

# The Private Sector and the Frontier of Geospatial Governance in Africa



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**UN-GGIM: AFRICA**  
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# A Call to Collaborative Transformation

- African governments continue to invest in modern geospatial systems, from national spatial data infrastructures to digital mapping programs. However, the scale of Africa's development challenges, including climate resilience, land governance, urban expansion, resource management, and digital transformation, demands more than government commitment.
- A new era of geospatial governance must be built on collaboration, where public institutions partner with the private sector to release innovation, creativity, and investment into the African geospatial ecosystem. This is the moment to strengthen cooperation and unlock shared value.



# Why Partnership Matters Now

- Africa is experiencing rapid digital advancement, but geospatial capacity remains uneven across countries.
- The private sector is advancing technology faster than many public institutions are able to adopt it.
- Collaboration allows governments to modernize quickly, scale efficiently, and work with sustainable systems.
- Africa's development priorities, such as food security, resilient cities, agriculture, and green transition, require geospatial data that is accurate, timely, and accessible.
- Partnership is essential to achieving Agenda 2063 and the Africa We Want vision.



# The Strategic Role of the Private Sector

- **Innovation and Technology Transfer:** Industry leads the development of tools such as drone photogrammetry, artificial intelligence assisted mapping, advanced analytics, cloud processing, and real time monitoring. These tools reduce cost and increase accuracy.
- **Capacity Development:** Private firms support practical skills through internships, mentorships, student attachments, and technology demonstrations. This strengthens Africa's professional pipeline.
- **Sustainability and Continuity:** Governments face funding gaps and slow procurement processes. Private firms provide stable long term support, maintenance, and system sustainability.
- **Economic Growth and New Enterprises:** Geospatial products and services support agriculture, logistics, mining, transportation, financial services, and the wider digital economy. This creates jobs and drives innovation.



# The Role of UN GGIM Africa and UNECA

UN GGIM Africa and UNECA have built strong institutional and policy foundations for geospatial development. The next step is to convert frameworks into visible action by:

- Creating Public Private Geospatial Partnership Platforms within national spatial data infrastructures
- Establishing trusted data sharing protocols between government and industry
- Encouraging professional associations to act as bridges between public and private institutions
- Supporting African countries to adopt common standards for data governance and ethics
- Strengthening regional platforms that enable cooperation during disaster events and transboundary initiatives



# Integrating the Wisdom of Experience

Africa has many senior professionals whose deep institutional knowledge is invaluable. Their experience must be deliberately integrated into:

- National geospatial advisory boards
- Mentorship and training programs for young officers
- Policy committees that guide national and regional geospatial direction
- Digital transition programs that connect historical mapping methods with advanced technologies
- Land administration and national mapping reforms

This protects institutional memory and strengthens the next generation of leaders.



# Illustrative Case Studies

## 1. Rwanda's Drone Economy Ecosystem

- Rwanda is an excellent example of what happens when leadership creates a supportive policy environment.
- Once clear regulations were introduced, private companies were able to expand the use of drones for medical delivery, environmental monitoring, and rapid spatial data collection.
- The result is a national system where government and private innovators work side by side to deliver essential services with speed and accuracy



# Illustrative Case Studies

## 2. Expansion of Ghana's CORS Network

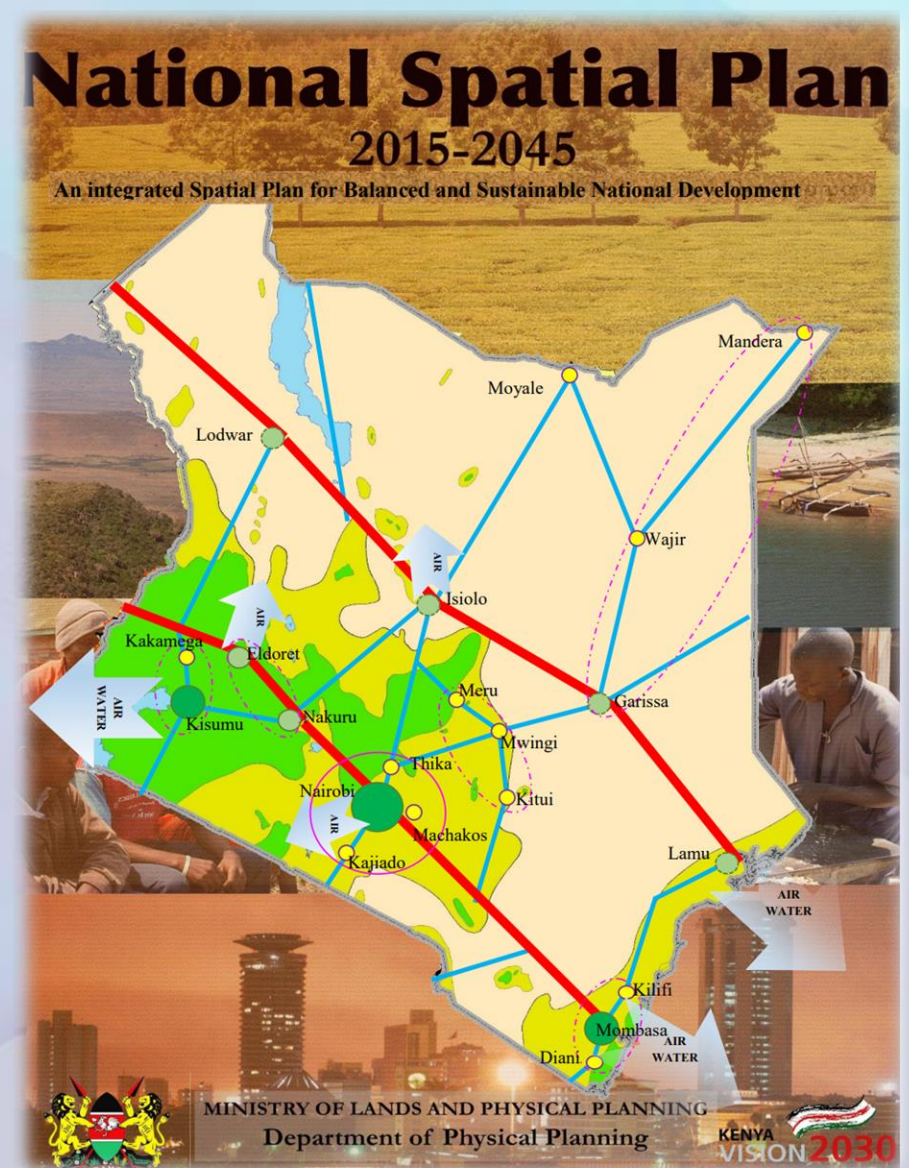
- In Ghana, cooperation among national agencies such as the Lands Commission, Ghana Water Company Ltd, together with the LISAG, Geotech, GMX expanded access to real time correction services. – Work is still in process
- This collaboration improved surveying accuracy, strengthened engineering and construction work, and created new opportunities for precision agriculture.



# Illustrative Case Studies

## 3. Kenya's National Spatial Data Strategy

- Kenya's National Spatial Plan was prepared by the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning to provide national direction for spatial development and guide the preparation of regional and county plans.
- In a case study on county-level spatial data analytics, the private sector is shown as a partner for technology, data supply, and capacity building.



# The Way Forward

- **Institutionalize Partnership Models:** National policies should outline how government and private companies collaborate on data production, licensing, and innovation.
- **Stimulate Investment in Geospatial Startups:** Support innovation grants, tax incentives, and incubators to grow new enterprises.
- **Promote Open Standards and Transparent Data Policies:** Trust improves when data systems are predictable, accessible, and interoperable.
- **Celebrate Excellence:** Recognize institutions and companies that demonstrate outstanding geospatial impact.
- **Sustain Mentorship and Cross Generational Exchange:** Create platforms where senior experts share wisdom and young professionals bring energy, creativity, and digital skills.



# Conclusion

- Africa is at a defining moment.
- Climate resilience, agricultural productivity, urban planning, water resource management, transportation, and energy planning all rely on spatial data.
- Partnership is the bridge that connects government capacity, private sector innovation, academic research, and community needs.
- Together, these forces can build a strong, data driven, inclusive, and future ready geospatial ecosystem for Africa.



## Quote

“The map of Africa’s future will not be drawn by chance, but by data — by those who see beyond boundaries and build geospatial bridges to a sustainable tomorrow.”

— Surv. Stephen Djaba

# Thanks

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