

# Geo-Information Society of South Africa (GISSA) Comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill

---



Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Reform  
3rd floor,  
90 Plein Street,  
Cape Town, 8001,

Attention : Ms Phumla Nyamza ( [panyamza@parliament.gov.za](mailto:panyamza@parliament.gov.za) )

**28 March 2013**

## **Comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill**

Please find below comments regarding the Geomatics Profession Bill.

We also want the opportunity to give a verbal presentation on these comments.

Kind Regards

Dr. Herman Booyesen

Representing GISSA

# Geo-Information Society of South Africa (GISSA)

## Comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill

### Summary of the Geo-Information Society of South Africa's (GISSA) comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill.

Section	Comment
1 (1)	Bill/Act must be cognisant of "recognition of prior learning"
1 (1)	<b>The term Geospatial Information Sciences (GISc) needs to be defined as there is a lack of clear "definition"</b>
1 (1)	The SDI Act No 54 of 2003 needs to be reference in lieu of the definition of Geospatial Information Science (GISc). This may require highlighting or articulating the Committee on Spatial Information (CSI) as a body which can carry out the role of defining GISc activities. i.e. GISc activities need to be accountable to the SDI Act through the CSI
1 (1)	<p><b>The first part of the definition of "geomatics practitioner" is biased towards surveying.</b> Although GISc practitioners use information collected by "a person who exercises skills and competencies. In the science of measurement" (i.e. surveyor), they need not necessarily have these skills (if they do, then they all need to be surveyors). The term "administration" is also biased towards land surveying and "management of land, sea and structures" would be a better description of what GISc practitioners do with geospatial information. <b>We consequently suggest that the definition be amended to:</b></p> <p>"geomatics practitioner" means a person who exercises skills and competencies in the science of measurement and/or the collection, assessment and application of geographic information for the efficient management of land, the sea and structures thereon or therein, as contemplated in section 2(a), and who is registered in one or more of the branches of geomatics and in one or more of the categories contemplated in section 13(4)(b), (c) and (d);</p>
1 (1)	<p><b>Definition for professional GISc practitioner</b></p> <p><b>There is currently no definition for professional GISc practitioner.</b> There is, however, one for professional land surveyor. This is indicative of the current Bill's bias towards surveying.</p>

## Geo-Information Society of South Africa (GISSA) Comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill

1 (1)	<p>"branch" means a specific specialisation field of geomatics including, but not limited to, land surveying, topographical surveying, engineering surveying, mine surveying and geo-spatial information science or any other specialisation field which may from time to time be determined by the Minister by notice in the Gazette;</p> <p>Will this "branch" also include educators such as teachers/lecturers of geo-spatial information sciences?</p>
2 (a) (iv)	<p><b>The section concerned with GISc in the description of the geomatics profession should be amended to:</b></p> <p>the design, development, establishment and administration of geospatial technologies (e.g. geographic information systems and remote sensing) and the collection, storage, analysis, visualisation and management of geo-spatial information;</p>
4 (1) (a) & 4 (1) (b)	<p><b>Composition of Council - Representatives from the GIS industry must be included.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 from government</li> <li>• 1 from private sector.</li> </ul>
4 (1) (a)	<p>Someone from the Committee on Spatial Information (CSI) must be represented on the Committee</p>
4 (1) (b)	<p>We request that Geospatial Information Sciences be provided with more representation or are guaranteed of a certain level of representation as their numbers will grow significantly when this Bill/Act is promulgated and will need to be "equal" to the surveyors if not represented more.</p>
4 (1) (b) (i)	<p>1 must be from the GIS sector</p>
4 (1) (b) (ii)	<p>Minimum of 1 from GISSA</p>
4 (1) (d)	<p>Can this be anyone or is it mandatory for this public rep to have geomatics interest and/or experience.</p> <p>What are the constraints on choosing such a person? This is very open-ended and needs to be expressed i.t.o a member of the public with a specific interest in the Geomatics profession (e.g. professional town planner, conveyancer, etc.)</p>
4 (7)	<p>It should also be Law that the chairman and deputy chairman of the council cannot be both Surveyors by trade one must come from a GIS background.</p>

**Geo-Information Society of South Africa (GISSA)  
Comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill**

<b>8 (1) (b) (ii) (aa)</b>	<b>What branch will the current Professional GISc practitioners be entitled to practice in: Geo-Information Science?</b>
<b>11</b>	We presume the idea of the remuneration is to reimburse an individual for expenses he / she might have incurred to attend the meeting. The idea is not to earn a salary. If money comes into play, people might not represent their category without bias.
<b>12 (5)</b>	Will the 14 days be after the closure of the financial year? How will registered members know when the statement and balance sheet is available for public inspection?
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Will there be subsections under the categories, for example:</b></p> <p><b><u>Professional Geomatics Practitioner</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professional GISc Practitioner</b></li> </ul> <p>What will be the Title of Geomatics Professional? Will it be Geomatics Professional under the branch (category) Geospatial Information Science (GISc)?</p>
<b>13</b>	In fact the Bill/Act is a bit thin on what the requirements are for the different levels and 'branches' will be. Will these be covered in the Rules and Regulations?
<b>13 (1)</b>	<b>Should registration categories (land surveyor, photogrammetric surveyor, etc.) not be explicitly mentioned?</b>

## Geo-Information Society of South Africa (GISSA) Comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill

---

<b>13 (4)</b>	It would seem that this Act assumes that only Surveyors are registered under the PLATO Act, and thus the old Act's definition of registered professionals is only extend to the include assessment of geographic information, the problem is GISc professionals registered under the same Act cannot be imposed to the same candidature assessment methods as Surveyor's because this would disadvantage them as their qualifications are not the same. How is this distinction made in the Bill?
<b>17</b>	Shouldn't SAGI, GISSA and the other established bodies be defined in the Bill/Act to try and ensure that we do not have multiple associations diluting the roles of the voluntary associations?

## Geo-Information Society of South Africa (GISSA) Comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill

22	What rights would an accused registered person have to access to all reports by investigation officer or witness's statement in order to appeal any judgement against them?
30	When will the geomatics (and specifically GIS profession) regulations be published?
30	Maybe define the types of information which will be published in the rules and regulations to put people at rest that this will be covered, but not necessarily by the Bill/Act per se.
36 (3)	<p><b>What happens to someone who is already a Registered GISc Practitioner with PLATO at the commencement of this Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There seems to be mention of the transition of surveyors but silent about registered GISc Practitioners. Do we simply apply and get a new certificate or do we have to go through the same competency assessments</li> <li>• Will only surveying professionals have to re-register? What about the Professional GISc practitioners? Won't we have to reregister as professional geomatics practitioners in the branch of GIS?</li> </ul>
36 (3)	In general: How will the existing registration with PLATO converted to this classification?
36 (3)	Would the registration as a geomatics professional be significantly different to the OLD registration under the PLATO Act?
36 (3)	In terms of GISc professionals who were in the process of registering under the PLATO Act what happens to their fees paid for this registration since the new Bill does not allude that they would automatically be registered if it becomes Law?
General	<p>"The main purpose of the Bill is to provide for the transformation of the geomatics profession...."</p> <p>yet item 13.(2)(a) potentially excludes previously disadvantaged individuals from access to work opportunities in the geomatics field and favours job reservation for professionals who qualified through grandfather clause. Even if someone started studying or working as a geomatics professional immediately after 1994 they still would not qualify as a geomatics professional through the grandfather clause and they wouldn't have had enough years to gain the necessary experience. They may have completed a PhD during that time but as many relevant courses have not yet been assessed against SAQA Unit Standards they cannot be accredited.</p> <p>There needs to be a timeframe for persons to gain necessary accreditation before being implicitly excluded from work opportunities until such time as a normal registration route mechanism is in place and working. There ideally needs to be an equivalency exam in the interim</p>

## Geo-Information Society of South Africa (GISSA) Comments on the Geomatics Profession Bill

---

	that is administered by the council over an appropriate time of the act coming in to law for the purpose of assessing applicable experience and suitability to be registered and practise as a technician, technologist, and professional. After this time a CPD program kicks in.
<b>General</b>	Transformation must be defined more clearly.
<b>General</b>	Will the bill/act influence the registration of people that is currently busy with the registration process?
<b>General</b>	Nowhere in the current bill has there been any reference to the Consumer Protection Act (Act No68 of 2008). This act has had severe impact on various other (related) professional industries in the way they interact with clients, their guarantees and deliverables and time frames. Would the impact of the Consumer Protection Act have on our industry be something that will be dealt with in amendments in the future?