

UN-GGIM.AFRICA

Africa Perspectives

CLINTON HEIMANN
AFRICA GIS CONFERENCE
ACCRA • 20 NOVEMBER 2025



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United Nations Secretariat
Global Geospatial Information Management

Positioning geospatial information to address global challenges
ggim.un.org

UN-GGIM. AFRICA | GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS

UN-GGIM: Africa is the regional coordination mechanism mandated to strengthen geospatial governance across the continent.



Executive Board

Chair: Morocco

1st Vice-Chair: Burkina Faso

2nd Vice-Chair: Mozambique

1st Rapporteur: Burundi

2nd Rapporteur: Congo

Ex-Officio: Ethiopia

Secretariat: UNECA

UN-GGIM Africa (2025/26)
Executive Board -Morocco - Burkina Faso -Mozambique - Burundi - Congo - Ethiopia - ECA
WG 1.IGIF Integrated Geospatial Information Framework - South Africa
WG 2.ISGI Integration of Geospatial & Stats - Cameroon
WG 3.AFREF Geodetic infrastructure - Côte d'Ivoire
WG 4.LAM Land Administration and Management - Morocco

UN-GGIM.AFRICA | THE JOURNEY SO FAR...



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UN-GGIM.AFRICA | KEY PROGRAMMES & INITIATIVES



Policy and legal frameworks

- Study on developing an overarching mechanism for holistic geospatial information governance in Africa, with the overall objective of obtaining a high-level political recognition of the importance of geospatial information in Africa.



Knowledge Capacity

- Under the SDG Data Alliance, many States have taken steps to share and publish their national geospatial data sets, which are critical to tracking progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



Integrated Frameworks

- UN- IGIF : Several countries have started the development of their national action plan utilizing the UN-GGIM approach.
- Most countries remain in the early stages of the needs assessment and situational analysis
- Burundi, Mali, Mozambique and Rwanda, have achieved tangible results.
- GSGF : The Regional Committee, through ECA and in partnership with the national statistical offices of Kenya, Togo and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United Nations Population Fund, organized several capacity-building workshops to empower participants with the skills and knowledge that are needed for the development of geocoding schemes for spatial analysis of census data in Africa



Meetings

- UN-GGIM: Africa 10th Session held back-to-back with the 9th StatCom-Africa (28 Oct – 1 Nov. 2024).
- The 10th Session was attended by more than 80 participants from about 25 African countries.
- UN-GGIM 15th Session in New York 5-9 August 2025
- 7th High-level Forum in Mexico, 8-10 October 2024
- IAC Meetings | UN-GGKIC | UN-GGCE



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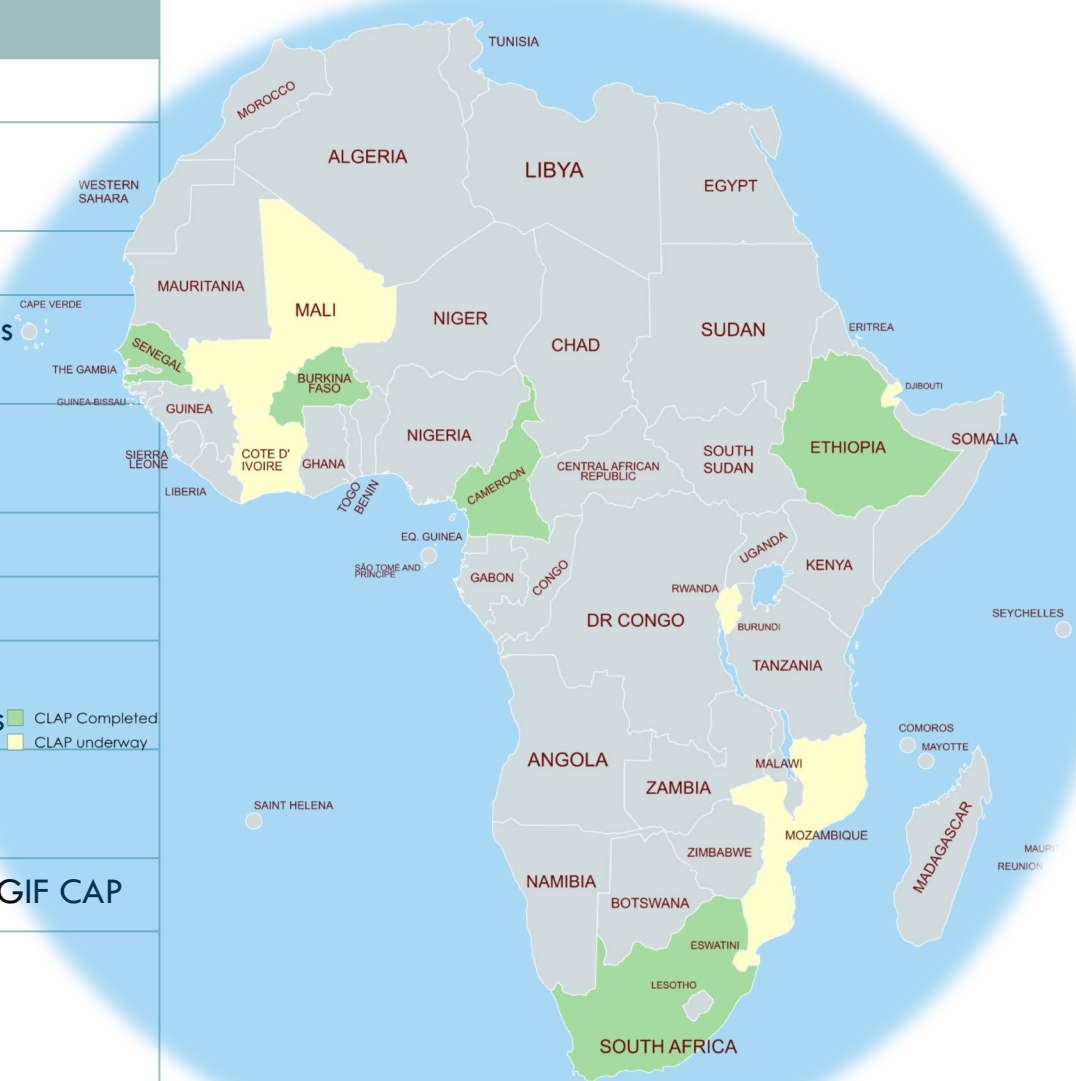
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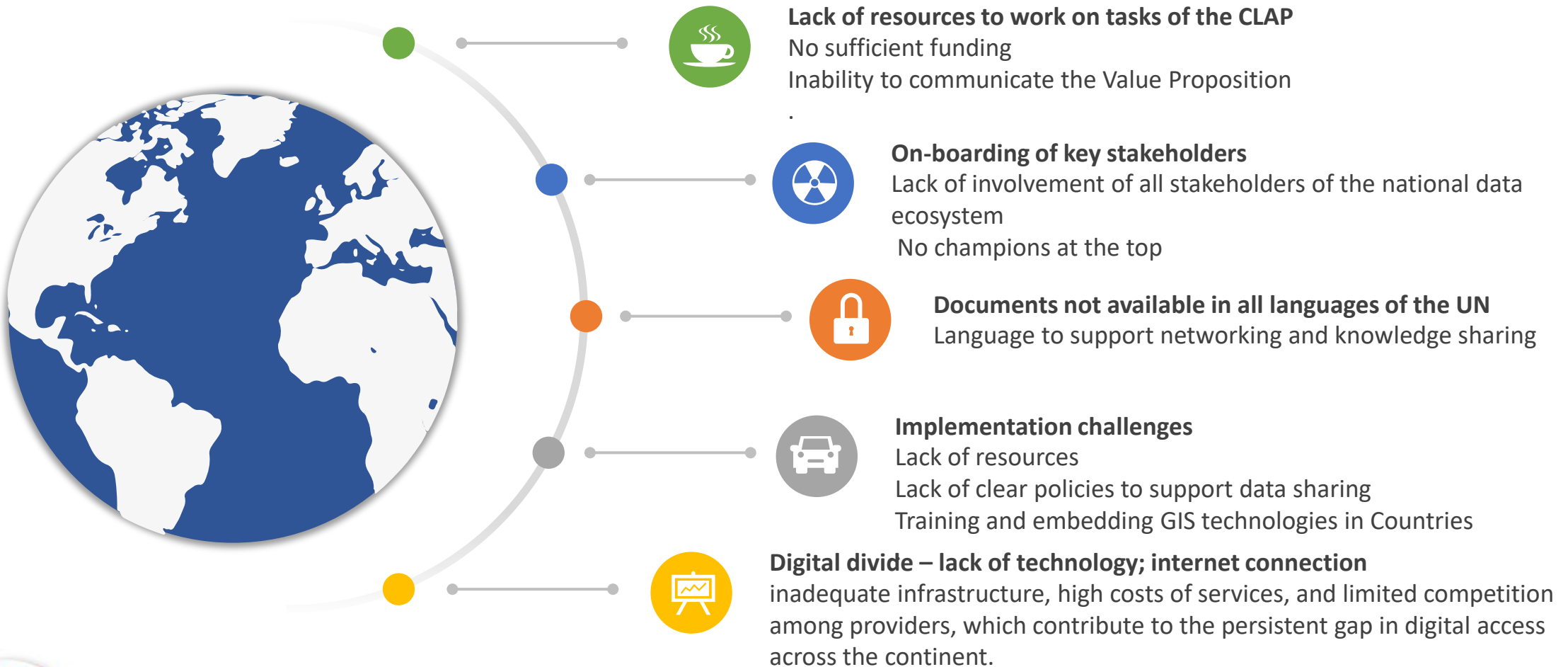
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UN-GGIM.AFRICA | STATE AND PROGRESS IN AFRICA

Country	Model	Status of the CAP
Burkina Faso	Development Account	Completed 2022
Burundi	NSDI Approach Outsourced	National Strategy Developed Alignment with UN-IGI CAP Underway
Cameroon	UN-GGIM Approach	Completed 2024
Côte d'Ivoire	UN-GGIM Approach	Commenced in 2024. Task 4 – 6 Stages
Djibouti	N/A	Early stage of gathering preliminary information
Ethiopia	Development Account	Completed 2022
Eswatini	UN-GGIM Approach	Task 3 Stage
Mali	UN-GGIM Approach	Draft action completed Waiting final adoption by stakeholders
Mozambique	UN-GGIM Approach	Task 3 Stage
Rwanda	UN-GGIM Approach	Aligning draft Strategic Plan with UN-IGIF CAP
South Africa	Hybrid (Outsourced but following the UN-GGIM Approach)	Awaiting contractor appointment
Senegal	World Bank	Completed 2024



UN-GGIM.AFRICA | TYPICAL AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES



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UN-GGIM.AFRICA | FGIE SURVEY RESULTS



Grounded Perspectives

41% of inputs came from public agencies - those closest to implementation pain points



Global South in Focus

Over 70% of responses came from Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America



Diverse Expertise

Technical, policy, civil, and private-sector voices all shaped the findings



Voices from the Field

232 stakeholders in 6 regions have responded to the survey and voiced their opinions

Region	Number of respondents	Percentage
Africa	88	38%
Asia-Pacific	49	21%
Latin America and the Caribbean	30	13%
Europe, North America, Arab States	65	28%
Total	232	100%

- 41% (95 respondents): National and local government agencies
- 23% (54 respondents): Universities and research institutions
- 18% (41 respondents): Private sector geospatial and ICT firms
- 12% (27 respondents): Civil society or NGOs
- 6% (15 respondents): Multilateral agencies and UN bodies



Key findings (1/4)

What's Broken and What Needs Fixing?



1. Siloed Systems

Fragmentation of institutional architectures across agencies delays decisions and blocks innovation

147 out of 232 respondents (63%) described their national or institutional geospatial systems as fragmented across multiple ministries, sectors, or governance tiers.



2. Missing Legal Guardrails

Legal and normative gaps: No clarity on who owns what data—or who's accountable for misuse

119 respondents (51%) flagged the absence of legally enforceable norms governing spatial data ownership, AI usage in public systems, ethical safeguards, and public accountability



3. Skills Without Systems

Disparities in readiness: Tech exists, but capacity and coordination lag far behind

130 respondents (56%) reported significant disparities in institutional and technological readiness, both across and within countries.



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Key findings (2/4)

What's Broken and What Needs Fixing?



4. Value based Governance

Human rights principles need to be integrated into the design of the future geospatial ecosystem, with safeguards against exclusion, surveillance, and elite data monopolies.

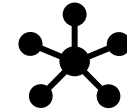
40% of respondents (n=92) explicitly emphasized the need for geospatial systems to embed ethics, rights, equity, and inclusion.. Failure to serve marginalized communities, including: (1) Indigenous populations; (2) Informal settlement dwellers; (3) Rural and underrepresented groups



5. Delivery over theory

A recurring pattern across the survey was a strong sense of frustration with conceptual frameworks that fail to translate into operational tools.

119 respondents (51%) flagged the absence of legally enforceable norms governing spatial data ownership, AI usage in public systems, ethical safeguards, and public accountability. This underscores the need for tools such as budget alignment models, procurement-ready templates, and regionally adapted toolkits.



6. Interoperability

Interoperability must be designed into future geospatial ecosystem, at multiple layers and not only technical, but also legal and procedural.

75 respondents (32%) cited interoperability as an essential but underachieved principle of digital transformation. Government respondents emphasized the absence of shared definitions, inconsistent metadata protocols, and legal fragmentation across departments. Meanwhile, private sector participants called attention to the lack of integration between proprietary platforms and public systems.

Key findings (3/4)

What's Broken and What Needs Fixing?



7. AI and new technologies

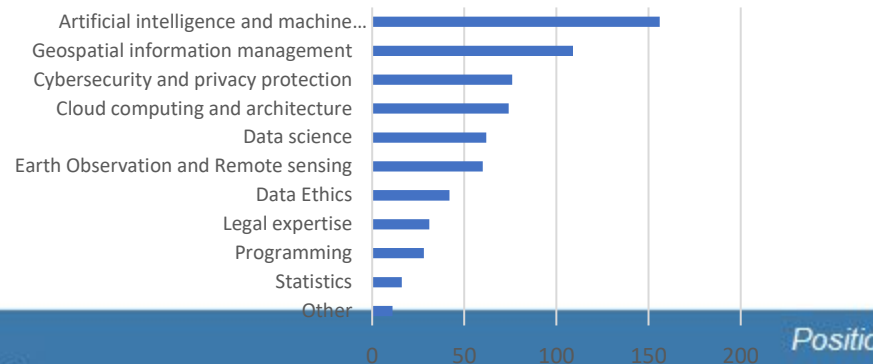
25% of respondents cited AI and blockchain as both transformative and risky, with divergent regional priorities and ethical concerns.

58 respondents expressed a spectrum of positions: (1) Some emphasized potential benefits such as predictive analytics, workflow automation, and real-time data enhancement. (2) raised concerns about ethical risks, algorithmic opacity, and (3) over-reliance on unregulated private-sector platforms.



8. Capacity gaps in key skills

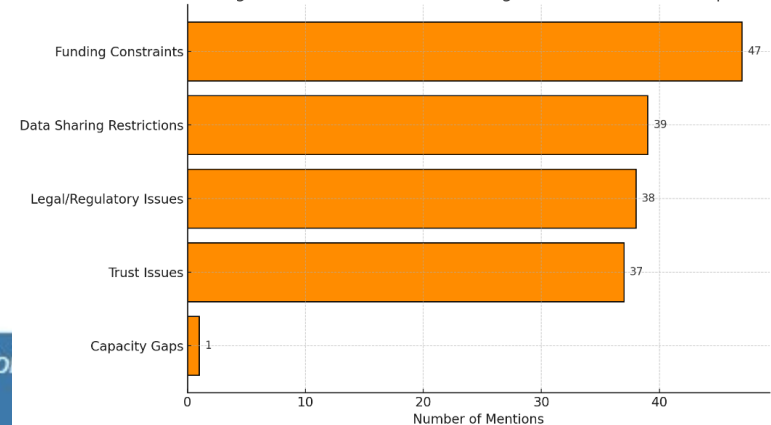
AI/ML, GIS, and legal expertise were most cited; respondents stressed multi-domain training for spatial governance.



9. Barriers to partnerships

Funding constraints (47%), Data sharing restrictions (39), Legal and Regulatory Issues (38). Trust Issues (37). Capacity Gaps (1).

Figure 7: Thematic Barriers to Digital and Data Partnerships



Key findings (4/4)

What's Broken and What Needs Fixing?



10. Emerging Technologies for impact

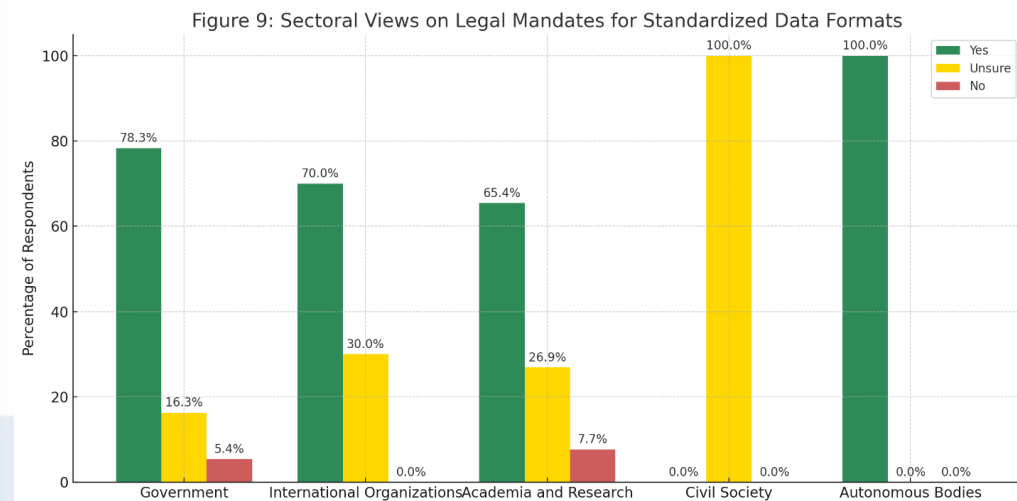
AI will dominate the digital geospatial agenda - many of these technologies are not equally accessible or deployable, particularly in low-connectivity contexts

Artificial Intelligence (135) Automation (50), Geolocation & Mapping (49), and IoT (48). Blockchain (28) and Digital Twins (26): Big Data, Remote Sensing, and Cloud Computing each cited by fewer than 20 respondents, suggesting they are now considered enabling infrastructure rather than “emerging” frontiers.



11. Legal Data Format Standardization

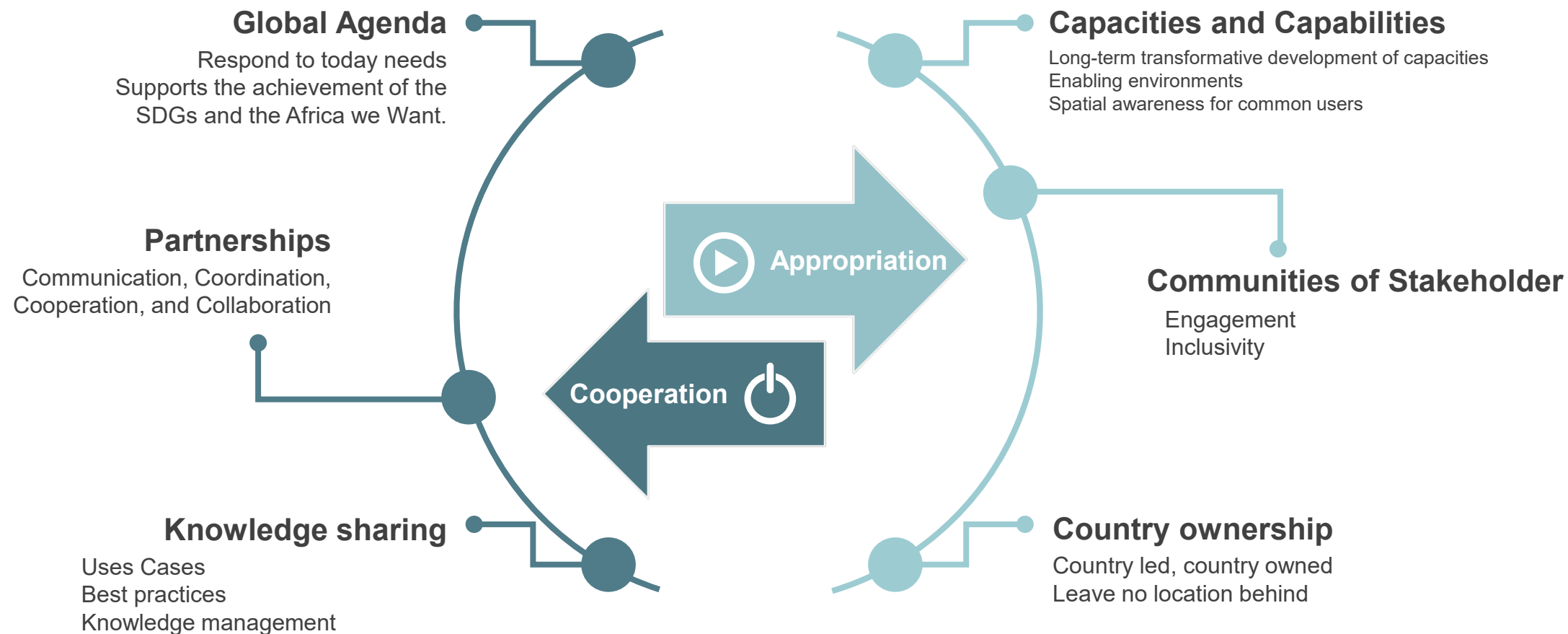
Strong cross-sectoral consensus on data standardization, legal enforcement remains a contentious or unfamiliar concept in non-governmental domains.



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UN-GGIM.AFRICA | OPPORTUNITIES



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UN- GGIM.AFRICA | WHAT NEXT...

✦ Convening

Organizing the twelfth meeting of the Regional Committee
Venue and Date | To be determined

✦ Governance

Completing the establishment of the overarching governance mechanism

Appointing a high-level advisory committee

Identifying an African geospatial champions and/or influential leaders

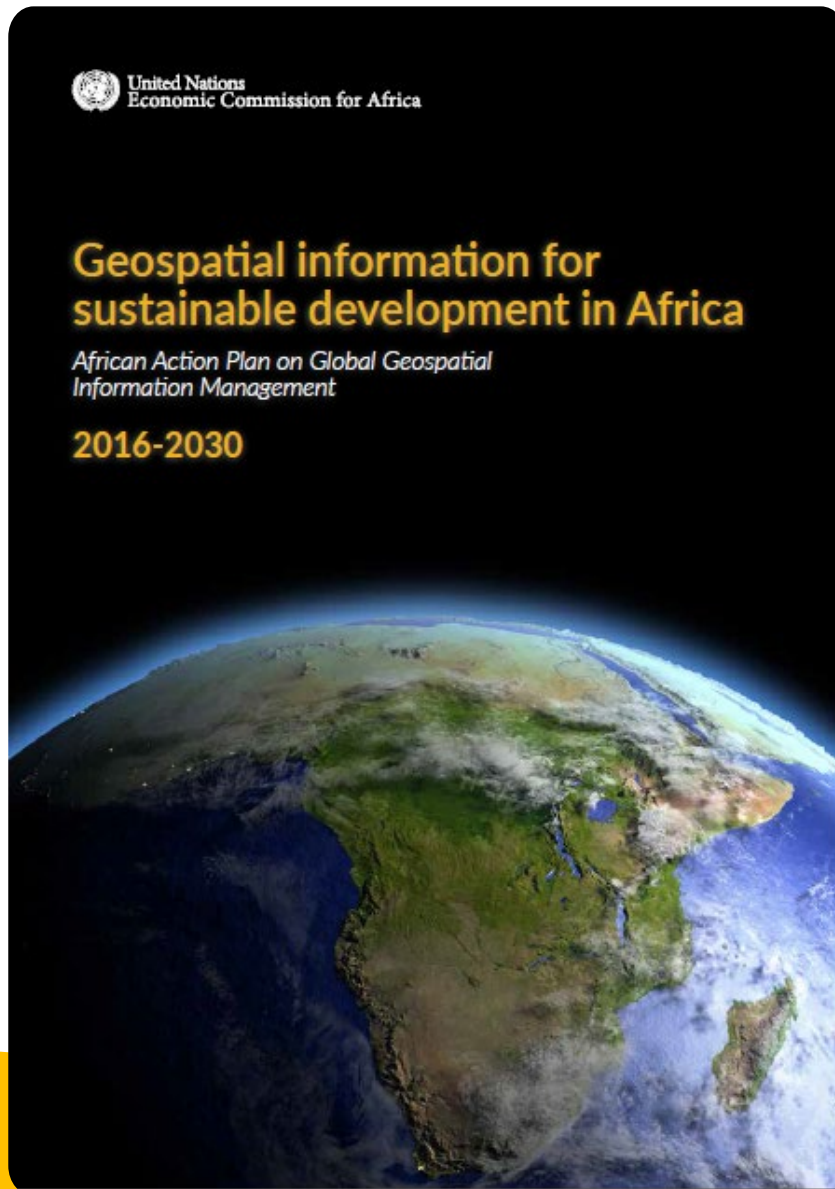
✦ UN-IGIF

Fast-tracking the support to the development and full implementation of national action plans

✦ Innovation

Appraising member states on emerging trends and advancements such GeoAI and working with our Private Sector Network





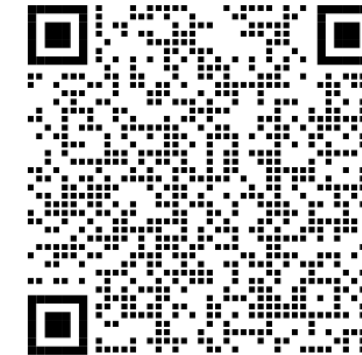
Know More...

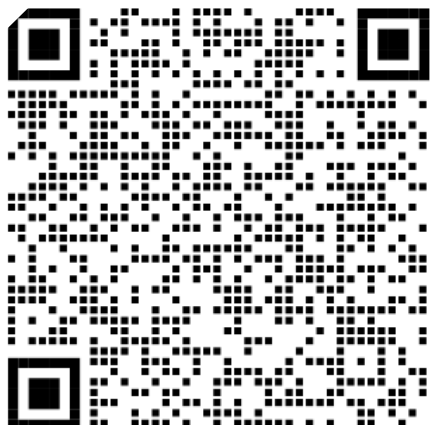
- The African Action Plan

English |



French |





Positioning the Future Geospatial Information Ecosystem

