Minutes of Meeting Geospatial Think Tank Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2020
Time: 1030 – 1130 hrs
Venue: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Attended by:
1. Lt. Gen. Girish Kumar
2. Dr. K J Ramesh
3. Jagdeesh Rao
4. Dr. V K Dadhwal
5. Anoop Singh
6. Raj Alla
7. Pramod Kaushik
8. Nikhil Kumar
9. Vishnu Chandra
10. Dr. Debpriya Dutta
11. Arun Bhardwaj
12. Pankaj Mishra
13. A K Singh
14. Shubha Pandey
15. Mahak Garg
16. Shreya Deb
17. Sanjay Kumar
18. Lt Gen Ajay Chandele
19. Prashant Joshi
20. Anamika Das
21. Anusuya Datta
22. Megha Datta

Apologies from:
1. Dr. Mohan Reddy
2. Kiran Kumar
3. Dr. Shailesh Nayak
4. Vinit Goenka
5. Agendra Kumar
6. Kamal Kishore
7. Shambhu Singh
8. Rajesh Pant
9. Subhash Ashutosh
10. Srinibas Patnaik
11. Rajan Aiyer
12. Kaushik Chakraborty
13. Amit Ghosh
14. Raj Khatri
15. Arabinda Mitra

Minutes:

Updates from Geospatial Media

1. Sanjay shared few insights from his conversations with the global geospatial community and the UN network. There is a growing need for integrated data ecosystem being felt now more than ever before
2. The UN is also looking at re-aligning the SDGs in face of the COVID pandemic
3. As per the last discussions, Geospatial Media created an internal team of 5 members who have worked to create a metadata of information on govt/CSO/pvt sector initiatives for COVID-19 response, identifying what layer of information is available where and what kinds of tools and software are available where
4. The metadata has been shared with DST to be uploaded on DST or NSDI portal

Updates from DST

5. DST is working with all geospatial organizations and divisions within DST. They are taking some definitive actions addressing both top down and bottom up approaches
   a. The SoI Sahyog app has been developed to build the integrated geospatial platform in the country. It will also support Arogya Setu app. Sahyog is being used by 4 state SDIs and S&T offices for data collection. This has brought together two capabilities – one is crowdsourcing of spatial information and second is delivery of an integrated geospatial portal. Next step will be to see how a network of NGO data can be integrated into it
   b. NATMO and IIT Kharagpur have jointly prepared a dashboard for post-COVID situation, which is being supported through NRDMS for quick clearance of proposals with AGNI (Accelerated Growth for New Industry Innovation) giving spatial analytics of livelihood, resource mapping and resilience
   c. DST and DoS had a call for developing a socio-economic restoration approach post COVID
   d. DST appreciates the metadata created by Geospatial Media and will consider hosting it on its website for wider distribution

Updates from Survey of India

6. Indiamap dashboard has been prepared, however the issue is collating validated data. To address this issue, SoI has joined hands with state SDIs for collaborating on data
7. Private industry like Here Maps and TomTom are also contributing Points of Interest (PoI) to SoI
8. These PoIs will serve in enriching the 1:10,000 and 1:4,000 scale maps that SoI is working upon. After feature extraction, SoI field staff validates the datasets using GPS connected tablets for precise location. Validation of data is very critical, and the entire process may take up to 2-3 yrs.
9. All collected data is sent to Min of Defense where classified data is segregated, and unclassified data is made open for all
10. In the meantime, the unvalidated data can be shown as a secondary layer with a note that it is currently not validated
11. Since Govt of India doesn't encourage hosting data on foreign servers, SoI is working with NIC on building a geospatial cloud for the country
12. On the question of how contributors like NGOs can access SoI data, it was clarified that SoI data is WMS (Web Map Service) and can always be used. After discussions, SoI can share data NGOs have. For example, while working with state SDIs, they worked with their own data model structure and it was integrated as it is. Sahyog app is dynamic and NGOs can study Sahyog app to see how it can work for them. In summary, technical collaboration is possible.
13. Once data integration takes place, Secretary DST will inform Min of Health, MHA, NDMA about the platform
14. A key initiative shared by SGI was that in states like Maharashtra or Karnataka Abadi areas or populated areas had never been mapped. To address this issue, SoI is working with Ministry of Panchayati Raj on a scheme approved by the Hon'ble PM on making 1:500 scale maps of 6 lakh villages using drones. The scheme will be launched on 24th Apr 2020

Updates from FES

15. FES is launching an enhanced version of its India Observatory platform aimed at helping govt/NGOs/CSOs/volunteers in providing timely relief and rehabilitation services to migrant workers and other vulnerable population
16. The unique thing about the platform is that it brings together not only spatial data, but a comprehensive directory of NGOs/Volunteers who are working with the govt for this agenda
17. The platform has data on migrant population in Mumbai and Bangalore
18. FES has incorporated amongst other data, helpline data of Govt of Jharkhand. Talks are also at good stage with Govt of Kerala for data sharing about migrant workers from Jharkhand in Kerala and other migrant population information. Talks are also on with Govt of Odisha
19. FES expressed interest to be in DST's data ecosystem

Updates from NIC

20. NIC has deployed platform for Ministry of Labor and making several APIs for public almost daily, now focusing on health data, test data
21. SOI completely switched to NIC developed e-office and now there are no physical files within SOI, which has made the approval process very fast

Updates from the Industry

22. HERE Maps has developed a tool for tracking facilities at web or phone level, which works as a building block. All base maps are made available, and more information can be added and used as a planning tool for economic restoration
23. Hexagon has approached DST to develop a COVID-19 war room, which is in line with the state govt on-call solution command and control room on cloud. This kind of a set up can be made available within 2 days
24. Hexagon is speaking with cloud players where this app can be made available. Their mobile app is already rolled out along with on call solution
25. Hexagon shared that both UP and MP police have optimised their apps for dial 100 for COVID response with their support

Recommendations

26. This is a time to collaborate for strengthening our individual work. All applications and services need to be based on sound data, hence a collaborative approach to building a reliable data ecosystem is a high priority
27. Data that we develop must address real needs of people on the ground
28. We need to not only look at geospatial, but at a continuum of technologies, that can work together to offer solutions
29. We need a geospatial strategy/outlook for economic restoration as aligned with the govt
30. SOI may consider putting up a list of data by commercial or civil society on its website
31. We can propose to build predictive analytics on two areas:
    a. It has been found in other countries that most COVID hotspots are near sewage treatment plants. If NIC and SoI can map sewage treatment plants and

hotspots in India to see if there is a spatial co-relation in our country as well. Essentially urban water quality monitoring for COVID virus

 b. Moving forward, working from home or distant working will be the norm. Government and industry systems will change, and more usage of broadband and video conferencing will be needed. Can we integrate GIS to those efforts and map the shadow areas of broadband connectivity?

32. The Think Tank can develop an assessment of what govt reports are coming, and the likely directions of eco recovery and how geospatial can play a role

Action Plan

33. Next step for the Think Tank is to come up with possibilities of supporting the govt for restoring social and economic normalcy
34. Develop potential applications of economic recovery
35. SOI portal will provide links to all NGO/Civil society data and FES will share their data with SoI
36. Geospatial Media will develop a resource of other civil society organizations that can share their data
37. Geospatial Media will continue to strengthen the metadata and collation of apps
38. Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 6th at 1030 hrs