities that work together on a trusted and continued basis, with the intent to increase knowledge, new ideas (new products, methods, etc.), and promote engagement of the parties involved.

Strategic Objective(s):

- 1) Define mechanisms to establish effective communication that will strengthen and promote continued exchange and collaboration among stakeholders.
- 2) Work together to strengthen awareness, participation, cooperation, and collaboration in the context of the use, management, and dissemination of geospatial data to support and advance in the regional integration, national development priorities, and sustainable development.
- 3) Brought together by the Aguascalientes Declaration's call upon stakeholders to work together to further define joint work strategies and programs, the UN-GGIM WG-Disasters, UN-GGIM: Americas Disasters Working Group, GEO Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group, and AmeriGEO Disasters Working Group convened with the objective of mutually advancing regional integration of geospatial data for Disasters Risk Reduction (DRR) in the Americas. These global and regionally oriented working groups are committed to continued integration of work plan activities through quarterly coordination meetings. Shared priorities will include the improved uptake and use of geospatial, statistical and Earth observation insights by national DRR stakeholders, particularly capacity building, standards-setting, awareness-raising and making relevant data discoverable.

Working Group Activities

- 1) Identify the internal structure and organization of the stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of the Declaration to create a contact directory to facilitate coordination.
- 2) Define the mechanisms that will allow the most suited interaction and decision-making among the parties in order to achieve objectives.
- 3) Identify stakeholders in the region according to categories like data suppliers/producers, value-adding organizations, business users, political and decision-makers, interest groups, government organizations, education institutions and others in order to set networking mechanisms.
- 4) Elaborate a stakeholder communication plan that considers different types of stakeholders, communication methods, objectives, purposes, and frequency among others.
- 5) Elaborate a regional inventory of knowledge, skills and resources.

C. Data, Information, and Knowledge Sharing

Description: This group is composed of universities and education centers, government agencies, industry, non-government organizations, and the private sector. The group seeks to integrate, share, and exploit geospatial Data, Information, and Knowledge (DIK).

Strategic Objective(s):

- 1) Promote cooperation, development, and/or strengthening existing regional capacity-building frameworks, common standards, GEOSS Data Sharing principles, adopting open data policies, promoting the use of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) principles; application of best practices for achieving regional integration, national development priorities, and sustainable development.
- 2) Strengthening the institutional arrangements to promote open data, open science, and open standards by default around geospatial DIK.

Working Group Activities

- 1) Achieve a common interoperable architecture of platforms that integrates geospatial DIK from different sources through collaborative work between diverse existing regional organizations.
- 2) Strengthen the institutional capacity at the national level for the generation and provision of geospatial DIK.
- 3) Prepare recommendations for overcoming the geospatial digital divide in the Americas.
- 4) Promote the integration of efforts among regional organizations and initiatives to manage, share, and exploit geospatial DIK to support decision-making and public policies in the Region.
- 5) Foster the use of open data, open science, and open standards for the publication of geospatial DIK, which allow broad conditions of access and use, but without forgetting the recognition of the authors and/or institutions, as well as intellectual property.
- 6) Promote and assist the region's countries in strengthening their national geospatial initiatives in order to increase the availability and diversity of geospatial DIK based on the implementation of global frameworks and guidelines.
- 7) Prepare a diagnosis on the use of geospatial DIK for the production and dissemination of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 8) Encourage the inclusion of Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI) and Citizen Science initiatives in the development process of the Regional SDI- for the Americas.
- 9) Develop pilot projects with multiple parties to promote this working group's recommendations and best practices through various use cases.

Conclusion: The activities identified in this Joint Action Plan are high-level activities to be further developed by each working group, providing detailed activities, related time frames, and recognizing institutional resources/contributions to support implementation.

Annex I: Working Group Lists

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