Minutes – First roundtable meeting - 20th January, 2017,
Hosted at Esri India User Conference, New Delhi

The first meeting of the GIS Academia Council of India (GACI or "the council") took place at Esri India User Conference in New Delhi. The meeting was attended by council members including thought leaders, teachers and researchers from the Indian academia to suggest and recommend actions/framework to address the gaps in Geospatial education in India.

The first meeting was chaired by **Mr. Rajesh C Mathur**, Advisor, Esri India along with **Prof. Michael F Goodchild**, Emeritus Professor of Geography at the University of California.

Mr. Mathur opened the meeting with thanking the members for coming forward and accepting the noble task of participating in Geospatial capacity building and highlighted the proposed goals for the council. He also highlighted the report by National Task Force on Geospatial Education by MHRD that also called out for an urgent attention to reform this area.

The council members in attendance introduced themselves and reaffirmed that such an open council is formed and be the go -to group for matters related to Geospatial education in the country.

Prof. Goodchild with his 40+ years of experience in Geospatial education shared his perspective on the current state of GIS technology related education in the US and Canada. He introduced the Body of Knowledge (Bok) for Geographic Information Science and Technologies developed by University Consortium for Geographic Information Science that is published by the Association of American Geographers, Washington, DC. He also suggested that the first edition of this BoK can be used as a reference and guide to develop a standard curricula for Geospatial education as required to address the skill needs in the country. The BoK addresses the interdisciplinary nature of GIS technologies and the research aspect.

Further discussion focused around current situation and programs on Geospatial education in the country and a possible framework and models of addressing current challenges and future needs.

Following points were noted as suggestions / recommendations by the members:

1. Academic inclusion to be redefined by:
    a) Listing the required competencies for students and teachers in Geospatial
    b) Working out the Standard curricula with latest technology tools. The curricula to be modular in structure to address the inter-disciplinary needs. It was a common agreement that subject is currently restricted with 1 or 2 disciplines and needs to be propagated to other disciplines to address capacity requirements
    c) Mechanism to assess and be accredited e.g. through professional certification
2. Deeper industry participation by way of setting up Excellence Centres with joint industry-academia partnerships. These centres are expected to:
    a) Be a nodal centre for any Geospatial showcase in their region
    b) Research engagements with focus on live issues/problems
    c) Industry participants to help keep it current with various activities including Seminar, workshops, competitions/contests etc.
    d) Act as incubation centres for young student entrepreneurs mentoring them
    e) Offer industry aligned courses either as separate programs like for continuing education or inclusive/electives as credit based courses
    f) Industry to participate in teaching faculty and students
    g) Mass skilling by way of Summer/Winter workshops for non-captive audiences
3. Council to also put recommendations to Government of India or state governments (as applicable) to provide inputs / influence policy making in the relevant areas
4. Council may maintain a Database at National level of Institutes offering Geospatial courses, Trainers and Practitioners
5. Industry to offer more Internships to UG/PG students
6. Possible Programs that institutes and industry should collaborate leading to Social Benefits
7. Participation in GIAN (initiative by MHRD) by faculty development and inclusion of GIS courses
8. To devise programs/mechanism to make Geospatial more popular to attract good quality students who today go to Comp Science and other disciplines
9. Evaluate and propose programs for early adoption in K-12 segment

Following actions were noted:

a) To finalize the structure of the council and operations including administrative and various working groups
b) To prioritize the issues / tasks from the recommendation above and assigning them to workgroups who will build, finalize and action the plans post council approvals
c) It was also decided that council will be run independently with Esri as initial sponsor to help with logistics and other administrative needs of the councils.
d) To decide the Date and place for next meeting of the council. Most attending members offered to host the council at their location/premise.

The following members attended the first roundtable meeting on 20th January, 2017:

Name	Designation	Institution
Dr. I.V. Murali Krishna	Distinguished Fellow, RCI	DRDO
Dr. Anjana Vyas	Professor- Faculty of Technology	CEPT University
Dr. Seema M Parihar	Associate Professor - Department of Geography	Kirori Mal College, Delhi University
Prof. Vinay Sehgal	Professor & Principal Scientist	ICAR - Indian Agricultural Institute
Prof. A.K Gosain	Professor-Department of Civil Engineering	IIT-Delhi
Prof. Dharmendra Gupta	Professor & Head -Department of Petroleum Engineering & Earth Sciences	UPES, Dehradun
Dr. Krishan Mohan	Dept. of Geography	Punjab University, Chandigarh
Dr. Arko Pal Goswami	Assistant Professor, Ranbir & Chitra Gupta School of Infrastructure Design & Management	IIT-Kharagpur
Dr. Bharath H Aithal	Professor	IIT-Kharagpur
Dr. A. Senthil kumar	Director	IIRS, Dehradun
Prof. Rajiv Gupta	Senior Professor- Civil Engineering	BITS-Pilani
Dr. Vinay Sinha	Associate Professor - Deppt of natural resources	TERI University, New Delhi
Dr. Ashwani Luthra	Professor	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
Dr. Dheeraj Kumar	Associate Professor- Mining Engineering	IIT(ISM), Dhanbad