United Nations Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre

2025 UN-IGIF Workshops and Capacity development activities

Deqing, China

Introduction

The overarching goal of the United Nations Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN GGKIC) is to strengthen and advance the geospatial information management capabilities of Member States, especially developing countries, and to strengthen knowledge sharing and innovative cooperation. The first strategic priority of UN GGKIC is to provide technical assistance and capacity development for national SDG monitoring and allowing greater availability and visibility of country data at sub-national, national, regional and global levels.

To advance this priority and provide technical assistance and capacity development to Member States, UN GGKIC has developed a comprehensive approach encompassing technical training programs, knowledge-sharing workshops, and collaborative seminars. These initiatives are designed to deliver targeted technical assistance, with particular focus on countries of the Group of 77, Belt and Road Initiative participating countries, and other developing countries and least developed countries requiring urgent support in geospatial capacity development.

In 2025, UN GGKIC will implement a series of capacity development workshops in Africa, Asia and Pacific, Latin America, especially in SIDSs, LLDC and LDC. Some training activities will be in Deqing, China. These capacity development programmes will address critical applications of geospatial technology in sustainable development as foundational support to UN-IGIF. Through partnerships with contributing institutions, the Centre will ensure these activities are both responsive to Member States' specific needs and systematically sustained beyond 2025. Each workshop will support 30 developing countries.

24-28 March 2025, Maputo, Mozambique

Expert consultation and meeting on Enhancing Geospatial Information Management Arrangements and Accelerating the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals together with the Sub-regional Workshop on the UN Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) for Southern Africa

The meetings which included countries form the Southern Africa, including small islands developing states and land-locked developing countries, aimed to sustain the implementation and adoption of the UN-IGIF, contributing to the call for enhancing national geospatial information management capabilities of Member States. The five-day long event also aimed to foster the exchange of views on current challenges and opportunities for countries towards enhancing geospatial information management in the region. Participants shared knowledge on how geospatial information can provide the means to integrate data and information from across government and industry to address and inform national government priorities.

The meeting was opened by the Secretary of State for Transport, Mr. Chinguane Marcos Mabote, who expressed the importance of geospatial information for digital transformation, and by the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Mozambique, Ms. Catherine Sozi, who recognized in her remark the need for "timely, reliable, and integrated geospatial information that can guide decision-making and shape policies that work for people and for the planet". The Head of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC), Mr. Pengde Li, also provided a remark, referencing notably the role of geospatial information as a critical component of national digital public infrastructure.

The expert meeting and workshop was organized by the UN-GGKIC and Secretariat in close collaboration with the Agência Nacional de Desenvolvimento Geo-Espacial of Mozambique, the Economic Commission for Africa and the SDG Data Alliance. The meeting welcomed over 40 participants including Member States from Burundi, Cameroon, China, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, from the UN System including ECA, FAO, IOM, UNICEF and WFP, as well as other relevant regional and national stakeholders.

1-3 April 2025, Melbourne, Australia

2025 Geospatial Leadership Training and Global Forum, "Next-Generation Sustainability: Advancing the Future with Geospatial Intelligence"

A three-day event, the *2025 Geospatial Leadership Training and Global Forum for the Next Generation of the Sustainability Agenda*, titled "Next-Generation Sustainability: Advancing the Future with Geospatial Intelligence," was held in Melbourne, Australia, from 1 to 3 April 2025. The event was co-hosted by the United Nations-Global Geospatial Knowledge Centre, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Centre for Spatial Data Infrastructures and Land Administration (University of Melbourne), and the Chinese Academy of Survey and Mapping.

The leadership training, followed by the global forum, was attended by 100 in person and 140 online from 73 organization and 52 countries. While the majority hailed from Australia and New Zealand, strong regional representation was also observed from the Pacific Islands (including the Solomon Islands and Fiji), Arab countries, and Africa (notably Nigeria and Ghana). The event featured 12 sessions and 35 presentations delivered by experts from diverse backgrounds, including research institutions, government agencies, private sector organizations, and community-based groups.

This event aimed to empower leaders in the geospatial field to navigate rapidly changing technologies and establish the foundations needed for the industry to flourish. As the world faces the increasing impacts of climate change, the importance of geospatial intelligence in driving informed decision-making has never been greater. The forum underscored the critical role of accurate, timely, and accessible geospatial data in building climate resilience, mitigating environmental risks, and fostering sustainable development. It emphasized that leveraging geospatial technologies effectively is key to progressing from mere awareness to tangible action in addressing global challenges.

The leadership training was inaugurated by Professor Gregor Kennedy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Melbourne. He highlighted the significance of geospatial information as an essential digital infrastructure asset for the country. He also stressed the importance of technological transformation, valuing education, and embracing innovations such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. On the third day, the global forum was officially opened by Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the Statistics Division at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Additionally, Mr. Drew Clarke, former Secretary of the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, delivered a keynote speech emphasizing the value of maps and geospatial information as powerful communication tools that bridge data and people.

The training and forum were co-hosted by the UN-GGKIC, the Centre for Spatial Data Infrastructures, and the Chinese Academy of Survey and Mapping. His Excellency Abdullah Al-Jali, Mayor of the Aseer Region in Saudi Arabia, emphasized that his experience in city governance

has shown social and economic progress to be unattainable without Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which he hailed as an essential asset for effective urban planning and management.

4 June 2025, Deqing, China

Seminar on Development of Spatiotemporal Intelligence in Geospatial Information and National Land Governance

In line of promoting the implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) across various member states, particularly in fostering technological advancement and encouraging knowledge innovation, the UNGGKIC, in partnership with the GGIM-AP secretariat and the Chinese Ministry of Natural Resources, hosted a one-day seminar on June 4, 2025, at the Deqing International Center. The seminar focused on the theme of "Development of Spatiotemporal Intelligence in Geospatial Information and National Land Governance" with the primary objective of gaining insights into how these innovations are being utilized in the Asia-Pacific region, sharing practical experiences, and establishing a platform for collaboration and exchange among governments, industry, universities, and non-governmental organizations in this domain.

Representatives from UNGGIM-AP members, along with experts and technical staff from China's Ministry of Natural Resources, as well as related institutions, universities, and enterprises involved in geographic information management and territorial space governance, attended the event. During their presentations and panel discussions, they demonstrated technical innovations utilizing AI and presented exemplary case studies that illustrate how countries are effectively implementing the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) across various applications, including land governance, disaster risk reduction, and physical planning leading to improved implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia Pacific region.

During the seminar, the UNGGKIC facilitated a session and a panel discussion on "Intelligent Development of Geographic Information and Territorial Space Governance," which emphasized the significance and potential of GeoAI in space management based on practical experiences, as well as future perspectives in this field. The session concluded by also addressing the challenges

and potential solutions for countries undertaking the journey of developing and enhancing effective GeoAI, particularly in relation to SDG implementation and spatial planning.

28 June 2025, Deqing, China

Workshop on GIS Technology and Application

The Workshop on GIS Technology and Application was successfully held on 28 June 2025 at the International Institution for Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation in Deqing, China. Jointly organized by the UN Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC) and the Geospatial Information Technology Innovation Center (GIS-TIC) under the Ministry of Natural Resources, the workshop brought together 36 international participants from 19 countries. Experts from government agencies, academia, and the private sector gathered to explore how cutting-edge GIS innovations—especially those integrating AI, 3D modeling, and spatial data analytics—can support sustainable development and address pressing global challenges.

The workshop featured thematic sessions on the integration of GIS and AI, applications in sustainable development, utility management transformation, and real-world case studies in sectors such as water conservancy, digital agriculture, and climate action. Presentations by experts from UN-GGKIC, Zhejiang University, and GIS-TIC highlighted emerging technologies and shared practical solutions, promoting international collaboration and cross-sector knowledge exchange under the UN-IGIF framework. The event culminated in strengthened professional networks and reinforced the critical role of geospatial intelligence in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

14 July 2025

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

On 14 July 2025, a special event titled *"China's Initiatives and Progress on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: China's Two-Mountains Theory for Advancing Sustainable Development"* was held at the United Nations Headquarters as a side event to the High-Level Political Forum on

Sustainable Development. Co-organized by the UN Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN DESA) and the Permanent Mission of China to the UN, it drew over 100 participants including UN officials and government representatives. Opening remarks highlighted the relevance of China's "Two-Mountains Theory" in balancing ecological protection with economic development. A case study featuring the city of Huzhou illustrated practical applications of geospatial data and scientific research to support the SDGs.

The event showcased three thematic presentations focused on spatial planning reforms, advancements in geospatial technologies, and local ecological initiatives. These discussions reflected China's strategic commitment to sustainable development and green transformation. Presenters emphasized the value of international cooperation, the integration of ecological principles in governance, and the use of cutting-edge data tools to support the 2030 Agenda aligned with UN-IGIF implementation. The HLPF event reaffirmed UN-GGKIC's commitment to enabling Member States and local jurisdictions to translate geospatial frameworks into transformative development outcomes, fostering knowledge exchange, international cooperation, and evidence-based policymaking in support of the 2030 Agenda.

15-19 September 2025, Astana, Kazakhstan

Expert Consultation and Meeting on Enhancing Geospatial Information Management Arrangements and Accelerating Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Sub-regional Workshop on the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) for Central Asia, South Asia, and neighboring countries "Implementing geospatial strategies: challenges and opportunities"

In line with decision 14/105 of the Committee of Experts reaffirming the UN Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) as the central umbrella for coordinated global geospatial efforts, the upcoming Expert Consultation and Meeting represents a strategic milestone for Central Asia, South Asia, and neighboring regions. Convened just five years ahead of the 2030 Agenda deadline, this event—under the theme "Implementing geospatial strategies: challenges and opportunities"—aims to enhance national geospatial capacities and accelerate the adoption of the UN-IGIF, with particular emphasis on supporting Least Developed Countries (LLDCs) in developing sustainable and inclusive data ecosystems. Key partners include the UN-GGKIC, the SDG Data Alliance, regional committee leadership, and the UN-GGIM Secretariat, working together to advance country-level action planning and integrated geospatial governance.

Jointly organized by the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of Kazakhstan, the UN-GGKIC, and other strategic collaborators, this five-day program includes a High-Level Leadership Segment and an Interactive Workshop Segment. Senior officials, regional leaders, and technical experts will evaluate regional progress, exchange institutional experiences, and address implementation challenges with actionable solutions. With strong focus on peer

learning, cross-border collaboration, and knowledge-sharing particularly for LLDCs, participants will identify context-driven strategies to strengthen geospatial information arrangements and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals through effective IGIF implementation.

Upcoming activities for 2025, to be confirmed

24 September 2025, Seoul, South Korea *(tbc)*

Workshop on United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), GGIM AP 14th Plenary Session

Aligned with the priorities of the Committee of Experts and the HLG-IGIF, the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC), together with the Regional Committee of UN-GGIM for Asia and the Pacific, is organizing a strategic one-day workshop alongside the Fourteenth Plenary Session to advance geospatial leadership in the region. While Asia and the Pacific have made significant strides in adopting the UN-IGIF, further efforts are needed to build leadership strategies, improve geospatial capacities, and accelerate the development of Country-level Action Plans. The workshop will serve as a regional platform to raise awareness, share best practices, and foster policymaker engagement in using geospatial information as a powerful tool for sustainable development.

Bringing together national geospatial leaders, experts from academia, private sector, international entities, and members of the UN-GGIM AP Regional Committee, the workshop will focus on supporting IGIF implementation through leadership development, digital inclusion, and institutional capacity strengthening. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the unique constraints of Least Developed Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and leveraging cross-country collaboration to overcome challenges. Participants will explore new trends, technologies, and actionable measures to enhance geospatial information management and ensure regional progress toward achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

3-4 November 2025, Santiago, Chile *(tbc)*

Workshop on United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), Implementing Geospatial Leadership strategies for UN-IGIF Success, challenges and opportunities, GGIM Americas 12th Plenary Session

In response to growing momentum across the Americas for implementing the UN Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC), in coordination with regional partners, is convening a two-day high-level workshop to strengthen geospatial leadership and foster strategic action. While

notable progress has been made, the region continues to face challenges in advancing national geospatial capabilities and completing Country-level Action Plans. This gathering will provide Member States with a platform to share achievements, explore innovative approaches, and build leadership capacity critical to achieving national priorities and accelerating the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Supported by stakeholders from government, academia, civil society, and the private sector including the SDG Data Alliance and UNGGIM Americas Regional Committee the workshop will emphasize inclusive leadership, digital equity, and institutional strengthening. It will address the specific constraints faced by Least Developed Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and promote cross-country collaboration to enhance geospatial arrangements and bridge capacity gaps. Participants will explore the latest trends and best practices in geospatial information management, contributing to a unified regional effort toward the effective and sustainable implementation of the UN-IGIF.

17-19 November, Accra, Ghana *(tbc)*

Workshop on United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), Implementing geospatial strategies: challenges and opportunities, GGIM Africa 11th Plenary Session

To support Africa's continued momentum in advancing geospatial information management and the implementation of the UN Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), the UNGGIM Africa Regional Committee, in partnership with the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UNGGKIC), is convening a strategic two-day workshop alongside its Eleventh Plenary session. While significant progress has been made across the continent, many Member States still face institutional and technical barriers in finalizing Country-level Action Plans (CAPs). This workshop will bring together policymakers, national geospatial leaders, and regional experts to bolster leadership strategies, bridge the digital divide, and build geospatial capacities aligned with national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Guided by the recommendations of the Committee of Experts and its High-Level Group on IGIF, the workshop will facilitate inclusive dialogue and knowledge sharing on emerging technologies, good practices, and regional collaboration. Key themes will include addressing the unique challenges of Least Developed Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), identifying cross-country cooperation opportunities, and supporting institutional strengthening through UN centers of excellence. Participation will draw from national mapping and data agencies, academic institutions, civil society, and private sector stakeholders, reflecting a unified regional effort to scale geospatial capabilities and unlock transformative sustainable development through the operationalization of UN-IGIF.

20-21 October 2025, Deqing, China *(tbc)*

Geospatial Leadership Development Training, Moganshan Talk (GeoNOW)

GeoNOW 2025, jointly organized by UN-GGKIC, the People's Government of Deqing County, and Moganshan Geospatial Information Laboratory with support from UN DESA and China's Ministry of Natural Resources, aims to advance geospatial innovation and capacity-building under the UN-IGIF framework. The event will mobilize international expertise and local partnerships to close digital divides, share best practices, foster cross-border collaboration, and empower nations to harness geospatial data for sustainable development. A key focus will be a high-impact workshop for developing countries, equipping policymakers and data leaders with actionable strategies for IGIF implementation, enriched by case studies and expert guidance from global academic institutions.

Spanning five days from October 20–24, GeoNOW week features an ambitious agenda. Highlights include leadership forums, youth dialogues, and thematic Moganshan Talks covering topics such as satellite cooperation, cultural heritage conservation, and coastal biodiversity monitoring. The program also hosts a Global Symposium exploring the intersection of geospatial tech and AI for empowering micro and small enterprises in delivering the SDGs. With input from UN and Chinese officials, the event fosters a dynamic space for global dialogue, showcasing how geospatial knowledge can transform governance and development on a planetary scale.

December 2025, Deqing, China *(tbc)*

Rapid Data Collection with UAVs Workshop

In early December 2025, a specialized geospatial training program will convene to explore the rapidly expanding civilian applications of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Once limited to military or niche use, UAVs now play a pivotal role in high-resolution mapping, precision agriculture, forest and environmental monitoring, and even last-mile delivery services. With technological advances and more accessible regulatory frameworks, UAVs equipped with multispectral, thermal, and LIDAR sensors are helping nations, especially those with limited access to costly satellite imagery, enrich and update their national geospatial datasets with timely, scalable information.

Targeting foresters, ecologists, agronomists, surveyors, national mapping agencies, and logistics professionals from developing countries, the program will be delivered by leading institutions including the China Academy for Surveying and Mapping, Wuhan University, and Beihang University. The training aims to bridge digital gaps, boost technical capacity in UAV operations and geospatial data integration, and stimulate innovation across sectors where timely spatial information can drive more informed decision-making and sustainable development outcomes.

September – December 2025 *(tbc)*

Geo-Empower Webinar Series

The UN-GGKIC, guided by its Strategic Plan, is prioritizing capacity building through the launch of the Geo-Empower Webinar Series, an initiative designed to expand geospatial knowledge and its practical application in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These online sessions leverage the reach of virtual platforms to connect a diverse global audience with expert-led discussions on targeted geospatial themes. By aligning with the UN Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), each webinar offers real-world case studies, interactive dialogue, and practical insights, equipping participants to address SDG-related challenges with data-driven strategies, while fostering technical proficiency and international collaboration.

The first two webinars address urgent geospatial applications *in marine ecosystems* and *cultural heritage conservation*. The "Monitoring the Blue Edge" session explores innovations in coastal and marine mapping to advance SDGs 13 and 14, while the heritage-focused webinar promotes geospatial tools like AI-driven mapping and 3D modeling to safeguard cultural assets under pressure from climate change and urbanization. Both sessions demonstrate how emerging geospatial technologies can be leveraged for real-world impact, fostering informed action and long-term resilience across sectors and regions.