International Consultation on the Future of Global Geodesy

Terms of Reference: Consultation Steering Committee

Document field	Details
Status	V1.0
Date	30 October 2026
Endorsement	Endorsed by the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau, acting on behalf of the Subcommittee, on 30 October 2026.

The International Consultation on the Future of Global Geodesy aims to explore options for international governance arrangements that support a robust and sustainable global geodesy supply chain. To inform these options, the consultation will examine the supply chain, its vulnerabilities and the needs of those who depend on geodetic products.

The Consultation Steering Committee will help guide the process and ensure that it is inclusive, transparent and grounded in evidence. The consultation is led by the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy and managed by the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE).

These Terms of Reference explain the Steering Committee's role, membership and working arrangements, as well as its relationship with the other bodies involved in the consultation.

1. Purpose of these Terms of Reference

1.1 These Terms of Reference establish the Consultation Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) of the International Consultation on the Future of Global Geodesy (the Consultation). They set out why the Steering Committee exists; what it is and is not responsible for; who can be a member and how members are chosen; how the Steering Committee meets and reaches agreement; and how it works with the bodies that lead, manage and contribute to the Consultation.

1.2 The Terms of Reference are written for three groups of readers: people deciding whether to nominate themselves for membership; members once they are appointed; and the organisations the Steering Committee works with, including the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy and the UN Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE). The detailed work programme of the Consultation will be set out separately in the Consultation Plan, which the Steering Committee will refine and finalise, and then oversee.

1.3 The conflict-of-interest policy that applies to members is at **Annex A**. Terms and abbreviations used in this document are explained at **Annex B**.

2. Why the Consultation matters

2.1 Satellite navigation, the timing that underpins telecommunications and financial systems, Earth observation, sea-level and climate monitoring, disaster response and national mapping all depend on geodetic products such as reference frames, Earth Orientation Parameters (EOP), and satellite orbits. Most people and organisations who rely on these products do not know they depend on them.

2.2 Geodetic products are created by a global geodesy supply chain: a network of observing infrastructure, data centres, analysis centres, scientific services, skilled people and funding contributed by many countries and organisations, with no

formalised international arrangements responsible for making sure it keeps working. If parts of that supply chain weaken or fail, the consequences reach far beyond geodesy, with significant economic and societal impacts.

2.3 The Consultation will examine options for international governance arrangements to strengthen the resilience and long-term sustainability of the global geodesy supply chain, informed by an assessment of its vulnerabilities, capability gaps and future needs. Its conclusions will only carry weight if Member States, the scientific community and the private sector regard the process that produced them as fair, inclusive and grounded in evidence. The Steering Committee exists to safeguard that process.

3. Mandate

3.1 The mandate for the Consultation comes from two decisions of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) at its Sixteenth Session. The Committee:

> *agreed to further scope and advance structured and inclusive consultations on options for international governance for geodesy, emphasized the importance of ensuring diverse views from Member States, the inclusion of the scientific community, in particular the International Association of Geodesy, and the private sector, and recommended that the consultation process be conducted by the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE) [Draft decision 16/106 (c)]*
>
> *welcomed the efforts of the UN-GGCE to enhance global recognition of geodesy as essential to satellite operations, telecommunications and climate monitoring, and to strengthen global governance arrangements for geodesy, and encouraged the Centre to remain actively involved in the process to be led by the Subcommittee on Geodesy, including by supporting evidence-based analysis and structured consultations [Draft decision 16/115 (d)]*

3.2 At a meeting of the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau and the UN-GGCE on 3 September 2026, it was agreed that the Subcommittee on Geodesy would lead the Consultation and the UN-GGCE would manage the process. The Bureau established a Startup Team of approximately ten people, drawn from the Subcommittee on Geodesy, the UN-GGCE International Advisory Committee, space agencies, the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) and the private sector, to initiate the Consultation, including by forming the Steering Committee.

3.3 The Steering Committee is established under this mandate. The Startup Team's responsibilities end once the Steering Committee has been appointed and onboarded and responsibility for the next phase of the Consultation has been formally handed over to it.

4. Scope of the Consultation

4.1 The Consultation will focus on options for international governance of the global geodesy supply chain, supported by an evidence base on its vulnerabilities, capabilities and future needs. The work will be organised into two interconnected workstreams:

Workstream 1: Consideration of options for international governance for geodesy; and

Workstream 2: The evidence base needed to develop and assess governance options, such as an assessment of the robustness, capability and needs of the global geodesy supply chain.

4.2 The workstreams will assess enduring custodianship, including arrangements capable of sustaining global geodesy as long-term critical infrastructure, rather than arrangements that address only today's weaknesses.

4.3 A single Steering Committee will oversee both workstreams. Separate committees would risk governance options being developed without regard to the supply-chain evidence, or supply-chain findings being produced without regard to how they will be used in governance decisions.

4.4 The indicative timeline of the Consultation is shown in Table 1. The dates will be confirmed in the Consultation Plan endorsed by the Subcommittee on Geodesy. The Consultation will start only if, by the end of March 2027, the Consultation Plan has been endorsed and the resources needed to carry it out have been secured. If not, the start will be postponed (see the go/no-go decision in Table 1).

Table 1: Indicative Consultation timeline.

Phase	Indicative period	What happens
Confirm direction and initialise	Aug–Sep 2026	[3 Sep 2026] The Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau, meeting with the UN-GGCE, establishes a Startup Team. [10 Sep 2026] The Startup Team discusses and agrees the mandate and its activities.
Establish the parameters for the Steering Committee	Sep–Nov 2026	The Startup Team establishes the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee, including the self-nomination process used to form the Steering Committee, eligibility criteria, the perspectives matrix, role description and conflict-of-interest policy. The Terms of Reference are endorsed by the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau and published on the UN-GGCE website.
Nominate and appoint	Nov–Dec 2026	The Startup Team conducts the self-nomination, selection, endorsement and appointment processes to form the Steering Committee. The Bureau endorses the proposed membership on behalf of the Subcommittee.
Draft Consultation Plan	Nov–Dec 2026	The UN-GGCE, with assistance from the Startup Team, develops a draft of the Consultation Plan which will include a detailed work programme, engagement methods, secondee requirements, consultant requirements, schedule, budget, quality controls and reporting arrangements. The UN-GGCE calls on Member States and partners to provide resources to undertake the Consultation process.
Preparatory technical information review with the IAG	Nov 2026–Feb 2027	Experts nominated through the IAG review UN-GGCE's geodetic product maps, so that the global geodesy supply chain steps, components and connections are clearly defined and correct before they are used in the Consultation.

Phase	Indicative period	What happens
Onboard and hand over	Nov–Dec 2026	The Startup Team onboards Steering Committee members with a common mandate, background information, initial evidence and the materials needed to design and plan the Consultation.
Review and finalise the Consultation Plan	Dec 2026–Mar 2027	The Steering Committee and the UN-GGCE review and finalise the Consultation Plan.
Review and endorse the Consultation Plan	Mar 2027	The Subcommittee on Geodesy reviews and endorses the Consultation Plan in March 2027.
Go/no-go decision	End Mar 2027	The Subcommittee on Geodesy decides whether the Consultation can start. It starts in April 2027 only if the Consultation Plan has been endorsed and the resources needed to carry it out have been secured. If either condition is not met, the start of the Consultation is postponed until both are met, and the dates in this table move accordingly.
Consultation process	Apr 2027–Jun 2028	The Consultation process will be described in the Consultation Plan.
Finalise and report	Jun–Jul 2028	The UN-GGCE drafts the final report for the Eighteenth Session of UN-GGIM, and the Steering Committee reviews it. The Steering Committee also considers an evaluation of the Consultation process and recommends lessons learned.
Clear the final report	Jul 2028	The Steering Committee recommends the final report of the Consultation to the Subcommittee on Geodesy, which clears it before it is reported to the Eighteenth Session of UN-GGIM.

5. Bodies involved in the Consultation

5.1 The Steering Committee is one of several bodies involved in the Consultation. Table 2 sets out each body's role and how it relates to the Steering Committee. The most important point is that the Steering Committee is **not the final decision-making body**. It reaches agreement by consensus and makes recommendations; the Subcommittee on Geodesy has final clearance of all Consultation outputs and reports to the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts on options for decision.

5.2 In these Terms of Reference, a reference to the Subcommittee on Geodesy means the Subcommittee as a whole, and a reference to the Bureau means the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau acting on the Subcommittee's behalf between plenary meetings. The Subcommittee takes the major decisions such as endorsing the Consultation Plan, deciding whether the Consultation can start (the go/no-go decision), clearing the final report of the Consultation, and endorsing amendments to these Terms of Reference. The Bureau takes the decisions needed between plenary meetings, including the initial endorsement of these Terms of Reference, endorsement of Steering Committee membership, minor changes to the Consultation Plan, clearance of meeting summaries for publication, and matters on which the Steering Committee cannot reach consensus. The Bureau reports those decisions to the next plenary meeting of the Subcommittee.

Table 2: Bodies involved in the Consultation.

Body	Role	Relationship to the Steering Committee
UN-GGIM Committee of Experts	Political direction	Provides the mandate and strategic direction. Receives reports from the Subcommittee on Geodesy on options for decision. The Steering Committee does not report to it directly.
UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy	Lead of the Consultation	Takes the major decisions on the Consultation, such as endorsing the Consultation Plan and deciding whether the Consultation can start. The Subcommittee Bureau acts on behalf of the Subcommittee and takes necessary decisions between plenary meetings, such as Steering Committee membership and matters on which the Steering Committee cannot reach consensus (Section 15). Bureau members communicate progress to the full Subcommittee.
Consultation Steering Committee	Process design, direction and integrity	Refines and finalises the Consultation Plan, oversees the Consultation, safeguards its integrity and inclusiveness, and recommends outputs to the Subcommittee on Geodesy for clearance.
UN-GGCE, supported by consultants and secondees	Implementation manager and Secretariat	Manages day-to-day implementation, carries out the assessment and analysis, drafts documents for the Steering Committee's consideration and provides the Steering Committee's Secretariat (Section 13).
Expert groups	Expert input and validation	Groups yet to be formed that provide technical, legal and policy input on technical and governance requirements throughout the Consultation (Section 16).

5.3 To avoid overlap with other bodies, the Steering Committee does **not**:

(a) make final decisions on the Consultation Plan, its outputs or any governance option;

(b) decide which international governance arrangement should be adopted. Its role is to ensure that options are developed through a sound, inclusive process and follow from the evidence;

(c) carry out the assessment or analysis itself, which is done by the UN-GGCE, consultants, secondees and expert groups;

(d) manage the Consultation budget, staff, consultants, secondees or procurement, which are the responsibility of the UN-GGCE; or

(e) negotiate on behalf of, or commit, any government, organisation or company. Members serve in a personal capacity (paragraph 7.1). The views they express are their own and do not represent or commit their government, employer or any other organisation.

6. Role and responsibilities

6.1 The Steering Committee guides the **design, direction and integrity** of the Consultation. In practice this means making sure the Consultation is well designed, stays on course, reaches the people it needs to reach, and produces conclusions that are supported by evidence and can be trusted by those who were not in the room.

6.2 The responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to:

(a) **Refine and finalise the Consultation Plan.** Work with the UN-GGCE to refine and finalise the draft Consultation Plan, including the detailed work programme, engagement methods, secondee and consultant requirements, schedule, budget, quality controls including how evidence is documented and assessed, and reporting arrangements. Agree the draft Consultation Plan by consensus and recommend it to the Subcommittee on Geodesy for endorsement in March 2027.

(b) **Oversee implementation.** Monitor delivery against the endorsed Consultation Plan using progress, risk and issue reports from the Secretariat, and recommend changes to the Plan: material changes to the Subcommittee on Geodesy, and minor changes to the Bureau, which may approve them between plenary meetings.

(c) **Safeguard inclusiveness.** Check that the Consultation follows its agreed methods; that the evidence it relies on is documented and traceable, with its limitations stated openly, including gaps in geographic coverage, areas of uncertainty, significant contrary evidence and potential conflicts of interest of those who supplied it; that conclusions and governance options follow from the evidence; that diverse and dissenting views are represented fairly; and that the scientific community (in particular the IAG) takes part as a partner in shaping findings, not only as a source of information.

(d) **Safeguard integrity.** Check that the Consultation follows its agreed methods; that conclusions and governance options follow from the evidence; that diverse and dissenting views are represented fairly; and that the scientific community takes part as a partner in shaping findings, not only as a source of information.

(e) **Review draft materials.** Review and comment on draft materials, including evidence summaries and draft reports, with a focus on whether they are clear, fair and supported by evidence. Detailed technical validation is the role of the expert groups.

(f) **Advise on expert groups.** Advise on the scope and composition of expert groups so that they are inclusive and have the right expertise, and consider their outputs (Section 16).

(g) **Communicate and connect.** Communicate the Consultation's progress through members' professional networks, and bring into the Steering Committee's work the views of the regions, organisations and sectors members are connected with, without representing them (Section 11).

(h) **Resolve process-level disputes.** Resolve disagreements about how the Consultation is being run, for example a concern that a group of stakeholders has been excluded, or that an engagement activity was not conducted fairly. Disagreements about technical findings or about which governance option is preferable are not process-level disputes. They are worked through within the Consultation itself, through the evidence base, the Expert Groups and successive consultation rounds. The Consultation's conclusions are reported, through the Subcommittee on Geodesy, to UN-GGIM, where Member States take the decision.

(i) **Support resource mobilisation.** Help identify potential contributors to the Consultation and advocate for support through members' networks. The UN-GGCE manages contributions.

(j) **Recommend the final report.** Review the final report of the Consultation, agree it by consensus and recommend it to the Subcommittee on Geodesy for clearance.

(k) **Review lessons learned.** Before dissolution, consider an evaluation of the Consultation process prepared by the Secretariat, covering participation, evidence quality, governance, resources and stakeholder confidence, and recommend lessons for future international geodesy initiatives. The scope and method of the evaluation are set out in the Consultation Plan.

7. Membership

Purpose and character of the Steering Committee

7.1 Members of the Steering Committee serve in a personal capacity. They are selected for their own knowledge, experience and judgement, and for the perspective they can bring from a part of the global geodesy community, not as representatives of a country, region, organisation or company. Members do not take instructions from their government or employer on Steering Committee matters, and the positions they take do not commit any government or organisation. This follows from the role of the Steering Committee: it safeguards the design and integrity of the Consultation and makes recommendations, while Member States express their positions and take decisions through the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy and the Committee of Experts (Section 5). The Steering Committee is intended to combine strategic leadership of the Consultation, a breadth of perspectives from the stakeholder groups with a direct interest in global geodesy, and members' connections with those groups, so that the Consultation's progress and findings reach the people and organisations that will act on them. Although members serve in a personal capacity, they are not appointed as individual technical experts: detailed technical work is carried out by the expert groups (Section 16), and members are expected to draw on that work rather than duplicate it. The composition, nomination process and eligibility criteria in this section follow from that intended character.

Size

7.2 The size of the Steering Committee is flexible and will depend on the number and quality of self-nominations received. It is expected to have **approximately 20 members**. The working range is 18 to 22 members, as set out in Table 3.

Perspectives matrix

7.3 The Startup Team will endeavour to select members who together bring the range of perspectives shown in the indicative perspectives matrix (Table 3). The matrix shows the stakeholder groups whose perspectives the Steering Committee needs, examples of where people with each perspective may work or be active, the indicative number of members bringing each perspective, and why each perspective is needed. A member is selected because they can bring a group's perspective, not to represent that group. The examples are illustrative, not exclusive. The Startup Team will balance the perspectives when selecting members (Section 9).

Table 3: Indicative perspectives matrix.

Stakeholder group	Examples of where members may work or be active	Indicative number of members	Why this perspective is needed
National government, by region	National government agencies responsible for geodesy, mapping, positioning or space in each UN-GGIM region: Africa; Americas; Arab States; Asia and the Pacific; Europe	5–6 (should have at least 1 per region)	Member States use, fund and host most components of the global geodesy supply chain, and would take any decision on future international governance. Members selected for this perspective are expected to keep the relevant UN-GGIM regional committee informed and to bring its views into the Steering Committee's discussions, but they do not represent their region or their government.
Scientific community: geodesy	International Association of Geodesy (IAG), including its scientific services	2	The IAG and its services coordinate much of the scientific work behind these products. The Committee of Experts named the IAG specifically.
Scientific community: astronomy	International Astronomical Union (IAU)	1	The celestial reference frame and Earth orientation depend on the astronomy community, including its expertise in very long baseline interferometry (VLBI).
Geodetic product generation	Operational organisations that generate geodetic products, e.g. the United States Naval Observatory (USNO)	1	Brings the perspective of organisations that produce the products operationally.
Space agencies	National and regional space agencies	2	Operate satellite missions that contribute to, and depend on, satellite orbits, gravity field models and reference frames.
Earth observation coordination	Group on Earth Observations (GEO); Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS)	1	Brings the perspective of major users of geodetic products for climate, environment and disaster monitoring.
Space and radio-spectrum coordination	United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA); International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	1–2	Brings intergovernmental space coordination and the protection of radio frequencies that geodetic observations rely on.
Education, research and capacity development	International Federation of Surveyors (FIG); universities and the UN-GGIM Academic Network	1	Brings the perspective of skills and capacity development, particularly in countries with limited geodetic capability.
Regional and national geodesy task forces	Regional or national bodies established to strengthen geodesy (e.g. GGOS-Africa)	1	Brings experience of coordinating geodesy across countries within a region or across agencies within a country.
Standards organisations	e.g. ISO Technical Committee 211; Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC)	1	Brings interoperability and standards perspectives that affect how geodetic products are used.

Stakeholder group	Examples of where members may work or be active	Indicative number of members	Why this perspective is needed
Private sector	Companies whose products or services depend on or contribute to the global geodesy supply chain	2	Companies are major users of, and contributors to, the supply chain. The Committee of Experts named the private sector specifically.
Specialist expertise: international law and intergovernmental process	Any relevant background (e.g. WMO)	0–1	Filled only if the collective skills check (paragraphs 7.4–7.5) shows a gap.
Specialist expertise: finance and resource mobilisation	Any relevant background	0–1	Filled only if the collective skills check (paragraphs 7.4–7.5) shows a gap.
Total		**18–22**	

Collective skills

7.4 In addition to bringing the perspectives in Table 3, the Steering Committee as a whole should include people with the following skills and experience:

(a) designing and managing multi-stakeholder consultation processes;

(b) geodesy and the global geodesy supply chain, sufficient to judge whether evidence and conclusions are credible;

(c) international and institutional law, and United Nations or other intergovernmental processes;

(d) education, research and long-term capacity development;

(e) risk management or supply-chain analysis; and

(f) finance and resource mobilisation.

7.5 After selecting members to bring the perspectives in Table 3, the Startup Team will check whether the proposed membership covers these skills. Where a skill is not covered, the Startup Team will encourage further self-nominations from people with that skill, for example by circulating the call through networks where such people are likely to be found.

Balance targets

7.6 The Steering Committee aims for no more than 60% of its members to be of any one gender, and for members to come from all five UN-GGIM regions. These are targets, not quotas: they guide selection and the seeking of further self-nominations, but a well-qualified nominee will not be excluded solely to meet them. If the proposed membership does not meet a target, the Startup Team will explain why when submitting it for endorsement.

7.7 The Startup Team will also seek a balance of members from developed and developing countries, including countries with limited geodetic capacity such as least developed countries and small island developing States, across all stakeholder groups, so that the Consultation reflects the views of countries with different roles in, and different levels of reliance on, the global geodesy supply chain.

Co-chairs

7.8 The Steering Committee is led by two co-chairs drawn from its membership: one from a developing country and one from a developed country. The co-chairs are selected by the Steering Committee by consensus at its first meeting. Their role is set out in Section 12.

8. Eligibility criteria

8.1 Nominees must meet all of the following essential criteria:

(a) **Relevant knowledge.** Understand geodesy, the global geodesy supply chain, or a field in which geodetic products are used or governed (for example space, Earth observation, radio spectrum, standards or intergovernmental policy), sufficiently to judge whether evidence and conclusions are credible.

(b) **Judging inclusiveness.** Be able to assess whether a process is representative and inclusive, and to identify whose views are missing.

(c) **Managing an inclusive process.** Be able to contribute to managing a consultation process that gives diverse stakeholders a fair opportunity to be heard.

(d) **Time.** Have the capacity to commit time consistently from the date of appointment to July 2028 (Section 11).

(e) **Networks.** Have access to professional networks within the stakeholder group whose perspective they bring, and be willing to engage them actively.

(f) **Language.** Be able to work effectively in English, the working language of the Steering Committee.

(g) **Commitments.** Agree to serve in a personal capacity and to comply with these Terms of Reference, including the confidentiality provisions and the conflict-of-interest policy at Annex A.

8.2 The following criteria are preferred but not essential:

(a) experience running or overseeing multi-stakeholder consultation processes; and

(b) experience of United Nations or other intergovernmental processes.

9. Nomination, selection and appointment

9.1 The Startup Team leads the self-nomination and selection process. The steps are set out in Table 4. Table 1 sets out the indicative timing for these steps and for the Consultation as a whole. As paragraph 4.4 explains, the dates will be confirmed in the Consultation Plan.

9.2 Membership is open through self-nomination. Anyone who meets the eligibility criteria in Section 8 may nominate themselves. No letter or statement of support from a government, organisation or company is required, and none will be requested, because members serve in a personal capacity (paragraph 7.1). Nominees are responsible for making any arrangements with their employer that they need, for example to commit the time described in Section 11. The Startup Team may encourage particular people to nominate themselves, so that the call reaches all the perspectives in Table 3, but every nominee follows the same process.

Table 4: Nomination, selection and appointment steps.

Step	What happens
1. Endorse and publish	The Startup Team submits these Terms of Reference, including the eligibility criteria, perspectives matrix, role description and conflict-of-interest policy, to the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau for endorsement, then publishes them.
2. Call for self-nominations	The Startup Team publishes an open call for self-nominations on the UN-GGCE website and circulates it widely, including through the networks of each stakeholder group in Table 3.
3. Submit self-nominations	Each self-nomination includes the following (no letter of support is required): – a statement showing how the nominee meets the eligibility criteria in Section 8 and which perspective in Table 3 they would bring; – confirmation that the nominee can commit the time described in Section 11; – a short statement on how the nominee will engage their professional networks; – the nominee's gender, nationality and UN-GGIM region, so that the balance targets in paragraphs 7.6–7.7 can be checked; and – a preliminary conflict-of-interest declaration (Annex A, Appendix 1).
4. Review and fill gaps	The Startup Team reviews nominations against the eligibility criteria, the perspectives matrix, the balance targets and the collective skills check. Where there are gaps, it encourages further self-nominations. Where there are more suitable nominees for a perspective than the indicative number of members, it selects on the strength of the nominations and the overall balance of the Steering Committee.
5. Endorse membership	The Startup Team submits the proposed membership to the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau for endorsement, with a short explanation of how the perspectives matrix, balance targets and collective skills are met, or why they are not.
6. Appoint	Following endorsement, members receive a letter of appointment. Each member confirms acceptance of these Terms of Reference and submits a full conflict-of-interest declaration.
7. Onboard and hand over	Members receive a background information pack covering the mandate, initial evidence and the materials needed to refine and finalise the Consultation Plan. At its first meeting, the Steering Committee selects its co-chairs (Section 12). Responsibility is formally handed over from the Startup Team, whose mandate then ends.

10. Term, leave of absence and changes in membership

Term

10.1 Members serve from the date of their appointment until the Steering Committee is dissolved under Section 20.

No alternates and leave of absence

10.2 Because members serve in a personal capacity, no one else can stand in for a member, and there are no alternates. Continuity of membership also matters because the Steering Committee's judgements about integrity and inclusiveness build up over the life of the Consultation.

10.3 Where a member cannot take part for a period (for example because of extended leave), the member agrees a leave of absence with the co-chairs and the Secretariat. During the leave of absence the member does not take part in reaching consensus and is not included when calculating whether a meeting is quorate. If the absence is likely to last for a substantial part of the remaining Consultation, the co-chairs may

recommend replacement under paragraph 10.5. The Secretariat records every leave of absence.

Resignation and replacement

10.4 A member may resign by writing to the Secretariat. Because members serve in a personal capacity, a change of employer or role does not by itself end membership. A member who changes role tells the Secretariat and updates their conflict-of-interest declaration. If the change means the member can no longer meet the eligibility criteria or commit the time required, they are expected to resign.

10.5 A replacement is selected by the co-chairs and the Secretariat from suitable self-nominations, either those already received or those received through a further call, having regard to the perspective the departing member brought and the balance targets in paragraph 7.6. The replacement is checked against the eligibility criteria and endorsed by the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau.

Membership review

10.6 A review of a member's continued membership is triggered by:

(a) absence from two consecutive meetings without a leave of absence agreed under paragraph 10.3;

(b) failure to disclose a material conflict of interest (Annex A);

(c) a serious breach of these Terms of Reference, including the confidentiality provisions;

(d) a conflict of interest so pervasive that the member would need to recuse themselves from a large part of the Steering Committee's work (Annex A, Table A1); or

(e) ceasing to meet the essential eligibility criteria in Section 8.

10.7 The co-chairs, supported by the Secretariat, conduct the review. If the member is a co-chair, the other co-chair conducts the review. The member is told why the review has been triggered and is given the opportunity to respond. The Steering Committee then considers the matter, without the member concerned taking part in reaching consensus, and makes a recommendation to the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau, which decides. Possible outcomes include continued membership, continued membership with conditions, or removal and replacement under paragraph 10.5.

11. Member responsibilities and time commitment

Time commitment

11.1 Members should expect about **one two-hour virtual meeting per month**, plus time to read and prepare. Averaged across the Consultation, this amounts to about one hour per week. In more demanding weeks, members should expect two to three hours. Demanding weeks occur when members are absorbing the background material and helping to refine and finalise the Consultation Plan (December 2026 to March 2027), when they are reading and commenting on substantial draft material, and during final reporting (June to July 2028). Additional meetings may be held during the Consultation Plan and final reporting periods.

11.2 Members should read meeting papers before each meeting and tell the Secretariat in advance if they cannot attend.

Acting as a link with the wider community

11.3 Members do not represent a stakeholder group, but they are expected to act as an active link between the Steering Committee and the stakeholder group whose perspective they bring. This is central to the Steering Committee's value: the Consultation can only claim to be inclusive if the people on the Steering Committee genuinely carry information in both directions. In particular, members are expected to:

(a) actively engage their professional networks to communicate the Consultation's purpose, progress and opportunities to take part;

(b) bring views, concerns and evidence from that stakeholder group into the Steering Committee's discussions, making clear where these differ from their own;

(c) report back to that stakeholder group on Steering Committee outcomes, using published meeting summaries and materials labelled "For stakeholder input" (Section 18); and

(d) raise concerns from that stakeholder group early, so they can be addressed before decisions are taken.

Conduct

11.4 Members are expected to take part in good faith; to listen to and engage with views that differ from their own; to raise objections early and explain them; to comply with the conflict-of-interest policy, the confidentiality provisions and, where it has been applied, the Chatham House Rule; and to describe the Steering Committee's agreed outcomes accurately when communicating externally, including outcomes from which they stood aside or with which their employer or wider community may disagree.

12. Co-chairs

12.1 The Steering Committee has two co-chairs, selected by consensus from among its members at its first meeting. One co-chair is from a developing country and one from a developed country (paragraph 7.8), and at least one co-chair must be a member selected for the national government perspective (Table 3). The Secretariat convenes the first meeting and facilitates the selection.

12.2 Co-chairs serve for the term of the Steering Committee. If a co-chair steps down, the Steering Committee selects a replacement by consensus, keeping the balance in paragraph 12.1. If consensus on a co-chair cannot be reached, whether at the first meeting or when a co-chair is replaced, the matter is escalated under the consensus protocol (Section 15). For the selection of the first co-chairs, the Secretariat takes the role that Section 15 gives to the co-chairs.

12.3 The co-chairs:

(a) chair meetings, sharing the role between them;

(b) agree meeting agendas with the Secretariat;

(c) facilitate discussion, judge when consensus has been reached, and propose compromises where it has not;

(d) work with the Secretariat on recommendations and escalations to the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau;

(e) speak on behalf of the Steering Committee, within positions the Steering Committee has agreed; and

(f) lead membership reviews under paragraph 10.7.

12.4 Where a co-chair has a conflict of interest on an agenda item, the other co-chair chairs that item. If both co-chairs are conflicted, the Steering Committee agrees another member to facilitate the item.

13. Secretariat

13.1 The UN-GGCE provides the Secretariat for the Steering Committee, as part of its role as implementation manager of the Consultation. The Secretariat is not a member of the Steering Committee and does not take part in reaching consensus.

13.2 The Secretariat:

(a) prepares and circulates agendas and papers, and organises meetings;

(b) drafts documents for the Steering Committee's consideration, drawing on the work of the UN-GGCE, consultants, secondees and expert groups;

(c) maintains the record of decisions and actions, including a record of the outcome of each consensus decision, reservations, stand-asides, formal objections and recusals;

(d) prepares meeting summaries and submits them to the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau for clearance before publication;

(e) provides progress, risk and issue reports on implementation of the Consultation Plan;

(f) holds the conflict-of-interest register and the membership list, and records leaves of absence;

(g) supports the co-chairs with escalations and recommendations to the Bureau;

(h) onboards new members;

(i) links the Steering Committee's work with that of the expert groups; and,

(j) prepares an evaluation of the Consultation process for the Steering Committee's consideration before dissolution (paragraph 6.2(k)).

14. Meetings and ways of working

14.1 **Format.** Meetings are held virtually, normally once a month, with additional meetings when needed. If members choose to meet in person alongside an existing event, remote participation must be offered, and no decision is taken that members participating remotely cannot take part in. This protects members who cannot travel, as no travel support is provided (Section 19).

14.2 **Time zones.** Meeting times are rotated so that no region is consistently asked to meet outside normal working hours.

14.3 **Papers.** Papers are circulated at least five working days before a meeting. Each paper states what the Steering Committee is being asked to do. Circulating papers early also allows members with limited internet connectivity to contribute in writing before the meeting.

14.4 **Quorum.** A meeting is quorate when at least half of the members, including at least one co-chair, are present. The requirement for a co-chair to be present does not apply to the first meeting, at which the co-chairs are selected (paragraph 12.1), or to an item from which both co-chairs are recused, for which the member agreed under paragraph 12.4 to facilitate that item takes the co-chair's place. Members on leave of absence under paragraph 10.3 are not included when calculating whether a meeting

is quorate, and members recused from an item are not included when calculating whether the meeting is quorate for that item.

14.5 **Language.** The working language is English. Papers are written in plain language, and longer papers include a short summary, to support members for whom English is not a first language.

14.6 **Transparency of discussion.** See paragraphs 17.3–17.4.

15. Decision-making: consensus protocol

Principles

15.1 The Steering Committee is not the final decision-making body. Final clearance of all Consultation outputs rests with the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy, as lead of the Consultation, which reports to the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts on options for decision. The Steering Committee therefore works by consensus. Its influence comes from the quality of its process and the breadth of agreement behind its recommendations, not from a count of votes. Matters not reserved to the Subcommittee on Geodesy or the Bureau take effect once the Steering Committee reaches consensus. The matters reserved to the Subcommittee on Geodesy are the Consultation Plan and any material changes to it, the go/no-go decision on starting the Consultation, the final report of the Consultation, and amendments to these Terms of Reference (paragraph 20.2). The matters reserved to the Bureau, acting on the Subcommittee's behalf between plenary meetings, are Steering Committee membership (including replacements and the outcomes of membership reviews), minor changes to the Consultation Plan, clearance of meeting summaries for publication, and matters on which the Steering Committee cannot reach consensus (paragraph 15.6, step 7).

15.2 **Consensus** means general agreement, with no formal objection maintained by any member taking part in the decision. Consensus is not unanimity: members may agree while holding reservations, or may stand aside. When a co-chair clearly states a proposed conclusion and asks whether there is any formal objection, a member who does not object is taken to agree.

15.3 Positions are taken by members in their personal capacity. A member recused from an item under Annex A, or on leave of absence under paragraph 10.3, does not take a position on it.

15.4 A formal objection must be explained and, where possible, accompanied by a proposed alternative. It must rest on at least one of these grounds: the proposal would compromise the integrity, inclusiveness, quality or evidence basis of the Consultation; or it would conflict with the Consultation's mandate or these Terms of Reference.

15.5 Consensus that relies on many stand-asides is weak. If more than one-third of the members taking part in a decision stand aside, the co-chairs will treat consensus as not yet reached and continue the process in paragraph 15.6 from step 5.

Steps to reach consensus

15.6 The Steering Committee follows these steps:

(1) **Prepare.** The Secretariat circulates the proposal with a paper that states what the Steering Committee is being asked to do (paragraph 14.3).

(2) **Discuss.** The co-chairs facilitate discussion, aiming to understand and address members' concerns rather than simply to record them.

(3) **Test for consensus.** A co-chair states the proposed conclusion and asks whether there is any formal objection. If there is none, consensus is reached. Reservations and stand-asides are recorded.

(4) **Resolve objections in the meeting.** If a member makes a formal objection, the member explains it, and the Steering Committee tries to resolve it in the meeting, for example by amending the proposal. If the objection is withdrawn, the co-chair tests for consensus again.

(5) **Make a further attempt.** If the objection is not resolved, or if consensus is treated as not yet reached under paragraph 15.5, the matter is carried forward, for no more than one further meeting. Between meetings, the co-chairs and the Secretariat work with the members concerned, and with others as needed, on an amended proposal. The matter is then considered again at the next scheduled meeting or at a special meeting.

(6) **Co-chair compromise.** If consensus is still not reached at that meeting, the co-chairs put forward a compromise proposal and test for consensus.

(7) **Escalate.** If consensus is still not reached, the Steering Committee records that there is no consensus. The Secretariat, with the co-chairs, prepares an escalation note that sets out the options and each position fairly. Members whose positions are described may review the note to confirm it represents their position accurately. The note is sent to the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau, which decides. The Bureau's decision is final for the purposes of the Consultation, and the Steering Committee proceeds on that basis.

15.7 **Urgent matters.** Where the Consultation timeline does not allow the full period in step 5 of paragraph 15.6, the co-chairs may shorten it. The reason is recorded.

Decisions between meetings

15.8 Between meetings, the Secretariat may circulate a proposal by email for decision by written procedure. Members have ten working days to respond. If no formal objection is received by the deadline, consensus is reached and the outcome is confirmed to all members. If a formal objection is received, the matter goes to the next meeting and continues from step 4 of paragraph 15.6.

15.9 The Consultation Plan and the final report are always considered in a meeting and are not decided by written procedure, because of their importance.

Recording decisions

15.10 The Secretariat records, for each decision, the outcome and any reservations, stand-asides, formal objections and recusals. The internal record identifies the members who objected or stood aside, so that escalation notes can describe positions accurately. Published meeting summaries record decisions and actions only and do not attribute views.

16. Relationship with expert groups

16.1 Expert groups will be formed to provide technical, legal and policy input on the technical and governance requirements of the Consultation, across both workstreams, and will be consulted throughout the process. Their scope, composition and ways of working will be set out in the Consultation Plan.

16.2 In relation to the expert groups, the Steering Committee:

(a) advises on their scope and composition, so that they are inclusive and include the expertise needed;

(b) considers their outputs and checks that their input is reflected accurately in Consultation materials; and

(c) does not duplicate the technical work of expert groups but may request further analysis or additional expert advice where needed.

16.3 A person may be a member of both the Steering Committee and an expert group. This must be declared under Annex A.

17. Reporting, transparency and communications

Reporting

17.1 Reporting follows a single line. The Secretariat reports to the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau after each meeting, through the meeting summary, and provides regular progress reports. Bureau members communicate progress to the full Subcommittee on Geodesy. The Subcommittee on Geodesy reports to the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts.

Transparency

17.2 The following are made public:

(a) these Terms of Reference;

(b) the membership list, showing each member's name, current role and organisation (for identification only), and the perspective in Table 3 for which they were selected;

(c) a summary of the conflict-of-interest register (Annex A); and

(d) meeting summaries, recording decisions and actions without attributing views, once cleared by the Subcommittee on Geodesy Bureau.

Transparency of discussion

17.3 This is a United Nations-led consultation and members are expected to engage with, and report back to, the stakeholder groups whose perspectives they bring, so transparency rather than confidentiality is the working assumption. The co-chairs, with the Secretariat, may invite observers to a meeting or agenda item, for example from the Subcommittee on Geodesy, the UN-GGIM Secretariat or the expert groups. Observers may speak at the co-chairs' invitation but do not take part in reaching consensus and are not counted when calculating whether a meeting is quorate. Observers are not present for items involving material labelled "Steering Committee only" (paragraph 18.1(a)), membership matters (Section 10) or conflicts of interest (Annex A). Where the Chatham House Rule applies (paragraph 17.4), observers are bound by it.

17.4 The Chatham House Rule may be applied to a particular meeting or agenda item where a more candid discussion is needed, for example where members are testing ideas that are not yet settled. The co-chairs, with the Secretariat, decide this before or at the start of the item, state it clearly at the time, and record it. Where the Rule applies, members may use the information they receive, including when reporting back to the stakeholder group whose perspective they bring, but must not reveal the identity or affiliation of the person who said it. Because the membership list is published, members should take care not to describe a view in a way that identifies the speaker.

Speaking on behalf of the Steering Committee

17.5 Only the co-chairs speak on behalf of the Steering Committee, and only within positions the Steering Committee has agreed. Other members communicate about the Consultation's progress to their networks using published material and materials labelled "For stakeholder input" (Section 18), and make clear that they are expressing their own view.

18. Confidentiality

18.1 Members are expected to share draft materials with the stakeholder groups whose perspectives they bring, and the Consultation benefits when they do. At the same time, publishing a draft or circulating it publicly before it is agreed can cause it to be misread as a settled position. To balance these needs, the Secretariat, with the co-chairs, marks each draft with one of two labels:

(a) **Steering Committee only:** used sparingly, for the few drafts that are genuinely sensitive. Not shared beyond the member except, with the Secretariat's agreement, with a small number of named colleagues whose advice the member needs; or

(b) **For stakeholder input:** may be shared within the stakeholder group whose perspective the member brings, and with others whose input the member needs, to gather feedback, but not published or posted publicly. This is the normal label for draft materials.

18.2 Material without a label may be shared for stakeholder input under paragraph 18.1(b).

18.3 Members must not use confidential information, meaning material labelled "Steering Committee only" under paragraph 18.1(a), for the private or commercial advantage of themselves, their organisation or any other party.

18.4 Personal information about members and stakeholders is handled in accordance with applicable United Nations rules.

18.5 Confidentiality obligations continue after a member leaves the Steering Committee, until the material concerned is published or is no longer sensitive.

19. Resources

19.1 Membership is not remunerated. The time members contribute is provided by the member, or by their employer where the employer agrees to release them.

19.2 No travel support is provided. Meetings are held virtually so that taking part does not require travel. Any costs of taking part, including travel if members choose to meet in person, are borne by the member or their employer.

19.3 The UN-GGCE and the Subcommittee on Geodesy will make best efforts to provide support for multilingual and regional consultation activities to ensure meaningful participation from different countries.

19.4 Secretariat services are provided by the UN-GGCE as part of its management of the Consultation, using the resources mobilised for the Consultation.

20. Review, amendment and dissolution

20.1 The Steering Committee reviews these Terms of Reference at its first meeting after the Consultation Plan has been endorsed, to make sure they remain consistent with the Plan. It may also review them at any other time.

20.2 Amendments are agreed by the Steering Committee by consensus and recommended to the Subcommittee on Geodesy for endorsement. Amendments take effect once endorsed by the Subcommittee.

20.3 The Steering Committee is dissolved once the Subcommittee on Geodesy has cleared the final report of the Consultation, the Steering Committee has considered the evaluation of the Consultation process (paragraph 6.2(k)), and it has confirmed that it has no outstanding responsibilities. This is expected in July 2028. The UN-GGCE archives the Steering Committee's records in accordance with applicable United Nations rules.

Annex A: Conflict-of-interest policy

A1. Purpose

A1.1 This policy exists so that Member States, the scientific community, the private sector and the wider public can trust that the Steering Committee's recommendations and process decisions serve the purpose of the Consultation, not the private interests of individual members or organisations.

A1.2 The outcomes of the Consultation could change the roles, responsibilities, funding or recognition of organisations that employ members of the Steering Committee or with which members are closely connected. Conflicts of interest are therefore likely and expected. The aim of this policy is not to exclude people with relevant interests, many of whom bring essential expertise, but to identify those interests openly and manage them fairly.

A2. Bringing a perspective is not in itself a conflict

A2.1 Members serve in a personal capacity (paragraph 7.1 of the Terms of Reference), but they are selected because of their experience in a part of the global geodesy community. Drawing on that experience, including knowledge of how their employer or wider stakeholder group sees an issue, and bringing that stakeholder group's views openly into discussion, is an expected part of the role and is not in itself a conflict of interest.

A2.2 A conflict of interest arises when a member, their organisation or a person closely connected to them has an interest that could reasonably be seen to influence the member's participation in a **specific** decision or piece of drafting, beyond the openly declared perspective they bring.

A3. Types of interest

A3.1 Interests that must be disclosed include, but are not limited to:

(a) **Financial:** for example, a contract, grant, consultancy or commercial relationship with an entity likely to benefit from a particular governance outcome; or an intention by the member's organisation to bid for consultancy or other contracts connected with the Consultation.

(b) **Institutional:** for example, the member's organisation could gain or lose a role, mandate or funding under a governance option being considered; the organisation has contributed, or intends to contribute, funding or secondees to the Consultation; or the member holds a leadership role in another body with an interest in the outcome.

(c) **Professional:** for example, the member is an author of evidence being reviewed; is a member of an expert group whose output is under review; or is applying for a paid role within the Consultation.

(d) **Personal:** for example, a close family or personal relationship with a person directly affected by a decision, such as a candidate for a consultant or secondee role.

A3.2 **The test:** would a reasonable, informed observer think the interest could influence the member's judgement on the matter? If in doubt, the member should disclose.

A3.3 Contributing funding or secondees to the Consultation gives an organisation no additional influence over the Steering Committee's recommendations.

A4. Disclosure

A4.1 Members disclose interests:

(a) in a preliminary declaration submitted with their self-nomination, using the form at Appendix 1;

(b) in a full declaration on appointment, using the form at Appendix 1;

(c) promptly whenever a new interest arises or an existing interest changes, and in any case before the relevant matter is discussed;

(d) at the start of each meeting, when the co-chairs ask whether any member has an interest in an agenda item; and

(e) through an annual reconfirmation of their declaration, in November 2027.

A5. The register

A5.1 The UN-GGCE Secretariat holds a register of all declarations. Full declarations are available to Steering Committee members.

A5.2 A summary of the register is published. It lists each member's name and the general nature of their declared interests (for example, "employer manufactures satellite positioning equipment"), without financial or personal details. By submitting a declaration, members consent to this publication.

A6. Managing interests and conflicts

A6.1 Institutional interests of the kind described in paragraph A3.1(b) are inherent in the composition of the Steering Committee. Most members work for organisations whose roles, responsibilities or funding could change as a result of the Consultation; the experience that comes with that is part of why they were selected. These interests are normally managed through disclosure and transparency, not recusal. The member declares the interest, it is recorded in the register, and the member takes a full part in the discussion.

A6.2 Recusal is reserved for specific matters where a member's impartiality could reasonably be questioned. In practice this means matters in which the member, their organisation or someone close to them stands to gain or lose directly and specifically, rather than as one of many organisations affected by a general governance option. Examples include advice on the selection of a consultant, secondee or contractor for which the member or their organisation is a candidate; a decision about the member's own continued membership; and the review of a specific piece of evidence the member authored, where the Steering Committee is being asked to judge its quality.

A6.3 A general governance option that would affect a whole class of organisations, including the member's, is not on its own a ground for recusal. Treating it as one would remove from the discussion the people who understand the consequences best.

A6.4 When an interest is identified, the Secretariat and the co-chairs assess it and agree a proportionate response with the member, using Table A1.

Table A1: Responses to interests and conflicts of interest.

Response	When it applies	What the member does
Disclosure (the normal response)	The interest is institutional or general: the member's organisation	Takes a full part in discussion and in reaching consensus. The interest is recorded in the register and, where

Response	When it applies	What the member does
	is one of a number that could be affected by the matter.	relevant, noted in the record of the decision.
Recusal from a specific matter	The member, their organisation or someone close to them stands to gain or lose directly and specifically, or impartiality could reasonably be questioned (paragraph A6.2).	Does not take part in reaching consensus on that matter and does not take part in related drafting. May provide factual information if the Steering Committee asks.
Membership review	The conflict is so pervasive that the member would need to recuse from a large part of the Steering Committee's work.	The co-chairs initiate a membership review under paragraph 10.7 of the Terms of Reference.

A6.5 Every recusal is recorded in the internal record of decisions. A member who is unsure whether to recuse should raise it with the co-chairs and the Secretariat rather than withdraw on their own initiative, so that the Steering Committee does not lose expertise it needs.

A6.6 Where a member's organisation intends to bid for a consultancy or other contract, or to offer secondees, connected with the Consultation, the member takes no part in drafting the related requirements or in any advice on selection. Procurement and recruitment are carried out by the UN-GGCE under United Nations rules.

A6.7 Where a co-chair has an interest, the other co-chair assesses it with the Secretariat, and a conflicted co-chair does not chair the related item (paragraph 12.4 of the Terms of Reference).

A7. Failure to disclose

A7.1 If a material conflict that should have been disclosed comes to light, the co-chairs and the Secretariat review it. The member is given the opportunity to respond. A failure to disclose a material conflict triggers a membership review under paragraph 10.7 of the Terms of Reference, which may lead the Steering Committee to recommend continued membership, continued membership with conditions, or removal.

A7.2 The Steering Committee may also revisit any decision in which the undisclosed conflict may have played a part.

A8. Raising concerns

A8.1 Anyone, whether a member, a stakeholder or a member of the public, may raise a concern about a possible conflict of interest with the UN-GGCE Secretariat. Concerns are handled confidentially.

Appendix 1 to Annex A: Conflict-of-interest declaration form

Nominees complete this form as a preliminary declaration with their self-nomination, and members complete it again as a full declaration on appointment (paragraph A4.1). Complete each section. Write “None” where you have nothing to declare. If you are unsure whether something should be declared, declare it.

Section	Details to be completed by the nominee or member
Name	
Perspective in Table 3 that you would bring (nominees) or for which you were selected (members)	
Current employer and role	
1. Financial interests	Contracts, grants, consultancies or commercial relationships relevant to the Consultation; any intention to bid for Consultation contracts.
2. Institutional interests	Roles, mandates or funding your organisation could gain or lose; contributions of funding or secondees to the Consultation; leadership roles in other relevant bodies.
3. Professional interests	Authorship of evidence under review; expert group membership; applications for roles within the Consultation.
4. Personal interests	Close relationships with people directly affected by Steering Committee decisions.
5. Other relevant interests	
Declaration	I confirm that this declaration is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I will update it promptly if my interests change. I consent to a summary of the general nature of my declared interests being published if I am appointed.
Signature and date	

Annex B: Terms and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
Bureau	The Bureau of the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy, which acts on behalf of the Subcommittee between its plenary meetings (paragraph 5.2).
Chatham House Rule	A rule under which participants may use information received in a meeting, but may not reveal the identity or affiliation of the speaker. It is applied to particular meetings or agenda items, not to the Steering Committee's discussions as a whole (paragraph 17.4).
Consensus	General agreement with no formal objection maintained by any member taking part in the decision. It is not the same as unanimity (paragraph 15.2).
Consultation	The International Consultation on the Future of Global Geodesy.
Consultation Plan	The plan, drafted by the UN-GGCE, refined and finalised by the Steering Committee and the UN-GGCE, and endorsed by the Subcommittee on Geodesy, that sets out the detailed work programme, engagement methods, resources, schedule, budget, quality controls and reporting arrangements of the Consultation.
Developed and developing countries	For the balance target and co-chair arrangements in these Terms of Reference (paragraphs 7.7, 7.8 and 12.1), a developed country is a country classified as a developed economy in the country classification of the most recent World Economic Situation and Prospects report of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs at the time of selection. All other countries, including those classified as economies in transition, are developing countries. Nominees and members are counted under the country of their nationality.
Expert groups	Groups, yet to be formed, that provide technical, legal and policy input on the technical and governance requirements of the Consultation.
Formal objection	A reasoned statement by a member that a proposal cannot proceed, which blocks consensus until resolved (paragraph 15.4).
Global geodesy supply chain	The infrastructure, data, organisations, people, processes and services, contributed by many countries and organisations, that together create global geodetic products.
IAG	International Association of Geodesy.
Least developed countries and small island developing States	Countries on the respective United Nations lists at the time of selection (paragraph 7.7).
Leave of absence	An agreed period during which a member does not take part in the Steering Committee's work. No one stands in for the member, because members serve in a personal capacity (paragraph 10.3).
Observer	A person invited by the co-chairs to attend a Steering Committee meeting or agenda item. Observers do not take part in reaching consensus and are not counted for quorum (paragraph 17.3).
Personal capacity	Serving on the Steering Committee as an individual, not as a representative of a country, region, organisation or company. Members do not take instructions from their government or employer on Steering Committee matters, and their positions commit no one but themselves (paragraph 7.1).
Perspectives matrix	The indicative list of stakeholder groups whose perspectives the Steering Committee needs, with the indicative number of members bringing each perspective (Table 3).
Plenary	A meeting of the full UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy, as distinct from a meeting of its Bureau (paragraph 5.2).

Term	Meaning
Reservation	A position in which a member agrees to a proposal but asks for a concern about it to be recorded. It does not block consensus (paragraph 15.2).
Secretariat	The UN Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE), which manages and implements the Consultation on behalf of the Subcommittee on Geodesy. In these Terms of Reference, the Secretariat supports the Steering Committee by organising meetings, preparing and circulating documents, keeping records of decisions, and coordinating the Consultation's day-to-day operations. The Secretariat has no decision-making role on the Steering Committee.
Self-nomination	Nominating oneself for membership of the Steering Committee. No letter of support from a government, organisation or company is required (paragraph 9.2).
Stakeholder group	A community with a direct interest in global geodesy, such as national governments in a region, the scientific community or the private sector (Table 3). Members bring the perspective of a stakeholder group but do not represent it (paragraph 7.1).
Stand aside	A position in which a member does not support a proposal but does not prevent the Steering Committee from proceeding (paragraphs 15.2 and 15.5).
Startup Team	The group of approximately ten people established by the Bureau to initiate the Consultation and form the Steering Committee.
UN-GGCE	United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence, which manages the Consultation and provides the Steering Committee's Secretariat.
UN-GGIM	United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.
Written procedure	A way of reaching a decision between meetings by email, in which a proposal is agreed if no formal objection is received by the deadline (paragraph 15.8).