



# United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress

## Why in News

Recently, it was announced that the **second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC)** will be held **in Hyderabad, India, in 2022**. The event would show a glimpse of **India's evolving geospatial ecosystem**.

## Key Points

### ▪ About UNWGIC:

- **Organised By:** United Nation Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)
- **Objective:** To enhance international collaboration among the Member States and relevant stakeholders in Geospatial information management and capacities.
- **Timeframe:** It is conducted every four years. The **first UNWGIC was organized by China in October 2018**.
- **Theme of Second UNWGIC:** Geo-enabling the Global Village.

### ▪ About UN-GGIM:

- The UN-GGIM aims at playing a leading role in setting the **agenda for the development of global geospatial information** and to promote its use to address key global challenges.
  - It works towards implementing the 2030 Agenda for **Sustainable Development** and to keep the promise to leave no one behind.
- In 2009, the **United Nations Statistics Division**, convened in New York, an informal consultative meeting with geospatial information experts from different regions of the world.
- In 2010, the United Nations Secretariat was requested to initiate discussion and prepare a report for the approval of the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** on global coordination of geospatial information management, including the consideration of the possible creation of a United Nations Forum on GGIM.
- In **2011**, the ECOSOC forum concluded with the acceptance of the **Seoul Declaration** on Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM).

### ▪ Geospatial Technologies:

- Geospatial technologies is a term used to describe the range of modern tools contributing to the geographic mapping and analysis of the Earth and human societies.
- These technologies have been evolving in some form since the first maps were drawn in prehistoric times.
- The science and art of photographic interpretation and map making was accelerated during the **Second World War (1939-45)** and during the **Cold War (1945-1989)** it took on new dimensions with the advent of satellites and computers.
- Broadly speaking, it consists of the following technologies:
  - **Remote Sensing:** It is imagery and data collected from space- or airborne camera

and sensor platforms.

- **GIS (Geographic Information System)**: A GIS is a computer system for capturing, storing, checking, and displaying data related to positions on Earth's surface.
- **GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System)**: It is a general term describing any satellite constellation that provides positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) services on a global or regional basis.
- **3D Scanning**: It is the process of analyzing a real-world object or environment to collect data on its shape and possibly its appearance.

#### ▪ **Geospatial Policy of India:**

- The Ministry of Science and Technology has recently [released new guidelines for the Geo-Spatial Sector in India](#).
- The news policy liberalises the sector to a more competitive field. Following are the objectives of new policy:

##### • **Open Access:**

- Open access to its geospatial data and services, including maps, for all Indian entities, with the exception of sensitive defence or security-related data.
- It envisages the benefits of geospatial technologies to reach urban as well as rural areas, and make geospatial information accessible to all.
- For example, [SVAMITA scheme](#) seeks to empower rural population through which a digital certificate of landholding is being given to rural landowners.

##### • **Restrictions Removed:**

- Indian corporations and innovators are no longer subject to restrictions nor do they require prior approvals before they collect, generate, prepare, disseminate, store, publish, update digital geospatial data and maps within the territory of India.

#### ▪ **Other Recent Initiatives:** The Union government has also launched web portals to offer geospatial data.

- **Sarathi**: The [Survey of India](#) has developed a web Geographic Information System (GIS) called Sarathi. It will help users in creating applications for geospatial data visualisation, manipulation, and analysis without a lot of resources at their end.
- **Online Maps Portal**: The online maps portal of Survey of India has over 4,000 maps with national, state, district, and tehsil level data that have been indexed for end users.
- **Manchitrans: National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organization (NATMO)** has released thematic maps such as the cultural map of India, the climactic map, or the economic map, on this portal.
  - NATMO, functioning as a subordinate department under the Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Science & Technology, with its headquarters at Kolkata.
- **Bhuvan**, is the national Geo-portal **developed and hosted by ISRO** comprising Geo Spatial Data, Services and Tools for Analysis.
- The Association of Geospatial Industries has released a report titled ["Potential of Geospatial Technologies for the Water Sector in India"](#).

**[Source: PIB](#)**

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