



Third United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (3UNWGIC)

16–19 November 2026

Hilton Riyadh Hotel & Residences, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Terms of Reference

Background and Context

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), acting as the Secretariat for the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), will convene the Third United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (3UNWGIC). The 3UNWGIC will be hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through its General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information (GEOSA).

Building on the success of the first two Congresses, the 3UNWGIC will serve as a high-level, multi-stakeholder global platform to advance dialogue, cooperation, and innovation in geospatial information management. Convened under the theme: *“Navigating the Next Frontier: Embracing Digital Renaissance and a New Geospatial Paradigm”*, the 3UNWGIC will explore transformative approaches to harness integrated geospatial knowledge, insights and information for the collective good. It aims to foster a future-ready geospatial ecosystem that supports and drive smarter, sustainable decisions for people, planet, prosperity and peace.

The convening of the 3UNWGIC is pursuant to the mandate of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), which, through its subsidiary body, the Committee of Experts, convenes global forums that promote comprehensive dialogue amongst and between Member States and international organizations, the private sector, academia, and civil society. At its fifteenth session (6–8 August 2025), the Committee welcomed the generous offer of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the 3UNWGIC in Riyadh from 16–19 November 2026. The 3UNWGIC is expected to attract over 1,800 participants from more than 120 countries, ensuring an open, participatory, and inclusive event that inspires action and progress toward the future-ready geospatial ecosystem.



Objectives

The 3UNWGIC seeks to:

- **Embrace a new geospatial paradigm:** Reimagine geospatial knowledge as a foundation for people, planet, prosperity, and peace, ensuring it serves as a global public good.
- **Reaffirm the digital renaissance:** Explore the transformative potential of emerging technologies and creativity to reshape governance, production, and use of geospatial information.
- **Advance integrated knowledge systems:** Promote the fusion of geospatial, statistical, environmental, and socio-economic data for holistic, evidence-based decision-making.
- **Strengthening global geospatial ecosystem:** Accelerate implementation of consensus-based frameworks, notably the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF).
- **Foster global solidarity and partnerships:** Enhance collaboration among governments, international organizations, private sector, academia, and civil society to advance inclusive development and shared priorities.
- **Chart the next frontier:** Define bold yet feasible pathways toward a geospatially enabled digital era that is future-oriented, humanity-centered, and responsive to global challenges.

Scope

The 3UNWGIC is the flagship quadrennial event of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). It serves as a high-level platform for governments, international organizations, and relevant stakeholders to advance toward a future-ready geospatial ecosystem where geospatial information, insights and knowledge are effectively applied for global to local impacts. The 3UNWGIC will bring together representatives from:

- **Member States:** National and where applicable, sub-national governments, responsible for geospatial legislation, policy, governance frameworks, and development agendas at their respective levels.



- **Government Authorities:** Public authorities, agencies or entities at national and where applicable, sub-national levels, with mandates related to surveying and mapping, hydrography, land administration, geodesy, spatial data infrastructure, official statistics, space programs, environmental and disaster management, digitalization or digital transformation.
- **International and Regional Organizations:** Organizations, development partners and donors promoting integrated geospatial information management and development cooperation including intergovernmental bodies and development banks.
- **United Nations system:** UN Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds, and programs working on data, development, climate, resilience, humanitarian action, and digital transformation.
- **Private Sector:** Technology companies and service providers, Earth observation providers, cloud platforms and analytics companies, solution developers driving next-generation geospatial capabilities.
- **Academia and Research Institutions:** Universities, research centers, think tanks providing thought leadership, expertise driving emerging research and advanced training.
- **Civil Society and Local Communities:** Non-government organizations, community organizations, citizen science networks driving local knowledge, grassroots insights, and people-centered approaches and solutions.
- **Youth, Under-represented and Next-generation:** Students, early-career professionals, young leaders including from the under-represented groups driving fresh perspectives, creativity, forward thinking critical to sustaining progress toward a future-ready geospatial ecosystem

Governance and Roles

Congress Coordinating Committee (CCC)

The CCC will provide strategic oversight to ensure that the 3UNWGIC fulfills its mandate as a global, inclusive, and future-oriented platform. Convened under the auspices of the United Nations, the CCC will guide preparations and ensure alignment with the objectives and theme of the 3UNWGIC.



International Advisory Committee (IAC)

The IAC will offer substantive guidance on the development and delivery of the 3UNWGIC program. It will ensure that the program is inclusive, representative, and forward-looking, aligned with global priorities and the evolving needs of the geospatial community.

Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

The LOC serves as the primary facilitator for all on-the-ground arrangements and logistics, coordinating operations, services and supplies in close collaboration with local authorities, partners, and the United Nations to ensure a safe, professional, participatory, and culturally appropriate event. This includes close coordination of entry and security arrangements and protocols. It is responsible for the seamless delivery of the UN global event by organizing and aligning host-country support, stakeholder engagement, and operational logistics.

Deliverables

The 3UNWGIC will culminate in an Outcome Document — a visionary global statement capturing paradigm shifts, key commitments, and pathways for the next decade of geospatial information management. This document will serve as a reference for Member States and stakeholders in fostering and progressing toward a future-ready responsibly governed geospatial ecosystem for the wellbeing of all lives and livelihoods.

Methodology

The main program of the 3UNWGIC will span four days, from 16 – 19 November 2025. In addition to the main program, in-person preparatory and governance meetings are planned for 14 – 15 November 2025, primarily involving the meeting of the Bureau of the Committee of Experts, and its expanded bureau, regional committees, as well as the International Advisory Committee of the 3UNWGIC.



The provisional outline for the 3UNWGIC main program, from 16 to 19 November 2026, is as follows:

Monday 16 November 2026	Tuesday 17 November 2026	Wednesday 18 November 2026	Thursday 19 November 2026
Official Opening Ceremony			
Keynote Session(s)			
Plenary Sessions and Panels			
Parallel, Thematic Sessions and Panels			
Closing Ceremony			

The 3UNWGIC will feature:

- **Official Opening Ceremony:** Formally launches the 3UNWGIC by welcoming participants and affirming the event’s vision, purpose, and host-country commitment.
- **Keynote Session(s):** Offers high-level strategic insights from global leaders to inspire and frame the 3UNWGIC’s thematic direction.
- **Plenary Sessions and Panels:** Convene leadership perspectives to address priority issues, share global experiences, and guide collective action.
- **Parallel, Thematic Sessions and Panels:** Provide focused, in-depth discussions and technical exchanges across specialized geospatial topics and community’s interests.
- **Closing Ceremony:** Concludes the 3UNWGIC by presenting the high-level Outcome Document — capturing the shared vision, priorities, and commitments — while acknowledging contributions and reinforcing the agenda for moving forward.

In addition,

- **Side Events:** Dedicated spaces on the margins of the principal program for targeted exchanges, collaboration, and deep dives into specialized issues beyond the main program.
- **International Exhibition:** Dedicated spaces for global partners to display cutting-edge geospatial technologies, solutions, and collaborations.
- **National Showcase:** Presents the host country’s geospatial innovations, capabilities, and achievements to the global community.
- **Cultural Evening:** Offers an immersive celebration of the host country’s culture and cuisine to foster connection and exchange among participants.



- **Technical Visits** (*being considered*): Demonstrate real-world geospatial applications through on-site visits to national offices, facilities and projects.
- **Local Experience Activities** (*being considered*): Engage participants with the host community's heritage or places of significance to enrich the overall experience.

The overall program will encourage dynamic engagement, co-creation of solutions, and inclusive participation.

Dates and Venue

The 3UNWGIC will be held from 16–19 November 2026 at the Hilton Riyadh Hotel & Residences, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The venue offers state-of-the-art facilities for plenary sessions, thematic tracks, exhibitions, and networking events. GEOSA, in coordination with UNSD, will provide logistical guidance, including visa procedures and entry requirements.

Budget and Resources

The host entity, GEOSA, will provide adequate resources for the 3UNWGIC including the core budget and resources covering the venue, local arrangements, operational logistics, technology platforms such as the website and registration system, on-site conference services, catering, and a support package to enable diverse participation. The United Nations is responsible for the planning, preparation, and delivery of the event, including all program documentation, and will cover the associated staff costs and incidentals.

Communication and Reporting

GEOSA will establish a dedicated communications framework and team to implement coordinated communications and media engagement to enhance the 3UNWGIC's visibility and convey key messages, conduct targeted promotional activities to encourage broad and diverse participation, and produce compelling video and multimedia content that highlights Saudi Arabia and Riyadh to enrich overall awareness and appreciation for this flagship quadrennial event of the United Nations.



Health, Safety, and Legal Compliance

Participants are responsible for ensuring they have obtained all required inoculations and vaccinations prior to travel, in accordance with international health advisories and any host-country regulations. They must secure comprehensive insurance coverage for the full duration of their stay, including, but not limited to, hospitalization, medical treatment and evacuation, as well as travel and life insurance. The organizers assume no responsibility for any illness, injury, or medical condition that may arise during travel or the stay in the host country. Participants are also required to respect and fully adhere to the laws, regulations, cultural norms, and etiquette of the host country to ensure a safe, respectful, compliant, and conducive environment for all participants, stakeholders, and the hosting community.

Legacy

The 3UNWGIC strengthens institutional capacities, showcases national progress, innovation, and expertise, and deepens strategic partnerships and collaboration across sectors and borders. It offers the national professional community valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange, development, collaboration, and exposure to cutting-edge geospatial practices and thinking. By hosting the 3UNWGIC, Saudi Arabia and GEOSA further elevate their regional and global leadership, positioning themselves as key contributors to the development of a future-ready and responsibly governed geospatial ecosystem. The event also delivers broader social and economic benefits for the local community through increased visibility, engagement, and investment, leaving a lasting legacy of enhanced capability, credibility, and international standing.

(19 December 2025)