

Are You Being Served?

The GSDI Association is preparing a 2015-2020 Strategy and Strategic Plan for presentation to the GSDI Board in October. In a fast-changing world that is ever-more dependent upon geoinformation and geomatics technology, we realised that it was time to review the Association's fitness for purpose, aims, mission and activities to ensure that we remain relevant to current and future members, both organisations and individuals.

The strategy seeks to reaffirm the Association as a trusted, single source of reliable, open-access information on SDI challenges and implementation best practices from around the globe, while delivering practical member benefits. We are not alone in re-evaluating our strategy and position in the geo world and the role we can play in assisting governments and organisations in regard to SDI by knowledge sharing, while continuing to promote SDI research via our GSDI World Conferences, held since 1996.

Governments are devoting considerable resources to producing harmonised and interoperable geoinformation across a wide range of themes that reach far beyond the usual 'underpinning' themes identified in the early years of SDI development. A major challenge for the Association is extending its knowledge base to support not only those in the geo world who are involved directly in SDI implementation and maintenance, but also the myriad users of geo or location-based information globally. But who will use this information – and how? After all, information has value only when it is used.

Reaching out to SDI users

So how can the GSDI Association extend its reach, delivering value to members and to society? There are several avenues to explore within the spirit of the new strategy, including:

- Actively participating in Open Data programmes around the world, given that government geoinformation is 'government data' first, and 'geo' second, where that data includes a location attribute. Numerous studies have been completed on the value of Open Data to governments, businesses and civil society, yet many challenges remain to be resolved in regard to implementing Open Data principles within the framework of official SDI implementations and regulations.
- Meeting the challenges and opportunities presented by crowdsourcing and VGI in developing user-derived SDI components, in support of standards-based, 'official' government SDI development.
- Closer co-operation with allied organisations involved in different SDI sectors, such as the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) on continued development of marine SDI globally.

If we are to deliver on our vision, purpose and mission, then the GSDI Strategy and Strategic Plan requires support from the whole membership. Meanwhile, we strive to deliver real value to our fee-paying members. Watch this space!

Learn more about the GSDI Association and how to participate here: <http://www.gsdi.org/joinGSDI>

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