



STATUTE OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR GEOSPATIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE AMERICAS (PC-IDEA)

Chapter I General Aspects

Article 1. Name of the Committee

These statutes regulate the operation of the Permanent Committee for Geospatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas, hereinafter also referred to as the Permanent Committee or PC-IDEA.

Article 2. Mandate

The Permanent Committee has been established pursuant to Resolution No. 3 of the Sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, UNRCCA, held in New York from June 2 to 6, 1997. The Permanent Committee shall operate under the purview of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas and submit its recommendations and respective activity reports to them.

Article 3. Definitions

I. The Geospatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas (IDEA, from its Spanish acronym) is the set of geospatial data, policies, standards, technologies and resources required for the effective production, collection, management, access, distribution, sharing and use of geospatial data among member countries of the Permanent Committee.

II. Geospatial data or information: Information expressed basically through cartography and associated databases. This information has an implicit (population of a census area, cadastral reference, etc.) or explicit (coordinates obtained from GPS data, etc.) position, which makes it possible to locate, measure and relate data on the territory.

III. Geospatial information metadata: The set of information describing the data, including how they were obtained and produced, their quality and storage structure, and what is essential to document, integrate and display them, and how they may be searched and explored.



IV. Interoperability: Condition whereby different systems can share processes or data. In the context of geospatial information and geographic information systems, the accuracy of overlays and cross-referencing of associated alphanumeric information are crucial for analysis and decision making.

V. Standard: Document established by consensus and approved by a recognized institution, providing, for a common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, so as to obtain the optimum degree of order in a particular theme.

Article 4. General Purpose

To maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits derived from the use of geospatial information, through knowledge and exchange of experiences and technologies between the countries, based on common standards which would allow the establishment of the Geospatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas.

This purpose and the corresponding objectives of the Permanent Committee shall be in accordance with the principles of:

1. Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.
2. The considerations from the Johannesburg Summit in 2003.
3. The resolution on global management of geographic information adopted at the Regional Asia–Pacific Conference in October 2009.

Article 5. Specific Objectives

The Permanent Committee shall work towards the fulfillment of the following specific objectives:

1. To establish and coordinate policies and technical standards for the development of geospatial data infrastructure for the Americas.
2. To give priority to promoting the establishment and development of national geospatial data infrastructure in each member country of the



Permanent Committee, in accordance with Resolution No. 4 of the Sixth UNRCCA, and seek to integrate them.

3. To encourage the sharing of geospatial information among all member countries in the Americas, while respecting their autonomy and their national laws and policies.
4. To promote the interoperability of information and systems among member countries, through the use of standards.
5. To stimulate cooperation, research, complementation and sharing of experience in areas of knowledge related to geospatial data infrastructure (GDI).
6. To advise in the drafting of guidelines and strategies to support PC-IDEA member countries in developing geospatial information, considering the individual needs of each country.
7. To set priorities for information sharing, considering the regulatory framework of each member country.
8. To promote GDI training activities and technology transfer.

Article 6. Cooperation

The Permanent Committee shall implement the necessary mechanisms to facilitate cooperation with other regional and international forums, agencies and organizations with responsibility in this field.

Chapter II

The Permanent Committee

Article 7. Membership and Representation

1. Members of the Permanent Committee shall be countries in the Americas that express their willingness to be part of PC-IDEA, represented by the heads of the official national agencies in charge of geospatial data management or their designated representatives. If such agencies do not exist, representation may be exercised by the directors of the competent agencies or institutions, or the national



entities responsible for the environment, sustainable development, land-use planning, territorial administration or their equivalent.

2. Besides the representatives identified above, each country shall appoint a substitute to represent the regular members when necessary, for the purposes of attending meetings; these substitutes must have decision-making capacity.

Article 8. Duties of Members

1. The regular or substitute members, as the case may be, shall attend meetings and take the necessary action to develop and promote the general and specific objectives of the Permanent Committee; with the approval of the President, they may represent the Permanent Committee for specific duties entrusted to them.
2. Members of PC-IDEA shall keep the Executive Secretariat informed, at least once a year, on the progress made and related activities of their national GDI.

Article 9. Term and Replacement of Members

If any regular or substitute member of the Permanent Committee has permanently vacated his/her position, the member country shall propose a replacement in accordance with article 7.

Article 10. Executive Board

1. The Permanent Committee shall elect from among its members an Executive Board consisting of:
 - a. A President
 - b. A Vice President
 - c. An Executive Secretary and
 - d. Four Vocal members
2. Each of these Vocal members shall preferably represent one of the four American subregions, namely North America, Central America, the Caribbean Islands and South America, with a view to seeking regional balance.



3. The President, Vice President, Executive Secretary and Vocal members of the Executive Board shall be elected at meetings of the Permanent Committee held in conjunction with the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas.
4. The term of the Executive Board shall be the period between the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas and each position shall be elected with a vote of at least fifty percent plus one of the members of the Permanent Committee present.
5. The President, Vice President and Executive Secretary may be re-elected, but may not occupy that position for more than two consecutive terms. After an interval of one or more terms, they can be elected again.
6. If the President of the Executive Board is absent temporarily or permanently, the Vice President shall act in that capacity until the temporary vacancy ends; if the vacancy is permanent, the Vice President shall act as President until the next United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas.
7. If the position of Vice President or Executive Secretary is vacant between meetings of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas, the Executive Board may nominate a member of the Board to act in the corresponding capacity until the next meeting of the Permanent Committee.
8. If any other vacancy occurs in the Executive Board in the period between United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas, the Executive Board shall submit to the consideration of the Permanent Committee a member from the same nation to occupy the vacancy until the next UNRCCA, after consulting the country concerned. If there is no interest, the Executive Board shall request nominations from other member countries and the Permanent Committee may elect the new member of the Executive Board as the replacement to occupy the vacancy until the next UNRCCA.

Article 11. Duties and Powers of the Executive Board:

1. To plan, develop and coordinate the work program of the Permanent Committee and to submit it for consideration.



2. To monitor the work programs of the Permanent Committee and Working Groups.
3. To coordinate and direct the activities which the Permanent Committee must undertake pursuant to decisions of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas.
4. To submit to the United Nations a report on the achievements since the last United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, particularly with respect to monitoring the resolutions adopted for which PC-IDEA is responsible.
5. To propose to the Permanent Committee, at the request of member countries, issues of interest for the Geospatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas.
6. To ask the Vocal members of the Permanent Committee for the national reports of member countries at least eight weeks before the Permanent Committee meets.
7. To manage and coordinate:
 - (a) the production of publications, including directories, news bulletins, training and promotional material, and management of the Internet site.
 - (b) the distribution of documents to member countries of the Permanent Committee and to organizations concerned.
8. To manage and coordinate with regional and international agencies proposals to finance PC-IDEA's operations, and the initiatives, programs and projects related to IDEA and the development of national infrastructure in member countries.
9. To prepare by December a yearly summary with a list of activities and submit it to the Permanent Committee for consideration.
10. To take advantage of opportunities to make presentations to related organizations, such as the International Organization for Standardization, Technical Committee 211 (ISO/TC211), the International Steering Committee for Global Mapping (ISCGM) and Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI), and to hold related events



on the results and progress of IDEA, independently of events presented by members of the Permanent Committee.

Article 12. Duties and Powers of the President

1. To represent the Permanent Committee and its Executive Board.
2. To direct the general activities of PC-IDEA under these Statutes and the activities which the Permanent Committee may entrust to him/her at its meetings.
3. To call meetings of the Permanent Committee, instructing the Executive Secretary for this purpose.
4. To chair meetings of the Permanent Committee and the Executive Board.
5. The President may not vote at meetings of the Permanent Committee but may designate a member of his/her delegation to vote in his/her place.
6. To exercise the casting vote in case of a tied vote of the Permanent Committee or the Executive Board.
7. To open and close each meeting of the Permanent Committee and the Executive Board, to direct discussion at such meetings, to rule on points of order and to exercise control over the meetings.
8. To ensure that applicable legal provisions are enforced at meetings, to give the right to speak, to put issues to a vote and to announce decisions.
9. To arrange with the pertinent regional and international organizations the financing required for the proper operation of the Permanent Committee, its Executive Board and Working Groups.
10. To prepare and submit the corresponding reports as President at meetings of the Permanent Committee, particularly to the UNRCCA.



Article 13. Duties and Powers of the Vice President

1. To replace the President during his/her temporary or permanent absence, pursuant to article 10(6) hereof.
2. When acting as President, the Vice President exercises all the duties and powers of the President.
3. To assist and support the President in a coordinated manner with the activities to which article 12(10) hereof refers.
4. Such activities as may be assigned to him/her by the Executive Board, provided that they are directly related to the objectives of PC-IDEA.

Article 14. Duties and Powers of the Executive Secretary

1. To prepare the minutes of meetings and submit them to the Executive Board or the Permanent Committee for consideration as required.
2. To call meetings pursuant hereto.
3. To verify the legal quorum at meetings of the Executive Board and of PC-IDEA.
4. To count the votes and report the results to the President.
5. To prepare and compile, with the approval of the President, the documentation to be sent to the United Nations.
6. To administer PC-IDEA's Web site and keep it operational.
7. To post resolutions of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas on the Web site, along with a brief status update on them.
8. To keep PC-IDEA's directories up to date.
9. To implement the communication actions entrusted to him/her by the President of the Executive Board.
10. To organize the documentation of the Executive Board and PC-IDEA.



11. To receive and, when necessary, forward the documentation and communications sent by global and regional organizations, such as GSDI, ISCGM and the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH).
12. To liaise between PC-IDEA and ISO/TC211.
13. To attend all meetings of PC-IDEA and the Executive Board.

If the Executive Secretary is absent, the Executive Board may appoint a replacement from the Board to act in this capacity at any meeting.
14. To prepare and distribute agendas for meetings of the Executive Board and PC-IDEA.
15. To carry out the actions entrusted to him/her by the Executive Board with respect to Working Groups, and especially to monitor their activities and programs.
16. To keep a record of the progress of member countries in implementing national GDI.
17. Such other activities as the Executive Board may entrust to him/her, provided that they are directly related to the objectives of PC-IDEA.

Article 15. Duties and Powers of the Vocal members

1. To attend all meetings of the Executive Board and the Permanent Committee to which they have been invited.
2. To advise, coordinate and follow up activities related to PC-IDEA in the countries which they represent in the region.
3. To prepare or obtain the relevant reports and submit them to the Executive Board for consideration.

Article 16. Meetings and Operation of the Executive Board

1. The Executive Board shall ordinarily meet at least once a year, at the date and place determined by a majority of its members.



This meeting shall be official and valid if at least fifty percent plus one of its members are present.

2. The President, Vice President, Executive Secretary and at least one of the Vocal members shall attend these meetings.
3. The Executive Board shall operate mainly by e-mail, the PC-IDEA Web site forum and, in any case, using the available information and communication technologies.
4. The Executive Board may hold special meetings as required, on the request of at least two of its members; quorum for such meetings is half the members plus one.
5. The request for a special meeting shall be sent in writing to the Executive Board; those requesting the meeting shall specify the reasons and propose a place and date.
6. Meetings of the Executive Board shall be called by the President or by the Executive Secretary on instructions from the President; the Executive Secretary shall send notice of the proposed meeting at least eight weeks in advance.
7. The notice shall include the purpose, place, date and proposed agenda of the meeting.

Article 17. Working Groups

1. Working groups shall be established when required by the Executive Board, preferably taking into account the resolutions of the most recent United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas; the Executive Board will submit these working groups to the Permanent Committee for approval, so that its purposes can be achieved.
2. The Working Groups will carry out the projects or tasks entrusted by the Permanent Committee in areas of interest to it.

The Working Groups shall consist of a coordinator in charge of the group and appointed by the Executive Board, and a number of specialist collaborators in the field of concern to the Working Group,



who will be appointed by the Executive Board at the request of the coordinator of the Working Group.

3. The Working Groups shall report at least once a year to the Permanent Committee on the progress of their activities, together with the appropriate recommendations for its consideration, except when more frequent intervals related to the achievement of specific goals are established.
4. The coordinators of the Working Groups shall appoint persons responsible for key activities in their work program, who shall report on their activities and results.
5. The coordinators shall prepare the work plan for their group, specifying its aims, objectives and timetable. The work plan shall include viable objectives and achievable goals with reasonable time frames.
6. If Working Groups have been established, all meetings of the Permanent Committee shall include an item on the Agenda to report on the progress and achievements of these groups.
7. The rules and procedures set for the Committee shall also apply to the Working Groups.

Article 18. Duties and Powers of Coordinators of Working Groups

1. To coordinate the Working Groups established by the Executive Board.
2. To organize the Working Groups, determine their operating programs and assign activities to them.
3. To monitor the activities of the Working Groups for which they are responsible and to prepare or obtain the relevant reports and submit them through the Executive Secretary to the Executive Board for consideration.
4. To coordinate the preparation of reports from Working Groups that must be presented at meetings of the Permanent Committee.
5. Such other tasks as the Executive Board may entrust to them, provided that they are directly related to the objectives of PC-IDEA.



Chapter III Meetings of the Permanent Committee

Article 19. Holding of Meetings

1. The Permanent Committee shall meet in person at least once a year. Every year that a United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference is held, the Committee shall meet concurrently on the same date and in the same place.
2. Meetings of the Permanent Committee may be concurrent with other meetings on related topics when deemed appropriate and it is possible to coordinate them with the authorities organizing those meetings.
3. Meetings of PC-IDEA will be private, but guests may be invited to them in accordance with article 21.
4. Attendance may include delegations from member countries, headed by the regular member of the Committee or his/her substitute.
5. The agenda for meetings of the Permanent Committee shall be prepared by the Executive Board and approved by the Permanent Committee.
6. These meetings shall take the form of a conference, with presentations from members and guests and discussion of the Committee's business concerning programs and reports.
7. When PC-IDEA meetings are held jointly with the UNRCCA, the Executive Board shall coordinate administrative support with the United Nations.
8. At other meetings, administrative support, including translation service when possible, will be provided by the host country.
9. Some sessions of United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas could be held as part of a meeting of the Permanent Committee, if related to the specific subject matter of the Committee.
10. At least the following items shall be on the agenda of every meeting of the Committee:



- (a) Report from the Executive Board on achievements since the last meeting of the Committee and work program for the next period. If meetings are held in conjunction with the UNRCCA, the report refers to the period since the last UNRCCA and the work program shall cover the next four years.
- (b) Technical presentations from members and guests
- (c) National reports from participating countries
- (d) Reports from the Working Groups that have been formed
- (e) Report from the Executive Secretary on funds
- (f) Progress on and results of "action resolutions" arising from resolutions of the previous UNRCCA.

11. If necessary, meetings of PC-IDEA may exceptionally be held using information technologies such as teleconferences, video-conferences or other similar means.

Article 20. Calling Meetings of the Permanent Committee

Meetings of the Permanent Committee shall be called directly by the President or by the Executive Secretary on instructions from the President; the Executive Secretary shall send notice of the proposed meeting at least four months in advance.

The notice shall include the purpose, place and date of the meeting.

Article 21. Advisers and Observers at Meetings

The Executive Board and the Permanent Committee, through the Board, may invite to meetings of the Permanent Committee other persons as advisers, experts, technicians, specialists and/or observers if they are considered to be of interest for the pursuit of its duties and purposes.

These guests may express their opinions but are not entitled to vote. Such guests may make presentations on subjects of interest related to geospatial data infrastructure, provided they can be included in the agenda.



Chapter IV Finance and Expenses

Article 22. Financial Management

1. The Permanent Committee is a non-profit organization but needs operating funds. Therefore, the Executive Board or members of the Permanent Committee may seek financing from sponsors and/or sources of funding and international cooperation in order to obtain the facilities and financial support required.

a. PC-IDEA members will promote proposals for national projects to potential sources of funding for non-administrative activities. The terms and conditions will be established with funding institutions in accordance with the regulatory framework of each country. If necessary, PC-IDEA, through the Executive Board, may issue a document in support of the project, provided that it complies with the objectives of PC-IDEA.

b. If PC-IDEA develops a multinational project proposal, the terms and conditions must be approved by the Executive Board of PC-IDEA.

(i) The Executive Board will supervise these projects and will be responsible for final budget allocations and for any reallocations.

(ii) The Executive Board may at any time ask project officers for reports on the (financial and non-financial) status of these projects.

Article 23. Management of Funds

The Executive Board, through the Executive Secretary, shall be responsible for managing the funds which the Permanent Committee may obtain. This activity refers exclusively to managing expenses with the funding agencies or institutions; however, the Executive Board does not necessarily have to manage such funds, make payments or issue monetary documents directly.

Article 24. Expenses of Committee Members

1. The internal administrative and logistical expenses of meetings of the Permanent Committee and the Executive Board shall be borne by the host country.



2. The administrative expenses of the Permanent Committee and the Executive Board in their respective offices shall be met by the members.
3. Members shall preferably cover the costs of international travel and other expenses required to participate in meetings of the Permanent Committee, the Executive Board and Working Groups.
4. Guests attending meetings of the Permanent Committee as advisers, experts, technicians, specialists and/or observers shall cover the costs of transportation and other associated costs.

Chapter V Amendment and Validity of the Statutes

Article 25. Amendment of the Statutes

1. The Statutes may be modified or amended with the approval of two thirds of the votes of members of the Committee.
2. Any proposal to amend the Statutes shall be sent to the Executive Board through the Executive Secretary.
3. The proposed amendment shall be signed and specify the part(s) to be amended, with the reasons and justification.
4. The Executive Secretary shall send the proposal to members of the Executive Board and the Permanent Committee for their information.

Article 26. Validity of the Statutes

The Statutes and amendments, if any, shall take effect from the date on which they are approved.



Chapter VI Operational Aspects

Article 27. Working Languages

1. The working languages at meetings of the Permanent Committee and the Executive Board shall be Spanish, Portuguese and English. Whenever possible, the host country shall provide simultaneous translation services for Spanish, Portuguese and English.
2. If a guest, as specified in article 21, speaks in a language other than Spanish, Portuguese or English, the delegation from his/her country shall provide translation into at least one of the official languages, for both oral and written presentations.

Article 28. Domicile

The Permanent Committee and the Executive Board shall be based in the nation represented by the President, unless the Permanent Committee decides otherwise.

Chapter VII Procedural Aspects in Committee Meetings

Article 29. Legal Quorum for PC-IDEA Meetings

The quorum for meetings of the Permanent Committee shall be at least fifty percent of the members plus one.

Article 30. List of Speakers

The President, through the Secretary, shall control the list of speakers, propose to the Permanent Committee when to close the list or debate on the item under discussion and call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.



Article 31. Permission to Address the Committee

No member may address the Permanent Committee without having first obtained permission from the President, who shall call upon speakers in the order required. These speakers shall take no more than five minutes to make their presentations.

Article 32. Voting

1. Two kinds of voting shall be used: direct and indirect.

Direct voting is the one in which members are physically present at the meetings.

Indirect voting is the one done remotely by fax, video-conference, regular mail, e-mail or the PC-IDEA Web site and may be used for any matter to be decided by the Permanent Committee. Both types of voting shall be equally valid.

2. The Permanent Committee must make its best efforts so that decisions at its meetings are reached by consensus.
3. Each country participating in the Committee shall have only one vote; decisions of the Committee shall be taken by a simple majority of the members present and voting, except for the cases indicated herein.
4. At meetings of the Permanent Committee, voting shall be by show of hands or recorded vote, as requested by the members. The Executive Secretary shall count the votes and report the results to the President immediately, who shall announce them to the members present.
5. If a vote is equally divided among three or more options, a second vote shall be taken with the two options that obtained the most votes.
6. If a vote on a matter other than an election is equally divided, the President may cast the deciding vote. If the President abstains, the matter under discussion shall be considered to have been defeated.
7. In case of distance voting, the approval of at least fifty percent plus one of current members of the Committee shall be required and the Executive Secretary shall take the necessary action to inform the Committee as soon as possible of the decisions made.



Article 33. Elections of the Permanent Committee

1. At meetings of the Permanent Committee where authorities are to be elected, the President shall ask members present to nominate candidates for the various positions; the Executive Secretary shall record the nominations once they have been seconded by another member. In every case, efforts shall be made to have no more than four members nominated.
2. Next, the President shall conduct the election with the assistance of the Executive Secretary and shall make the final announcement of the results, after which those elected shall immediately take their positions.
3. To be elected, the candidate shall obtain a vote from at least fifty percent plus one of the members present who constitute a quorum.
4. If in the election process none of the candidates obtains the required majority in the first round, a second vote shall be taken, restricted to the two candidates who obtained the most votes in the first round.

Chapter VIII

Dissolution of the Permanent Committee

Article 34. Decision and Notification

The Permanent Committee may be dissolved by a vote of two thirds of its members at a meeting of the Committee. The United Nations shall be notified of this decision immediately, before the next UNRCCA.

Article 35. Settlement

If the Permanent Committee is dissolved, any funds remaining after settling all its liabilities and commitments will be returned to the source(s) of funding and, if applicable, transferred to the member countries in the manner and amounts approved by the Executive Board.