

Infrastructure Cook Islands

# Spatial Information Management Policy

Final

## Lead Agency

The Office of the Prime Minister is the lead agency in the preparation of this policy and will oversee its formal adoption by the Cook Islands government.

Infrastructure Cook Islands is the lead agency responsible for the oversight and implementation of this policy.

Prepared for  
The Marae Moana Division of the Office of the Prime Minister

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# Cook Islands National Spatial Information Management Policy

## 2020 - 2030

### Vision

Strengthened development, management and use of quality geospatial information for decision making and planning towards the long-term sustainability of the Cook Islands social, economic and environmental development.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Cook Islands spatial information management policy is to guide the development, management and provision of quality geospatial information and services in the Cook Islands.

This includes ensuring open access to available geospatial information with appropriate information handling and protection measures in place. Geospatial information is relied upon to inform a range of decisions and activities in the Cook Islands. Geospatial data is able to provide a visual geographical context. Spatial information plays an essential role informing sound evidence-based decision making and planning. The services provided by various Cook Islands agencies contributes to the development, security and well-being of Cook Islands people, assets/resources, sectors and endeavours. It is essential to ensure that the sharing of spatial data is guided by clear protocols which support full and open sharing whilst protecting the quality and robustness of the data. This includes recognition of data owners and protection of data to ensure individuals anonymity.

### Scope

The scope of the SIM policy covers all geospatial information within the Cook Islands, the quality of data, its production, use and storage as well as the operating environment that facilitates the open access sharing of spatial information among all spatial information custodian, providers and public users.

The scope of this policy includes managing various separate and integrated spatial data layers within a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyse, manage, and present (mapping) all types of geographical data. This includes vector data with spatial component or X, Y coordinates assigned to it; and raster data such as properties, streets, trees using air photos, polygons, lines and points.

This policy also encompasses the operating environment of spatial information. Direction is provided about establishment of institutional arrangements – roles and responsibilities; appropriate information technology infrastructure – hardware, software, procurement; and, personnel capacity development – technical and management needs.

The quality of spatial information is also covered by this policy. This will ensure available data is fit for purpose, accurate, precise, relevant and current while considering data and service limitations. It will also ensure information is securely stored, managed and protected using international standards and licencing agreements.

The term spatial information is used for consistency and encompasses references to geographic data and metadata as defined in the definitions. This includes geospatial, geophysical, geodetic and marine spatial data sets.

## Horizon and Review

The horizon of the vision is ten years. An initial review will take place two years after the policy comes into effect to determine the extent to which the policy has been implemented and effective. A full review will be carried out after five years with the intent of providing evidence and recommendations for consideration in policy renewal.

## Context

As a country of 15 islands spread over nearly two million square kilometres of ocean, the Cook Islands recognises the value in developing Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Such a system will transform approaches to planning and decision making and support the development of evidence-based solutions as the use of geospatial information grows in the country.

The connection between the terrestrial and marine environments is recognised as key in bringing together the various GIS operators, agencies and individuals. Therefore, the intended audience of this policy is wide ranging. Institutions and individuals of the Cook Islands government, civil society are the private sector are included. Development partner, research and commercial interests beyond the Cook Islands jurisdiction in need of Cook Islands geographic information will also be informed by this policy.

The audience of this policy also includes those who are custodians. For example, those who are collectors, owners, producers and users of geospatial information are considered custodians. It also includes those agencies and individuals that require such information for their planning and decision-making needs. Current agencies with an interest in spatial information include:

- Cook Islands Investment Corporation
- Cook Islands National Environment Service
- Cook Islands Red Cross Society
- Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority
- Cook Islands Tourism Corporation
- Infrastructure Cook Islands
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Management - Cook Islands Statistic Office
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Marine Resources
- Ministry of Transport - Meteorological Service
- Natural Heritage Trust
- National Environment Service
- Office of the Prime Minister
  - Climate Change Cook Islands
  - Emergency Management Cook Islands
  - Information and Communications Technology Division
  - Marae Moana
  - Pa Enea Governance Division
  - Renewable Energy Development Division
- Ports Authority
- Te Ipukarea Society
- Te Korero o te Orau

The use of spatial information by the Cook Islands government was first initiated in the late 1980s. Since that time, the use of a spatial information has expanded. However the progress has been slow and fragmented. Nevertheless, GIS has been a valuable tool in the development of the Cook Islands we know today. Geospatial data will also be a valuable tool in responding to emerging demands and anticipated future. This will require collaboration among agencies through web-based services such as a geoportal to enable agencies to share, search, access, view, integrate and cooperatively maintain and use geospatial information layers from multiple sources<sup>1</sup>

To maximise the potential of GIS in the Cook Islands, there is a need for a national policy space that includes relevant regulatory framework of legislation and policies. Appropriate institutional arrangements are also necessary with suitable governance and management mechanisms to provide oversight and coordination of geospatial resources, expertise, capacity and initiatives. In doing so, it will be possible to address many of the challenges and constraints that have hampered spatial information management in the country.

### Relevant legislation and policies

This policy is informed by and responds to Cook Islands legislation and policy, including but not limited to:

- Cook Islands Official Information Act 2008
- Official Information Management Policy 2018
- Public Service Code of Conduct Policy 2014
- Risk Management Policy 2018
- Acceptable User Policy 2016
- Traditional Knowledge Act 2013
- Copyright Act 2013
- National Sustainable Development Plan 2016 - 2020
- Marae Moana Policy 2016-2020

## Principles

The following principles guide all decisions and actions relating to the environment, quality and management of Cook Islands spatial information.

### *Stewardship – Mana Tiaki*

All producers and users of GIS data are caretakers of that data and have responsibility for its authenticity, quality and protection. As caretakers this includes adhering to data and metadata standards, licencing agreements as well as governance and management arrangements of the centralised geospatial information system.

### *Availability*

Data should be openly shared in a timely manner through clearly defined and licenced access agreements. It should only be labelled sensitive or restricted with appropriate justification for personal, public and commercial sensitivities according to recognised international standards. Respect for the data source includes ensuring privacy where appropriate and correct citation.

### *Collaboration*

All relevant stakeholders (Government, non-government and external partners) shall collaborate in the decision making and action on the operating environment, quality and management of Cook Islands

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/8th-Session/documents/Standards\\_Guide\\_2018.pdf](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/8th-Session/documents/Standards_Guide_2018.pdf)

spatial information. The commitment and active participation of key stakeholders throughout the life cycle of the policy is essential.

#### *Research and Development*

It is important that spatial information is based on the best GIS technology and information available. It is also important that research and development activities undertaken must be relevant to the Cook Islands large ocean state context. This includes taking account of the key aspects such as the country's peoples, culture, environment (terrestrial and marine), development and economy as part of providing technology and information options and solutions.

## Policy objectives

There are three priority areas addressed through the objectives of this policy:

- Development of spatial Information environment
- Quality of spatial Information
- Management of spatial Information

1. Development of the spatial information environment (institutions, systems and personnel)

Issues:

The development of spatial information in Cook Islands policy and planning requires attention to institutional, system and personnel levels of capacity. Since GIS technologies and systems were first initiated in the 1980s, little progress has been made over the last 30 years to build and integrate and spatial information capacity and resources. Siloed practices have persisted with ad hoc data sharing arrangements in place. Issues includes:

### *Institution*

- Absence of a reputable agency as the policy 'home' capable of providing without bias, oversight and coordination of the policy's implementation and future trends.
- Absence of a host department to offer a centralised Geoportal despite several possible options available

### *Systems*

- The varied software currently in place across government departments varies with no agreement as to the software that should be used to manage data.
- Limited resource and technical capacity constraints across sectors including the cost of technology, equipment and training
- Keeping up to date with technology changes as they come into effect.
- No clear guidance on spatial data management methods/protocols (such as data quality assurance)

### *Personnel*

- Keeping personnel abreast of technology changes through training and education.
- The limited roles dedicated to spatial data management

Policy Objective:

To establish and maintain an integrated geospatial information operating environment

Rationale:

Sharing information is key. The development of a robust geospatial approach to support decision making and planning will require an operating environment that integrates data provider and user needs with integrated arrangements. This includes consistent technology such as agreed software, applications and geoportal capabilities for use across government. Such technology needs to be compatible with the range of user needs, applications and services offered by spatial information providers.

Policy actions:

To address the issue and objective stated, we will:

- 1.1 Determine functions, roles and responsibilities and resources required by the host agency and other agencies to operationalise geospatial information management system.
- 1.2 Establish a credible agency to be the home for the policy and host for the centralised geoportal



- 1.3 Establish appropriate data management methodology protocols<sup>2</sup>
- 1.4 Carry out and maintain Spatial Information Inventory
- 1.5 Establish and maintain Information Technology infrastructure
- 1.6 Establish and maintain an appropriate software package with relevant training and support services.

Policy Indicators:

- 1.1 Function and role analysis of lead agency completed, and costed actions implemented
- 1.1 Position descriptions include geospatial information related tasks/outputs as required
- 1.1 Spatial information outputs and work deliverables specified in government department business/strategic plans of lead agency and other government users
- 1.2 Establishment of geoportal host agency
- 1.3 Establishment and delivery of a data management methodology protocol catalogue
- 1.4 Spatial information inventory established
- 1.5 IT infrastructure service and maintenance plan established
- 1.6 Establishment of appropriate software service provider agreement

## 2. Quality of Geospatial information

Issues:

Weak operating procedures for ensuring accurate, reliable and quality geospatial information is a key concern. This includes the need to establish checking processes and standards-based data models. Before data is uploaded to a centralised data portal it is imperative that the data is assessed for accuracy and reliability to ensure the quality of data on the portal. Other concerns identified that geospatial data is fragmented among data sources and producers. Data is also non-standardised or disaggregated, making it difficult to provide spatial information services.

Policy Objective:

To ensure the availability of quality spatial information using standardised data management and quality assurance protocols.

Rationale:

The development of a robust geospatial quality data approach that ensures reliability and accuracy of data is essential to be able to share information. This includes information shared through a centralised system such as a geoportal and prior to data being uploaded. Data is considered high quality if it is fit for its intended use, operations, decision making and planning.

The quality of the data is determined by the factors such as accuracy (the discrepancy between actual and recorded attributes), precision (the degree of detail), completeness, reliability (repeatable), and currency (up to date). These factors will ensure basic data format is provided and agreed geographic datum is used with agreed data gathering techniques. This also includes supporting information owners checking for data quality. The host then re-checks the data before uploading to the geoportal.

Policies Actions:

To address the issue and objective stated, we will:

- 2.1 Establish agreed standards-based data and metadata models
- 2.2 Issue consistent and integrated definitions of geospatial information for providers and users

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<sup>2</sup> I.e.: setting out a catalogue of operating procedures

## 2.3 Prepare and implement data quality checking procedures manual

### Policy Indicators:

- 2.1 Agreed data standards
- 2.2 Agreed data definitions
- 2.3 Establishment of data quality checking procedure manual and templates

## 3. Management of Geospatial information

### Issues:

The privacy and confidentiality of information is a key concern with uncertainty in determining the sensitivity of information and levels of access to different types of information. This uncertainty has led to information which should be openly accessible, or accessible with restrictions hindering access, circulation and use of data. A lack of acknowledgement of the data sources/owners is also a concern. This hinders the sharing of information due to concerns over lack of recognition for the data work. Sharing information is also hindered by absence of clear licencing agreements which include warranties and liabilities, terms and conditions on data use. Clear guidance is also needed on the limitations of data services provided such as information transfer capability and compatibility.

Despite government policy already in place, there is also concern regarding the inconsistent approaches to security and how data is managed and stored particularly when data is filed on personal computers and/or paper-based storage facilities are moved or lost.

Procurement of GIS services is also an issue. Through better coordination, identifying and prioritising services for procurement can improve efficiencies as well facilitate cost sharing opportunities when purchasing data and/or services.

### Policy Objective:

Spatial information is appropriately managed to enhance access, use and mitigate risks to ownership, confidentiality and availability.

### Rationale:

Sharing spatial information is critical to supporting more detailed analysis, forecasting and decision making and planning. It also allows data exchanges to operate within the geospatial information community by providing anonymised and secure information. This is achieved through rigorous checking procedures, tightly controlled change or amendment rights and open access arrangements through creative commons licenses. Licensing agreements will ensure access and use of data is managed with clear terms and conditions.

### Policy Actions:

To address the issue and objective stated, we will:

- 3.1 Provide open access licensing agreements on data use setting out terms and conditions such as warranties and disclaimers, liability limits, termination.
- 3.2 Establish clear levels of classification and restriction for sensitive information
- 3.3 Include recognition of data sources as part of creative commons licensing procedures
- 3.4 Establish processes for the protection and retention of data <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Measures ensure information cannot be lost, damaged and protects against unauthorised access and manipulation of data

- 3.5 Develop and carry out communication strategy to promote integrated approach and build public awareness on use of spatial information
- 3.6 Establish strong mutually accountable institutional arrangements for sharing and use of spatial data with formal agreements

Policy Indicators:

- 3.1 and 3.2 Procedure for creative commons classification and licencing agreement is put in place and implemented
- 3.3 Procedure established in line with Official Information Management policy
- 3.4 Communication strategy established
- 3.5 Memorandum of Agreements in place between Users and Lead Agency

## Roles and responsibilities

Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI) as the approved lead agency is responsible for the implementation, review, monitoring and evaluation of this policy. This includes coordinating implementation across stakeholders and other implementing agencies.

## Implementation arrangements

Implementation will take a hub and spokes approach where multiple agencies are engaged from the outset. ICI will operationalise the centralised geoportal as part of its national oversight and coordination role of the policy. Individual agencies that collect their own data will continue to do so and share to the centralised portal according to agreed protocols and procedures. Such arrangements will be formalised through memorandums of understanding between relevant agencies.

ICI will develop a three-year costed work plan with identified roles responsibilities and timelines, budget; interim transition arrangements with assistance from the GIS Users Group as required.

## Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to provide the lead agency and stakeholders with current information on the status of policy implementation. This includes information on emerging priorities, issues and constraints in providing spatial information to stakeholders for effective planning and decision-making purposes.

It also establishes criteria in holding relevant stakeholders accountable for progress and achievement. This should also include an evaluation – feedback- action sequence (feedback loop) as a central mechanism for policy and agency development and improvement.

ICI will undertake monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities as part of Public Service six month and annual business planning and reporting requirements.

A policy review will be carried out with an initial review two years after the policy comes into effect. A full review will be carried out after five years with the intent of providing evidence and recommendations for consideration in policy renewal.

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# Acronyms and Definitions

## Acronyms

GIS	Geographic Information Systems
ICI	Infrastructure Cook Islands
SIM	Spatial Information Management

## Definitions

Agency	Refers to a government ministry, authority, department, state owned enterprise or division of a department
Capacity	The ability of people, organisations and society to manage their affairs successfully
Capacity development	The process by which individuals, groups and organisations, institutions and countries develop, enhance and organise their systems, resources and knowledge; all reflected in their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives
Data	Any record, map, chart, plan, document, report, register, archive, statistic, database, technology, technique, practice, procedure or any other such information or practice that each member shall process and submit pursuant to this policy
Data management	Refers to process of planning for data collection, carrying out data collection, analysis, storing and recording data.
Geodetic	Pertaining to the geometry of curved surfaces
Geographical Information System	A system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyse, manage and present spatial or geographic data
Geophysical	Deals with the physics of the earth and its atmosphere including oceanography, seismology volcanology and geomagnetism
Geoportal	A type of web portal used to store, find and access spatial information
Geospatial	Refers to the relative position of things on the earth's surface
Geospatial data	Identifies geographic location or features such as natural or constructed features that is stored as coordinates and topology and its data mapped
Information	Any record, map, chart, plan, document, report, register, archive, statistic, database, technology, technique, practice, procedure or any other such information or practice that each member shall process and submit pursuant to this policy

Information security	The measures taken to prevent unauthorised access or use of information
Institutional arrangements	A set of agreements on the division of the respective responsibilities of agencies involved in the collection, compilation and dissemination of data.
Marine spatial data	Information on seabed bathymetry (elevation), geology, infrastructure (e.g. wrecks, offshore installations, pipelines, cables); administrative and legal boundaries, areas of conservation and marine habitats and oceanography.
Metadata	Description about an element of data
Operating environment	Refers to a set of interrelated conditions—such as legal, bureaucratic, fiscal, informational, political, and cultural—that impact on the capacity of organisations and individuals to engage with this policy in a sustained and effective manner.
Resources	A source of supply, support or aid that can be drawn on by a person or organisation in order to function effectively
Spatial information	Geographic data and meta data including geospatial, geophysical, geodetic and marine spatial data sets
Standard	Documented agreement containing technical specifications to be used consistently as rules, guidelines or definitions stipulates to ensure its fit for purpose
User	Recipient of data or information statistics, who transforms it into knowledge needed for decision making or research
User needs	Data or metadata requirement of persons or organisations to meet a particular use or set of uses. User needs refers to the description of users and their respective needs with respect to the statistical data

## List of Key Stakeholders

This policy was prepared in consultation with a range of stakeholders. Heads of government departments were consulted along with representatives of GIS users and information providers of the Cook Islands government and other non-government providers.

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Anna Glassie	Seabed Mineral Authority	Rima Browne	Seabed Mineral Authority
Ben Ponia	Office of the Prime Minister	Rima Moeka'a	CCCI, Office of the Prime Minister
Bruce Manuela	Ministry of Justice	Roselyn Strickland	National Environment Service
Chloe Wragg	Ministry of Marine Resources	Saungaki Rasmussen	Ministry of Transport
Diane Charlie Puna	Infrastructure Cook Islands	Sieni Tiraa	Cook Islands Tourism
Diane Charlie-Puna	Infrastructure Cook Islands	Tasha Black	EMCI, Office of the Prime Minister
Dorothy Solomona	Officer of the Public Service Commissioner	Taupepa Tutakao-Tupa	EMCI, Office of the Prime Minister
Elizabeth Munro	National Environment Service	Taukea Rani	Infrastructure Cook Islands
Enua Pakitoo	Statistics Office (MFEM)	Tekura Moekaa	National Environment Service
Gandercillar Wainaqolo	Office of the Prime Minister	Timoti Tangiruaine	Office of the Prime Minister, PEARL Project
Hayley Weeks	Ridge 2 Reef National Environment Service	Travel Aueovai	Ministry of Health
Jacqui Evans	Office of the Prime Minister	Vaiapo Mataora	Infrastructure Cook Islands
John Glassie	Ports Authority		
Kai Berlick	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management		
Kate McKessar	Te Ipukarea Society		
Kevin Iro	Marae Moana		
Kura Moeka'a	National Environment Service		
Louisa Karika	National Environment Service		
Makea Pauka	Ministry of Transport		
Maria Tuoro	Office of the Prime Minister		
Marino Wichman	Ministry of Marine Resources		
Muraai Herman	Ridge to Reef Project NES		
Myra Moekaa Patai	Office of the Public Service Commissioner		
Narangi Tangaroa	Office of the Prime Minister		
Nga Puna	National Environment Service		
Ngateina Rani	REDD, Office of the Prime Minister		
Olaf Rasmussen	Cook Islands Investment Corporation & Te Korero o te Orau		
Otheniel Tangianau	Infrastructure Cook Islands		
Paul Maoate	Infrastructure Cook Islands		
Petero Okotai	Cook Islands Investment Corporation		
Puna Mamoe	Ministry of Agriculture		
Reboama Samuel	Consultant		