

A GGOS Clearing-House for Geodesy
A Proposal

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Webster 1913: A method adopted by banks and bankers for making an exchange of checks held by each against the others, and settling differences of accounts.

WordNet (r) 2.0 (August 2003): a central collection place where banks exchange checks or drafts; participants maintain an account against which credits or debits are posted.

Vernimmen: A clearing house is the central counterparty of all operators in organised markets. It guarantees that all contracts will be honoured.

Wikipedia: A clearing house (also spelled clearing-house or clearinghouse) is an institution that collects and distributes information.

Description:

Clearing-house: The term "clearing-house" originally referred to a financial establishment where checks and bills are exchanged among member banks so that only the net balances need to be settled in cash. Today, its meaning has been extended to include any agency that brings together seekers and providers of goods, services or information, thus matching demand with supply.

Examples:

- Publishers Clearing House: multi-channel direct marketing company.
- Clearinghouse (EU): group on counter-terrorism matters, makes decision on which group to put on a blacklist.
- Airlines and Railroads clearinghouses: manage passenger shares.
- U.S.A: Many organizations have clearing-houses: information sharing, linking of group, networking.
- Convention on Biodiversity Clearing-house Mechanism: links all stakeholders of the Convention (<http://www.cbd.int/chm/default.shtml>).
- Biosafety Clearing-House: international mechanism, exchanges information about the movement of genetically modified organisms, established under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Motivation:

- The GGOS 2020 Process has initiated a dialog among a subset of stakeholders
- The progress made in this process underlines the need for a more permanent mechanism facilitating the interaction of GGOS stakeholders on several levels.
- In order to bring together the various stakeholders on national and international levels and within and outside of IAG, GGOS should consider the creation of a Clearing-House for Geodesy.
- The Clearing-House Mechanism of GGOS should be established based on the GGOS 2020 Strategy.

Mission:

The mission of the GGOS Clearing-House is to contribute significantly to the implementation of GGOS, its standards, and its conventions, for the maximum benefit of its users, through the promotion and facilitation of technical and scientific cooperation, among the IAG Services and Commissions, other organizations in Earth observation including but not limited to GEO, other relevant organizations, and stakeholders. In particular, the GGOS Clearing-house will have three major goals:

- Promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, among the IAG Services and Commissions, among GGOS components and other organizations, and within and between countries.
- Develop a global mechanism for exchanging and integrating information on geodesy.
- Develop the necessary human and technological network.

Key Characteristics

The mechanisms key characteristics are:

- Compatible with different levels of national/component capacity;
- Needs-driven;
- Structurally decentralized;
- Provides access to information;
- Supports decision-making;
- Has no vested interest in controlling the expertise or information;
- Created for the mutual benefit of all IAG Services and Commissions and other stakeholders

Activities

- Support GGOS' thematic and cross-cutting work programs by promoting cooperation, exchanging information and developing a network of partners.
- First priority: ensure universal access to the GGOS Implementation Plan, including the underlying documents of the GGOS 2020 process, the GGOS Standards, and Conventions.
- Include case studies, national reports, and other relevant documentation.
- Increase public awareness of the geodetic programs, issues, and products, including the relevance of the global terrestrial reference frame.
- Establish an Internet-based system to facilitate greater collaboration among the IAG Services and Commissions, the GGOS stakeholders, across national borders, through education and training projects, research cooperation, funding opportunities, access to and transfer of technology, and repatriation of information.
- Creation of the GGOS Portal.

Organization

- Coordinated by the GGOS Coordinating Office and
- Overseen and guided by an Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) set up by the GGOS Steering Committee.
- IAC works in a transparent and cooperative manner to promote awareness of the multiple needs and concerns facing various GGOS components, relevant organizations, communities, countries and regions.
- Network of national or regional focal points for the mechanism is being established to address matters relating to technical and scientific cooperation.

Implementation

- Guided by decisions of the GGOS Steering Committee and the advice of the GGOS Science Panel.
- Consist of the following components:
 - * The GGOS Portal, including its Information Centre.
 - * The network of national, regional, thematic Clearing-House Mechanisms.
 - * Various partner institutions.
- Promotion of the clearing-house and its goals through organization of workshops addressing the scientific and technical information needs of developing countries.
- Workshops priorities:
 - * assessing capacities for implementing of GGOS and its conventions,
 - * improving access to new information technologies and expertise,
 - * strengthening Public Education and Awareness.

Gaining access

- Based on the philosophy that broad participation and easy access must be a top priority.
- Database can therefore be tapped through both traditional and electronic means of communication.
- Special efforts will be made to ensure the participation of organizations and institutions in developing countries.