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FiMES extensibility guidelines proposal

Management Summary	

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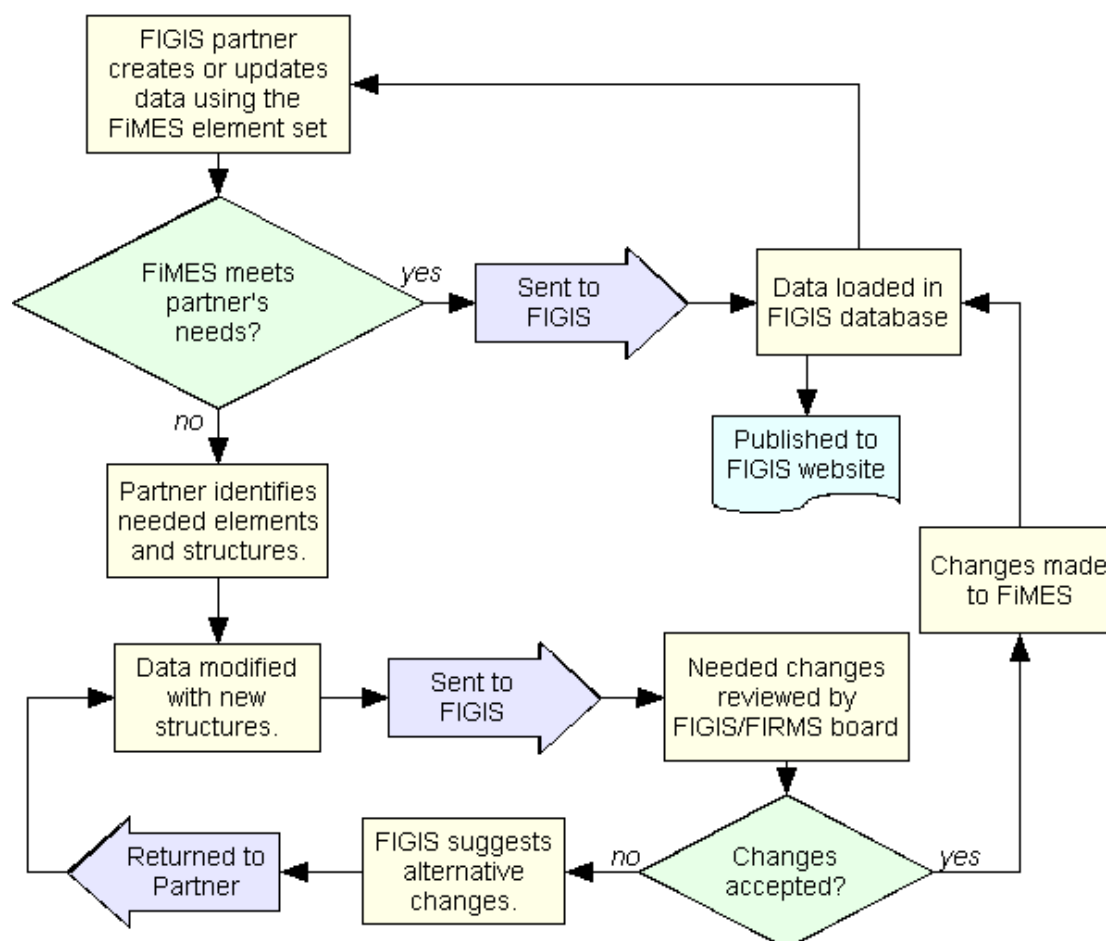| Revision History		
Date	**Author**	**Summary**
15/06/2002	Y. Jaques	Following comments from M. Taconet and G. Salokhe

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Introduction

This guide covers a set of proposed guidelines for the extensibility of the FiMES. As this metadata standard is increasingly used by partners and other organisations, a comprehensive and consistent set of policies and procedures for extension and modification of the FiMES must be implemented.

1.   Workflow diagram

The diagram below illustrates a proposed workflow between FIGIS and one of its partners:

Proposed process for FiMES extensibility

2.   History

- The FiMES has been developed at the FAO to meet the needs of XML document production by FAO Fisheries and foreseen external partners.
- At this point, the FiMES is being distributed outside of the FAO to FIGIS partner programmes for testing.

3.   Issue

- As FIGIS co-ordinates with a number of partner programmes the FiMES will need to be qualified and/or amended to encompass the data entry requirements of its partners.
- FIGIS must develop a comprehensive and consistent policy and review process that clarifies when, how and why the FiMES will be changed.

4.   Strategies

- The policy will be domain based. FIGIS will work with its partners within their domain of expertise in an effort to minimise impacts on other partners and other domains.
- Changes will be evaluated by impact. Extensions that do not impact other users or existing data will be more easily and quickly implemented.
- FIGIS will use a triage system, in which change requests will be graded upon receipt, highest priority given to those changes that are necessary to the immediate continued work or publication needs of a partner.

5.   Roles

5.1   Administrator *(FIGIS)*

The FIGIS project administers the following functions:
- The creation, validation and publication of the FiMES.
- The addition of extensions to the FiMES.
- The maintenance of both **current** and **beta** versions of FiMES

5.2   USER *(Partners)*

USER will administer the following functions:
- Encoding of data using the FiMES.
- Structural design suggestions for extensions to the FiMES within the USER domain of expertise.

6.   FiMES extension

6.1   Revision process

Any USER can request the Administrator to make a change to the FiMES. The Administrator will log the change request and after insuring that the change does not actively interfere with another pending request nor interfere with the functioning of either the current or beta versions of the FiMES, nor require the removal of a branch of the topic tree, will make the change to the **Beta** FiMES ASAP.

If the change is unacceptable in its current form due either to incompatibility with other pending change requests or the design of the existing FiMES, the Administrator and USER will seek together to modify the request.

Users will be alerted by email to the presence of changes in the Beta FiMES and instructed to examine the revision log for a detail of the changes. Users will thus have full ability to react and express their view point about the proposed change.

6.2   Revision log

The Administrator will log the following:
- Who made the change request.
- The date the request was made.
- The nature of the request including the domain(s.)
- Team members likely to be affected by the change
- The action taken to resolve the request
- The date the action was taken

The log will be published and updated on the web together with the beta FIMES.

6.3 Version update process

There will be an ongoing process of trial-and-error as regards changes to the Beta FiMES. After a period of time (depending on the speed of FiMES and/or domain development) the Beta and Current versions of the FiMES will be different enough that it will be impossible for users to validate their documents using the Current FiMES.

Though the development of the Beta FiMES is an ongoing process of peer-review, when it becomes necessary to archive the Current FiMES and replace it with the Beta FiMES a FIGIS/FIRMS board meeting will be held. At this meeting the changes will be reviewed and discussed.

Once it has been decided that there are no conflicts preventing the successful use of the update, the Administrator will archive the Current version, putting it in its own folder in the archive directory. The Beta version will then be moved to the Current directory. The source control will be opened and the various versions of the FiMES will be annotated as to the date and the action performed.

The team will be alerted by email to the presence of a new Current FiMES and instructed to examine the revision log for a detail of the differences between versions.

7. Recommended general policies

- As FiMES is designed at least initially to be primarily used by the UNFAO and FIRMS partners we will maintain a higher degree of control over its structure than is indicated for general open standards such as Dublin Core and RDF.
- Though the FiMES is not an open standard, it is extensible for our partners. Extensions to the FiMES remain at the discretion of the FIGIS/FIRMS board and are the product of a collaborative process between FIGIS and its partners.
- In the future if the FiMES comes into general use by the fishing community the FIGIS/FIRMS board may decide to make FiMES an open standard. In such a case FiMES would likely observe restrictions similar to Dublin Core.
- Our partners are specialized in various fisheries domains. We will work together with them within their domain to amend and extend the FiMES. We discourage changes outside a partner's domain or specialty.
- The FiMES is accessible via internet. We encourage our partners when creating XML data to use this address as their DOCTYPE declaration (http://193.43.36.85/dtd/current/Figisdoc2.5.dtd) to insure they are working with the correct version
- The HTML of all recent changes to the FiMES (*FiMES Change Tracker*) is also accessible via the internet (http://193.43.36.85/dtd/ChangeRequests/DTDChangeTracker.html). We encourage our partners to examine it for changes to the FIGIS standard.
- The XML-based *change request form* is also found at the same address and we encourage our partners to download it, fill it out and email it to us when they have a request. The XML file is at (http://193.43.36.85/dtd/ChangeRequests/DTDChangeRequestForm.xml) and the associated XSL stylesheet that allows one to view the form as formatted HTML is at (http://193.43.36.85/dtd/ChangeRequests/DTDChangeTracker.html) and the DTD that allows one to validate the change request is at (http://193.43.36.85/dtd/ChangeRequests/DTDChangeTracker.dtd)

- The element dictionary containing definitions of all FIGIS standard elements is also available via the internet at http://193.43.36.85/fi/figis/devcon/. We encourage our partners to use it when they have questions about the function of an element or structure. They are also encouraged to supplement definitions when the current definition is unclear or needs extending.