Meeting Report

Regional Inception Workshop on Integrating Statistical Geospatial Data for Land Accounts and Statistics in Central Asia

Venue: Tashkent, Uzbekistan
14-15 November 2019
Proceedings

1. The first regional workshop of the project on “strengthening institutional capacity on integrating geospatial and statistical data, with a focus on land accounts in Central Asia” was held at the Wyndham Hotel, Tashkent, Uzbekistan from 14 to 15 November 2019, in collaboration with the National Center for State Cadasters, Geodesy and Cartography, under the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastres.

2. Around 20 government officials from 6 Central Asian countries such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and 11 experts from China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and UNCCD participated in the workshop.

3. United Nations ESCAP delivered a presentation on key objectives, expected outputs and activities of the project. ESCAP also shared the key findings of the country-level assessment survey on the institutional capacity on integrating statistical data and geospatial data for land accounting in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

4. Experts from the Russian Federation shared the key findings from the analytical report on three Central Asian countries (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) on current land statistics and its relevant challenges in using combined statistical and geospatial data. They also introduced Russia’s spatial data infrastructure, statistics structure and land accounting systems with good practices.

5. Uzbekistan presented its current practices and challenges of land accounting, state cadaster, cartography and spatial data infrastructure including good practices on e-governance. The speaker of Uzbekistan emphasized the importance of strengthening capacity building, focusing on end-users’ needs and capacity level to analyze and interpret geo-statistical data.


7. Kazakhstan shared her good practices related to the effective use of remote sensing data and GIS for monitoring forest, crop, water resource, pasture, solid waste and illegal land capture; development of 3D-modelling of river basins; promotion of rational land use; development of crowdsourcing applications for environmental protection; development of 3D maps to enhance the safety of civil aircraft operation, and other emergency situations. Analytical system “TALDAU” and the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) of Kazakhstan were briefed to participants focusing on its current needs and drawbacks such as data heterogeneity, lack of a unified state GIS platform, lack of regular data updates and the issues of potential privacy breeches. Kazakhstan also mentioned that they will be compiling the Land Accounts (SEEA) in 2020. Compilation of visually represented environmental indicators, has already been made publicly available.

8. Kyrgyzstan presented its current issues on agriculture, highlighting the lack of irrigation, land degradation and desertification, urban extent, as well as the lack of geospatial capabilities. The presentation emphasized the potential roles of GIS to address the above challenges in agricultural management.

9. Tajikistan described the issues related to the collection of land-related statistics, which caused inefficiency of data gathering and data processing from lack of human resources, a unified database and technical expertise (including GIS expertise).

10. Turkmenistan emphasized the need for the creation of a country-wide system for statistical assessment on land and water resources, as well as the need for the enhancement of a wider set of statistical activities with technical assistance from other countries. Initiatives on land cover /land use...
will be further enhanced in collaboration with other ministries towards the development of digitized data.

11. UNCCD shared the key findings of and lessons learnt from 2018 national reporting on SDG Target 15.3.1. including methodology and data validation process. The results of the reporting indicate 36.9% of total land area of Central Asia experiencing severe land degradation and desertification. UNCCD reporting has 4 years cycle. For the next reporting periods (2022, 2026, 2030) a continuous process of data improvement and capacity building is envisaged jointly with the technical partners.

12. Expert from the Russian Federation (Rosstat) shared good practices on the system of National land cover and land ownership database, as well as the public cadaster map by using images from satellite, airplanes and UAVs as well as ground survey. Land Accounts for SEEA have not been compiled yet due to problems in land valuation using cadastral results. Initiatives on SEEA include initial work on Minerals, in 2013 and Lands, in 2014. Roadmap 2025 will be instituted towards to develop the SEEA Accounts, establishing working groups and focusing on methodologies.

13. Experts and researchers from Japan, China, Korea and UN ESCAP presented and discussed the application of geospatial and land accounts statistics such as the UN Vector Tile Toolkit; Crop Type Mapping; and for SEEA Land Accounts - Natural Capital Assessment and Sustainability of Cities.

14. UN ESCAP presented non-official statistics on land cover change matrices for each country attended as the starting point for capacity initiation on SEEA Land Statistics and Accounts. In addition, ESCAP presented a set of dynamic urban expansion/extent maps for the capital city of each country participated respectively. ESCAP also presented an example on SEEA Land cover change matrix mapped over population and road network statistics reflecting ecological potential capacities of landscapes and their sustainability at the city scale.

**Key Decisions**

1. The participants confirmed the increasing value of combined statistical data and geospatial data (geo-statistical data) for sustainable land management and land information system in Central Asia, including agriculture, irrigation, land degradation, desertification and urban development.

2. The participants acknowledge the importance of geo-statistical data as a tool to monitor sustainable management and use of land resources.

3. The participants from all invited Central Asian countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) have expressed their interest to be partner and pilot countries of the United Nations ESCAP project on “strengthening institutional capacity on integrating geospatial and statistical data, with a focus on land accounts in Central Asia”, which includes national capacity building training programmes.

4. Participants from Azerbaijan have proposed to invite an expert from JSC Azercosmos for further consultations and knowledge exchange.

5. The participants reconfirmed the importance of consistent capacity building training for government officials and local experts on geo-statistical data analysis for land management and land information system building in the long term.

6. Experts from China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and UNCCD were committed to providing their expertise and assistance to the implementation of the project in collaboration with UN ESCAP. Russian Federation’s commitment to provide capacity building assistance to Central Asian countries including UAV-related training in the field of land, geodesy and cartography.
7. The participants advised UN ESCAP to conduct capacity building activities at the country level or at the provincial level rather than at the regional level in order to accommodate the country’s unique weather-land conditions and specific local demands.

8. All the participants have an understanding that UN ESCAP in collaboration with Central Asian countries and regional institutes would organize a series of capacity building training programmes in 2020 focusing use of geo-statistical data for strengthening land information systems. The next capacity building training will be tentatively organized in a Central Asian country around April 2020.

9. UN ESCAP has committed to sharing the final version of the “Analytical report on Central Asian countries on current land statistics and its relevant challenges in employing combined geo-statistical data” in the beginning of 2020.