International Working Group on

Satellite-based Emergency Mapping (IWG-SEM)

Technical Specification of GeoRSS (Version 1 from 26.11.2014)

The IWG-SEM decided to use the GeoRSS feed to inform IWG-SEM members and other users about the emergency mapping activity. The feed is meant to spread the information as soon as possible after the emergency activation to allow potential cooperation of organizations involved in emergency mapping. The advantage of the GeoRSS feed is that it can be subscribed with normal RSS feed readers (MS Outlook, Mozilla Thunderbird) as well as with the GIS software (QGIS, ArcGIS etc.).

IWG-SEM agreed on the fields which should be included in the GeoRSS feed. There are mandatory and optional fields. The mandatory fields are those which contain substantial information about the activation. (what, where, when, who etc).

The optional fields are those which provide additional information about the activation. It is understood that the information included in the optional fields is not always available at the time of activation. However the organizations are encouraged to use these fields whenever possible to provide more complete information about the activation.

The fields of GeoRSS feed are in Table 1.

Field	Mandatory/Optional	Description/Note
Activation ID	Mandatory	The activation identifier used by an emergency mapping organization. It is expected that each organization have its own unique system of activation identifiers.
Type of event	Mandatory	Type of natural or humanitarian disaster. The use of the following list (small subset used by the GLIDE number specification) is encouraged: forest fire, flood, tsunami, earthquake, windstorm, industrial accident, other (used for disasters not on the list)
Activation notification date and time (UTC)	Mandatory	Date and time of the activation notification in UTC. It is the the time when the RSS feed was issued. It is automatic and it is not part of feed text.
Activation Location (point) specified by coordinates	Mandatory	The point placed in the "middle" of the expected mapping exercise. This serves as a rough indicator for the location. This field is not part of feed text, but it is contained in the feed xml file with appropriate geographic tags and coordinates. The geographic entity is point. It is used to display the location on the map using

		GeoRSS readers. It can be also the circle, in that case the optional radius must be accompanied with point coordinates in the xml tag.
Affected Countries	Mandatory	Name of the country(ies) which were affected. More localization (on province level) can be specified in optional Event Description field.
Dedicated mechanism (for example DLR-ZKI, EMS, Sent. Asia,)	Mandatory	The name of the organization or mechanism which was activated.
Date and time of event (LOCAL + UTC offset) Format: YYYY-MM-DD-HH	Optional	Date of the event as precisely as possible. Whenever possible the information coming from the authorities (e.g. civil protections) should be used at the first place, the online media and reports as second. Must be in local time with the UTC offset. The date is optional, because it is not always known or available (especially slow onset or long lasting disasters)
Event Description	Optional	Short description of the event taken from the activator and other sources (media etc).
Affected Area	Optional	Verbose description of the area within the country.
GLIDE number	Optional	If created and known, is should be used.
Links	Optional	Links to the activation web location (portals etc) where the other information and products are/will be available.

Table 1. The fields of Activations' GeoRSS feed.