EMGCP Meeting – Summer 2026

August 18, 2026 | 13:00 – 15:20 Emergency Management Geomatics Community of Practice (EMGCP)

Attendees	PS GOC Geomatics, DFO, TC, RCMP, HC, ECCC, PSPC, GAC, CCG, ESDC, DND MCE, RCN, CRA, NRCan, StatCan
Location	In-Person - GAC Facility and Online - Microsoft Teams

1. Welcome and Introduction 13:30-13:45

Presenter: Naomi Noiseux (PS GOC), Katryna Johnston and Carly Lovett (GAC)

Description
Welcome attendees in-person at the GAC Facility in Ottawa, ON. Begin the virtual meeting for those online. An address was given to the Community of Practice by Katryna Johnston, followed by a roundtable and an overview of today's meeting agenda.

1.1. Call to Order

Description

The attendance is captured by attendees inputting their name, position, team and department in the meeting chat.

2. Decentralizing GIS: Empowering Users with ArcGIS Apps 13:45-14:15

Presenter: Brigitte Hanna (GAC)

Overview of the team at GAC
- Made up of 5 dedicated positions.
- Known as the CartoVive team.
- Activated as part of the HQ – Emergency Response Team (ERT) during major global emergencies.
- Administrators of the CartoVive Platform (ArcGIS Enterprise 11.3)

Why Decentralize GIS?
- The GIS team at GAC provides maps and geographic information to different clients across the department.
    - As demand grows, relying on a centralized team for recurring requests becomes increasingly difficult to scale, especially when support is limited to business hours.
- ArcGIS apps give users direct access to geographic information and mapping tools on a 24/7 basis, which helps reduce reliance on the GIS team while providing faster access to information and increasing self-service.
- 4 different applications will be showcased in the following sections.

Operations Officer Dashboard
- Used by Operations Officers to respond to consular cases abroad on a 24/7 basis.
- Contains both local missions and supervising missions
- A feedback form has also been added for issues/feedback to be provided to the geomatics team
- A feedback dashboard was also created to track feedback in an easy to consume way
- Challenge: Critical information on Canadian missions is spread across multiple sources, slowing response times and increasing complexity for Operations Officer
- Goal: Centralize mission closures, accreditation areas, and key contacts to enable timely responses to consular cases
- Solution: A dashboard was chosen for its streamlined single-page design, enabling Operations Officers to quickly access key information through an intuitive interface tailored to non-GIS users.

- *A live demonstration of the application was provided.*

Rapid Impact Assessment Application
- Users: Watch Officers – Respond to emergencies and produce Situation Reports (SitReps) in the Emergency Watch and Response Centre (EWRC) on a 24/7 basis.
- Challenge: Emergency information is spread across multiple sources, making it difficult to quickly assess impacts and visualize events in relation to Canadian missions.
- Goal: Integrate natural disaster data and Canadian mission locations to rapidly assess potential impacts and produce visuals for Situational Reports.
- Solution: An Experience Builder was chosen for its ability to integrate multiple live data feeds, support spatial analysis, and provide highly customized workflows and printable outputs.
- There is an ability to export ROCA in Excel and another one to print maps in PDF with annotations. It is important to note that the annotations won't appear in the map legend but will be visible on the printed map.
- Instructions are available in a separate tab for users to refer to on how to use the application.

- *A live demonstration of the application was provided.*

GeoMap

- Users: Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (oMINA) and GAC staff – Staff frequently support meetings and prepare briefings products under tight timelines.
- Challenge: Staff lack an easy way to create consistent, briefing-ready maps that include the mission network and a professional print layout.
- Goal: Provide a simple solution that enables oMINA and GAC staff to independently generate professional, briefing-ready maps for ministerial products.
- Solution: An Experience Builder was chosen for its built-in print/export capabilities, support for departmental map templates, and customizable user experience.
- Lots of symbols are available for use within the draw tool/widget.
- This application provides a quick and easy way to export maps.
- One feature leveraged with this application is the use of exclusive visibility of layers within a group, ensuring that only one of the layers therein is displayed at once to maintain the legibility of the product.

- *A live demonstration of the application was provided.*

Ireland Connections Map

- Users: Embassy of Canada to Ireland, in Dublin – The Program Manager is responsible for advancing and monitoring strategic Canada-Ireland relationships and partnerships.
- Challenge: A static, hand-annotated poster map made it difficult to organize, maintain, and visualize the growing network of Canada-Ireland connections.
- Goal: Transform static map content into an engaging, interactive experience that better communicates Canada-Ireland connections.
- Solution: An Instant App was chosen for its simple, interactive presentation of Canada-Ireland connections, without the need for extensive customization or advanced functionality.

- *A live demonstration of the application was provided.*

Key Takeaways

- Gather requirements early by identifying users' key needs, priorities, and desired capabilities.
- Validate platform capabilities and limitations upfront before investing significant time in development and design.
- Be transparent about technical constraints and explore alternative solutions where possible.
- Share early prototypes and actively incorporate both positive and constructive feedback.
- Provide in-app guidance through walkthroughs, helps panels, or information windows to improve usability.
- Prioritize a clean, purposeful design that supports the map and data rather than distracting from them.

2.1. Q&A

Q: What was the name of the function used to only have one layer of a group visible at a time?

A: Exclusive Visibility.

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Q: Is CartoVive on premises?

A: Yes! It is the same credentials used by GAC employees to use the platform. They are only granted the editor role after training.

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Q: Does CartoVive have public showing?

A: Not yet.

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Q: How are you receiving all those requests from your clients from all over the world?

A: They would share it by email to the CartoVive inbox and include the geomatics team. Currently looking into Geomatics Management Solutions made by Esri to track requests.

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Q: Do you receive lots of request?

A: Mostly email but also come from other branches, or walk-in clients.

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Q: Do you have metrics on how your products are being utilized?

A: There are some metrics available every week on the use of the Rapid Impact Assessment application as it shows up on Situational Reports. There are currently no such metrics for either GeoMap or the Operations Officer Dashboard.

3. CartoVive Mobile: Field Data Collection and Staff Tracking 14:15-14:35

Presenter: Greg Tonkin (GAC)

CartoVive Mobile

- Integrated with CartoVive Desktop.
- Possesses offline capacity due to its requirement to function in high-threat locations, including areas with minimal to now network access.
- No additional cost or hardware necessary for users.
- Allows information classified up to Protected B level.
- Has a geofence alert feature on entry and exit from a specified area.
- Enhances field data collection and contains internal locations, allowing colleagues in an office to view and query in real time.
- Available for download on GAC smartphones.

Location Tracking functionality

- One high risk mission abroad requires 24/7 employee tracking for safety and security.
- Between January and March 2026, the missions tested the location sharing feature of Field Maps, before being implemented for all CBS in April/May.
- GPS accuracy is great in that region, remaining around 98% on average.
- Requirements
    - Spatiotemporal big data store (ideally on a separate server).
    - Location sharing add-on licenses, or Mobile Worker user type.
    - ArcGIS Field Maps on supported devices.
- Recommendations for setting up location tracking
    - Ensure an engaged client or client group.
    - Cover privacy, security and procedural issues up front.
        - Develop PNS with privacy team and develop one page description of solution to assuage concerns.
        - Emphasize privacy by design.
    - Develop simple onboarding and offboarding procedure for clients.

3.1. Q&A

Q: Why are you doing location tracking?

A: If an event takes place abroad, location of staff can be useful to assess the safety of all Canada-based staff.

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Q: What devices are being used? Considerations in certain countries?

A: The entire mission is using iOS, and currently being tested on Android. Only available for SSC compliant devices. Signal interception is a risk but assessed as low and acceptable for this purpose and better than other solutions.

4. Travel Advisory Maps: A technical look behind the scenes 14:35-15:15

Presenter: Eric Fortin (GAC)

Introduction to Travel Advisory Maps

- Travel.gc.ca receives a ton of traffic – it is in the top 10 most popular Government of Canada webpages.
- The website is host to 460 total unique maps, with half being in English and the other half in French.
- Uses NRCan map in order to accurately delineate international boundaries and ensure there are no conflicts in the way they are portrayed by the Government of Canada.
    - It is also important to assess bodies of water and other geographic features where names could differ by jurisdiction. All labels for controversial bodies of water are based on the official designation made by the international organization based in Monaco, the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO).
    - Of note, individual pages exist for both Macao and Hong Kong, but that does not mean the Government of Canada recognizes them as countries.
- The new maps were launched on December 15, 2025 and were shown on TV and received media attention that same day and for the following days.

Updating Process

- Robust python scripts were developed and operationalized, a process that took approximately 4 months.
- Maps are always reviewed and approved before being shared live. For example, some maps with specific warnings will be approved by the Head of mission in that specific area.

- Due to the high level of traffic and heavy media attention to changes made to travel advisories, it highlights the criticality of having a robust process in place.
- As the situation in a certain region can change or deteriorate quite quickly, the GAC Geomatics team has developed pre-established maps for all jurisdictions ready to be pushed live to the public website should something take place and require an urgent update after-hours.
    - This is particularly useful for GAC given as the geomatics team isn't on-call. These pre-prepared maps allow members of the Watch Centre to make those updates themselves when needed.

Live Demonstration of the Updating Process

- Most updates are normally very quick and easy to make (i.e.: a province/state changing colour or maybe the full country), but some of them can be more specific (i.e.: within x km away from this border).
- There are normally about 2-3 map updates needed per week on average since being launched. Some weeks can bring a dozen changes while there will be some with no changes at all.
- Updates are done through ArcGIS Pro. Updated products are then uploaded to the cloud for the travel advisory webpage to then establish that connection.

4.1. Q&A

Q: Have you had to make changes from external complaints?

A: No

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Q: How are the maps updated?

A: A python toolbox is set up. Users work in workspace projects but not within the actual layouts themselves. The hope is for travel operations officers to make the updates themselves since they are on 24/7.

5. Adjournment 15:15-15:20

Presenter: Naomi Noiseux (PS GOC)

Thank you to everyone who were able to make it to this meeting, and special thanks to our colleagues at GAC for the wonderful presentations today and so graciously offering to host!

The next meeting is scheduled to take place in November, more details to come soon.

Please feel free to reach out to Naomi Noiseux or the GOC Geomatics team if you have any topics you would like to present at the next meeting. Looking forward to meeting again soon!