Concept Note

Expert Group Meeting and High-level Policy Meeting

Integrated Use of Geospatial and Statistical Data for Land Information in Central Asia

Venue: Hybrid meeting, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

15 March 2022 (Expert group meeting)
16 March 2022 (High-level policy meeting)

Background:

Geospatial information systems (GIS), as well as tools to support monitoring and decision-making, are increasingly useful in sustainable economic development and disaster risk reduction including drought, natural resource, and land management. The latest innovations in geoinformatics have presented new opportunities through applications of geospatial technologies and data in promoting sustainable land and resource management. For example, land accounting and land statistics could be significantly enhanced with the use of advanced geospatial technology and data.

To support member States in the Central Asian region, ESCAP, with support from the Government of the Russian Federation, launched the project titled “Strengthening institutional capacity on integrating geospatial and statistical data, with a focus on land accounts in Central Asia” in 2020. The key objective is to develop or improve the capacity of institutions, within member States in Central Asia, for the effective integration of geospatial and statistical data, with a focus on land accounts. Its strategic objectives include strengthening cooperative relations between national statistics offices, space agencies and international organizations.

The project is designed as part of the overarching framework of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030), and in accordance with the UN-GGIM Integrated Geospatial Information Framework. This project will mainly contribute to the implementation of SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Project activities at the subregional level support the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) Working Group on Knowledge-based Development, as well as the SPECA Governing Council, and the Collective Vision and Framework for Action for Advancing Official Statistics for the 2030 Agenda of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics.

Throughout the program, more than 120 participants from six Central Asian countries, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, attended at least one session, taking into account separate bilateral meetings in the ESCAP-country format. The participants were introduced to various forms of universal, international statistical reporting for maintaining land resource statistics, such as the System of
Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and attended a series of workshops aimed at developing national land accounts using various tools.

In this regard, ESCAP and Cadastral Agency under the State Tax Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan are jointly organizing the hybrid “Expert Group Meeting and High-level policy meeting on integrated use of geospatial and statistical data for land information in Central Asia”, to summarize the project results and alert decision-makers about the results of the project.

**Expert group meeting (EGM)**

**Proposed Date and Venue**

- Venue: Hybrid meeting, Tashkent, Uzbekistan & online via Zoom meeting
- Date: 15 March (Tuesday), 09:30 - 15:30 (Tashkent time) / 11:30 - 17:30 (Bangkok time)

**High-level policy meeting (HLPM)**

**Proposed Date and Venue**

- Venue: Hybrid meeting, Tashkent, Uzbekistan & online via Zoom Meeting
- Date: 16 March (Wednesday), 09:30 - 12:15 (Tashkent time) / 11:30 - 14:15 (Bangkok time)

**Objectives of the EGM**

- Summing up the series of trainings conducted in 2020-2021:
  - Twenty-four on-line Capacity Building Training Programme on Integrating Statistical Geospatial Data for Land Accounts and Statistics in Central Asia sessions (120 minutes each), implemented in the Russian language with the support of the Russian trainers, were conducted in eight phases with three sessions per phase. The first phase was organized on 14, 16, 18 September 2020; the second phase on 2, 7, 9 October 2020; the third phase on 2, 4, 6 November 2020; the fourth phase on 30 November 2020, and on 2, 4 December in 2020. The fifth phase was organized on 14, 16, 18 June 2021; the sixth phase on 12, 14, 16 July 2021; the seventh phase on 16, 18, 20 August 2021; and the eighth phase on 13, 15, 17 September 2021.
  - Breakout sessions of the Capacity Building Training Programme were held in Uzbekistan in July 2021, and in Turkmenistan on 16 September 2021. The objectives of the breakout sessions were to assess the current situation in the national process of forming land accounts in both countries, as well as identify the challenges, constraints, and gaps, which need to be filled so that these countries can compile SEE-compatible land accounts using satellite-derived datasets.

- Discuss options for future work. To enhance the institutional capacity of Central Asian countries to use integrated geospatial and statistical data, with a focus on land accounts and land information systems, there is a need to:
  - Disseminate research findings regarding the preparedness of six participating Central Asian countries for implementing national land accounts with the use of satellite-derived data.
  - Present the outputs of the projects; describe on-line trainings and disseminate training results.
  - Prioritize high-level engagement to motivate the implementation of land accounts.
✓ Understand the ways in which land accounting can contribute to the fulfilment of national goals and explore best practices from countries which have implemented SEEA land accounting.
✓ Demonstrate tools and techniques in utilizing GIS applications and spatial data sets in order to compile land accounts in the SEEA format.
✓ Identify potential pilot countries in North and Central Asia to apply frameworks, methodologies, tools and good practices of statistical geospatial data for land accounts.
✓ To achieve consensus on the development of a self-paced training programme on selected topics from the online training conducted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

• Strengthen partnerships for future work. To foster institutional partnership between national statistics offices and national geospatial agencies to use integrated geospatial and statistical information, there is a need to:
  ✓ Facilitate interdisciplinary and interagency exchange at the national and regional levels with the aim to address technical gaps by creating local partnerships.

**Expected Outputs of the HLPM**

✓ To increase awareness of the participants, from EGM and HLPM, on how to build systems that can support the integrated use of geospatial and statistical data.
✓ To learn best practices from the successful implementation of SEEA in Australia, Indonesia, and Nepal.

**Working language**

English and Russian (Interpretation services will be provided during the meetings).

**Organizer and Participating Experts**

- Co-organizers: ESCAP and Cadastral Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Host: The Cadastre Agency under the State Tax Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Training experts: ESCAP, Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography and ScanEX
- Invited participants: representatives of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Government officials from land accounting and cadastral agencies; geodesists and cartographers; GIS and Remote Sensing specialists; statisticians; agricultural experts; ICT specialists; representatives of academia.

**Training instructors**

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