

AGI Glgateway™ Advisory Group Meeting

16th February 2005, 10:30am

AGI Offices, Block C, 4th Floor, Morelands, 5-23 Old Street, London, EV1V 9HL

MINUTES

Attendees

Lars Calvert (LC)	ODPM
Peter Capell (PC)	AGI
Bruce Gittings (BG)	University of Edinburgh
Jamie Justham (JJ)	Dotted Eyes
Robert Mann (RM)	AGI - <i>Chair</i>
Louise Scofield (LS)	AGI
Theresa Stabb (TS)	AGI - <i>Secretary</i>
Robert Turner (RT)	AGI
Rob Walker (RW)	GI Standards Committee

Apologies

Peat Allan	Ordnance Survey
Bob Barr	Manchester University
Tony Black	Intelligent Addressing
Jerry Giles	British Geological Survey
Geoff May	Ordnance Survey
Alan Smith	Office for National Statistics
Carol Hrynkiewicz	ODPM

1. Review of Minutes and Actions from last meeting

Actions from the meeting held on 17 November were reviewed and the following points were noted:

MetaGenie/‘Gateway in a Box’

RT stated that the requirements for the new version of MetaGenie have gone to **RT** Snowflake. These have been agreed and work has been started. **COMPLETED**

Mark Linehan to talk to Jonathan Rhind at the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit regarding the Housing Market Renewal and Pathfinders using the MetaGenie facility. LC stated that he was willing to take this on. LC contacted TS on **LC,TS** 17/02/05 and suggested that the action should be closed as Jonathan could not remember what this was about. **RT** agreed that the action should be closed. **RT** **CLOSED.**

GI Panel

Mark Linehan to discuss with Peter Capell the issue of a GI Panel.

RM stated that no announcement had been made concerning the GI Panel and that Yvette Cooper would in due course be initiating this. LC added that membership was currently under consideration and that the minister wants additions to be made. **RM** stated that a GI Panel should be a mechanism to promote GIGateway and that perhaps the AGI could write to the minister regarding this delay and express concern. LC replied that he was aware of the need to make things happen and would let **RM** know in the weeks to come if this would be a useful approach. **RM** stated that he felt encouraged that the minister is showing a direct interest in this matter but was worried that some slippage may occur. **ONGOING**

Web statistics

RT to e-mail the top 50 URL's to the group. **COMPLETED**

MetaGenie downloads

Mark Linehan had a meeting with Neil Calvert at ESRI on Monday 22nd November regarding this possibility of linking between vendors own metadata systems and MetaGenie.

LS stated that she would contact Mark Linehan regarding the outcome of this meeting. **ONGOING**

JJ added that there are other significant names to research in the area of software vendors and it was agreed that **RM** and **LS** could invite similar discussions with key vendors.

ACTION: LS to speak to Mark Linehan regarding this.

Membership of the Advisory Group

ACTION: Mark Linehan to consult Tony Black and to invite representatives from these organisations on to the Advisory Group. **COMPLETED**

LS stated that Carol Hryniewicz from ODPM had been invited to attend along with LC.

NIMSA consultation

ACTION: Mark Linehan to put together a list of bullet points that the group can respond to. This should be e-mailed to the group by Monday 22nd November at the latest. **COMPLETED**

Response to Peter Capell's letter

ACTION: Mark Linehan to draft a response to PC's letter and to copy this to the Advisory Group. He added that an invitation will be included to meet with the group. **COMPLETED**

It was noted that an additional meeting took place regarding this.

ACTION: LS to find out if Mark Linehan wrote a letter regarding the Scottish strategy

2. Membership of the Advisory Group

LS stated that in the last Quarter of 2004 a discussion took place regarding those members who could not attend two or more Advisory Group meetings. These members would be asked to reconfirm their commitment to the group. As Jerry Giles has not attended a meeting since October 2003 LS contacted him regarding this matter and reported that Jerry had agreed that he was too busy. Although he could not suggest a replacement Jerry stated that he would discuss the issue of a possible volunteer at the next NERC meeting on 3rd March. It was later suggested by RM that he may meet with Jerry Giles to discuss this matter. RM

BG then suggested that Hugh Baron in Edinburgh may be a possibility. BG JJ agreed that it would be helpful to look for a replacement. However he also expressed concern that BGS operates a very specific kind of node which acts as a model for the kind of nodes that Glgateway needs. JJ therefore felt that representation from BGS is very important. JJ

PC added that he was worried that support within BGS appeared to be so fragile. PC RW stated that he knew of someone else within BGS - whose name he could not recall – that may be suitable. RW added that he would make enquiries RW

ACTION: RW to inform LS of the details of a suitable replacement for Jerry from within BGS.

BG noted that a junior member of staff would be appropriate and that an expert is not necessary. He added that BGS could be used to make a strong business case and that perhaps this opportunity had not yet been taken up fully. BG

RT added that BGS represented a good example of the benefit and ease of contributing to Glgateway. RT

3. Draft Operating Plan for 2005-2006

LS stated that Geoff May had completed the first draft which was very helpful. She then worked on the second draft with Mark Linehan. LS added that after the meeting with Dave Lovell and Geoff May, the objectives were broadly agreed but that the budget still remained to be finalised. LS added that a delay in the process has occurred over the issue of time recording but that objectives will remain the same. LS

Time recording

RM stated that he had discussed the budget with Geoff May and Dave Lovell on 15/02/05 in Southampton where the issue of time recording had been raised. RM stated that he was concerned that this time recording will be not productive and that some questions remained concerning the method. RM

LS added that she had approached Geoff May regarding this matter but had received no reply as yet, though a meeting is scheduled for 25/02/03. LS

RM told the group that he expects this issue to be finalised at the meeting on the 25th. RM

LC stated that he would speak with Geoff May after the meeting regarding this and suggested that time recording could start the following week on a half-hourly basis as a starting point for discussion. LC

RM agreed that this was an excellent suggestion. RM

Targets

JJ told the group that it would be important to focus on quantifiable outcomes as well as the budget. He then asked the team about their level of confidence in achieving these goals and stressed the importance of measuring the correct things. JJ

LS stated that there has been no formal agreement of targets. She added that in terms of number of core data sets to be added (see Key Performance Targets table) these should set a challenging but realistic target. LS

BG confirmed the following goals: BG

1. Identifying core data sets
2. Deleting old data
3. Identifying those responsible for the upkeep of the data
4. Ensuring that records are continually updated

BG felt that these goals should be achievable.

RW asked the group if they were confident of getting support from the organisations concerned, as he felt that this may be problematic. RW

BG replied that if they are nationally important core data sets this should not be a problem. PC noted that in order to get a minimum of 12, there was a need to aim much higher. BG
PC

JJ stated that, with reference to the quantifiable business benefit statement generated by users (in the Key Performance Targets table) any further opportunity to close the feedback 'loop' for users would be welcome. He urged the need to proactively invite a rating of the service and noted that although this would be a brave move, it may be a necessity over the next 12 months. JJ

User survey results

LS replied that ratings of the service had taken place to an extent with the user survey. LS noted that over 95% of users said they would use the service again and that the most popular area on the site is the information pages with 61% of users viewing these pages. 43% of users visit primarily to use the Data Locator. LS stated that the results from Survey Monkey will be pulled together to produce a report. She added that the survey highlighted fairly regular use with 11% of visitors accessing the site on a daily or weekly basis and 38% on a monthly basis. LS

LC was concerned to find out what exactly the number of visits translates into and LS added that most people, after visiting the site, did not go on to retrieve data. LC
LS

ACTION: LS to compile a report from these results and send it to the group.

Identifying users

BG then raised the issue of logging on to use the site as well as rating the value of records. BG suggested that users could click a box in order to rate the records and that this could, in turn, compile a ratings system for users. BG

LS noted that it is a provision in Quarters 3 and 4 to move towards an appreciation of users. She suggested that perhaps a KPR was needed to tie this down. LS

RW asked if the survey allowed the identification of users willing to contribute data as such identification has been a particular problem. LS confirmed that some potential contributors had been identified. RW
LS

RM expressed concern that it would be hard to identify users without asking them to register. BG replied that it is difficult to analyse the web logs and suggested splitting the service, with a 'simple' search requiring no log-in while a more 'advanced' search would need details. RM BG

RM suggested that additional information could be targeted at those who logged in to the service, perhaps even linking to the newsletter. RM added that he would discuss this issue with Geoff May. RM

LS raised concerns about the time factor involved. BG suggested that a simple log-in form could contain a small number of questions which would allow the team to record and monitor users while focusing on providing 'power' users with additional benefits. LS

JJ added that this strategy could be linked in with those people who had attended training courses. JJ

BG raised the issue of a research plan to deal with the 3-5 year horizon and felt that there may be a missed opportunity for representation at the GISRUC conference. BG stressed the importance of 'spreading the message' and of thinking beyond next year for the service. BG

JJ suggested publicising some of BG's research assignments on GIGateway and BG confirmed that there are things that could be done for the GI community which would add to the future vision for GIGateway. JJ BG

Number of visits

RW noted that some Key Performance Indicators are still based on old figures. RW added that visits had been fairly steady and worried that the 100% rise projected over the next two years is not achievable. LS replied that this could perhaps be changed and that she would consult Geoff May on this. RW LS

BG suggested formulating a series of key steps to show how the number of visits could be boosted. He added that if these were completed and an increase in users did not take place, the team could be assured that they have succeeded in successfully implementing the steps and have tried their best. BG

A discussion on the sharp rise in visits for May 2004 on the Website Statistics graph followed.

PC was keen to differentiate between the aspiration for outcome and those factors that can actually be controlled. He added that although a clear need exists for targets and aspirations, these could be separated from more realistic measurements. PC

Although LC expressed some sympathy with this view, he stressed the need to question what could be done differently. LC

4. UK's key national datasets – definitive list

LS stated that she had made the initial template by compiling a list of all the INSPIRE themes which was then circulated to the group for comments. A discussion then took place regarding this list and LS expressed the urgency to finalise this matter so that the team can begin work. LS

LC noted that it was not only a case of compiling a list but also of asking how likely each organisation would be to contribute and which key themes could be filled. JJ agreed that this was a good approach and that the team could use this. LC JJ

as a starting point.

The group then spent quite some time on getting together an initial list of themes and associated organisations and datasets (see attached)

BG stressed the importance of contacting the organisations, finding out who is responsible for the data and ensuring that they maintain quality standards. BG

LS expressed concern over the debate concerning a potential supplier (rather than the number of core data sets) being counted as one new addition to the required target. LS

LC was worried that, from the perspective of an investor, this approach seemed a lot of investment for a small return. LC

RW stressed that the team would succeed if the main parts of each theme are successfully covered. RW

RM confirmed that the plan was to approach 12 data suppliers from the themes listed, provide them with a list of potential key data sets, request that they confirm or refine this list and finally ask them to commit responsibility for a number of those data sets. He stressed that the team is not committed to getting all the data sets listed from each supplier. RM

BG suggested the following:

- Asking for a letter of agreement from suppliers to confirm their continuing commitment to maintain and update their data. BG
- Recording the number of organisations approached and their response that could be forwarded to ODPM.
- Devise a mechanism for flagging up those records within the system that have recently been updated.
- E-mail suppliers to let them know if they are not updating their records on a regular basis.

5. DEFRA's plans for metadata

RM confirmed that he had attended a meeting with Phillipa Swanton and Niall Watson of DEFRA regarding this matter and that DEFRA has an internal issue of splitting their GIS from the department. RM reported that DEFRA intend to build up a metadata catalogue (SPIRE) and that a study will be carried out over the next six months. The focus will be on exactly what it will be used for, how it will be maintained, its cost etc. RM

PC reported that DEFRA had been asked if GIGateway could help in the implementation of this project. It had been stressed that any pressure to hurry on this project would not be beneficial. PC

RM also stated that the issue of continuing to use MetaGenie v.1 (rather than waiting for the update) had been raised and LS stressed that DEFRA should already be aware that a conversion tool is available. PC suggested reinforcing this. RM LS PC

RM confirmed that it would be a desirable outcome if the SPIRE project was treated as a node in the same way as BGS. RM

PC suggested asking DEFRA to be aware of connecting up with other data as part of the six month plan and of stressing the need for some degree of PC

commonality.

JJ added that it would be beneficial to build on DEFRA's willingness to talk about the project by asking them to put forward a representative for the Advisory Group. This was agreed. JJ

ACTION: RM or PC to draft a letter regarding this issue. RM,PC

6. AOB

Vacancy for Information Services Officer

RW asked for an update on the vacancy for Information Services Officer and LS told the group that applications have started to come in. She added that the closing date is 25th February. RW,LS

RM suggested that BG may have some suitable post-graduate students. RM,BG

RM also expressed a preference for candidates with a geographic background in order to ensure that the learning curve is not excessively steep. RM

JJ felt that experience was the most relevant requirement and RW added that he felt data management to be more important than geography in the selection of candidates. JJ,RW

Glgateway's future

PC moved on to suggest that the issue of the long-term situation for Glgateway should be discussed. PC

RM stated that ODPM had not been particularly forthcoming regarding this matter. He added that when asked about their intentions, ODPM had stated that any decision regarding this issue could not be expected before October. RM

PC stressed the need for a plan and noted that the Executive Group is due to meet next week and that Council is due to meet in March. PC suggested that decisions could then be made concerning whether AGI wished to continue with Glgateway. If the decision is made not to continue, PC emphasised the importance of ascertaining when the contract will be put out to tender and added that AGI could not live with the uncertainty much longer. PC urged that any tendering exercise should be put in place by July at the latest and added that although he is personally reluctant to discontinue with the contract, he is aware that Council may disagree. PC again stressed the need for clarity regarding this issue. PC

RW stated that he has asked continually about the contract over the years and that he has always been assured that any decision regarding this would be made at the start of the financial year. RW reiterated PC's view of the difficulty in attempting to plan ahead for Glgateway while such a level of uncertainty prevails. RW

PC noted that, regardless of any decision made by NIMSA, things would definitely change and added that the most likely outcome will be a direct contract with ODPM. PC

BG stated that it was very useful to push this matter and felt that discontinuation of Glgateway would be disastrous for the industry. However, BG expressed concern that if financial uncertainty is an issue, the situation could become problematic. BG

PC felt that it would be helpful if members of the Advisory Group could write to RM with views on this matter, which could then be passed on to Council. RW felt that it would be best to do this as members of the AGI rather than the Advisory Group and urged the need to assume the contract will terminate in 2006.

PC
RM,RW

ACTION: ALL to write to RM as AGI members on the uncertainty over Glgateway's future.

JJ added that it is realistic to ask ODPM to honour the one year requirement and to make any decision at the start of the financial year. JJ also stated that, as a member of the Advisory Group, he understood that any decision to end the contract would be made via Council. However, JJ added that he would personally like to fight such a decision.

JJ

The issue of Intellectual Property Rights was then discussed by the group and it was agreed that some clarification is needed concerning which particular areas IPR pertains to.

LS stated that Geoff May had suggested that the AGI solicitor would deal with this but LS noted that no provision for this is included in the budget. She suggested passing the contracts on to Ordnance Survey in order for them to deal directly with those involved and this was agreed.

LS

RM closed the meeting by thanking all those in attendance.

RM