



Geospatial for Citizens

– *Geo4Cit* –

*Leveraging geospatial technologies for
active citizenship and good governance in Africa!*

C o n c e p t N o t e

1. INTRODUCTION

Africa is at a pivotal point in its development journey. With rapid urbanization, economic growth, and digital transformation, the continent is faced with both significant opportunities and challenges in governance, development, and citizen engagement. Effective governance, transparency, and citizen participation are critical to ensuring sustainable development, particularly in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063.

To address these challenges and mainly the Goal 2, Aspiration 1 of the Agenda 2063 (*Well Educated Citizens and Skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation*), Geospatial for Citizens (GeoCit) proposes to leverage geospatial technologies to strengthen active citizenship and promote good governance across Africa. By combining the power of spatial-enabled governance and a spatially-informed society, GeoCit seeks to empower African citizens and governments to enhance decision-making, increase transparency, and improve the monitoring and implementation of development programs.

Geo4Cit focuses on the **societal and governance applications of geospatial technologies**, complementing the work of scientific and professional geospatial communities across Africa.

This concept note outlines the vision, objectives, and potential impact of GeoCit and seeks to engage stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, academic institutions, private sector players, and geospatial technology experts, to contribute to and participate in the creation of this transformative initiative.

2. RATIONALE

Africa's challenges in governance, public service delivery, and citizen participation can often be traced to limited access to accurate and timely information. Governments struggle to collect and manage data effectively, while citizens often lack the tools and platforms needed to actively engage in decision-making and hold leaders accountable.

Geospatial technologies offer a unique opportunity to bridge this gap. Through the use of geospatial data, geographic information systems (GIS), and spatial analysis, citizens and governments can make better decisions, monitor development progress, and promote accountability.

3. VISION AND MISSION

3.1 Vision

To build a geospatially-informed society in Africa where citizens actively participate in governance and development processes, and where public institutions use spatial intelligence to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficient service delivery.

3.2 Mission

Geo4Cit aims to empower citizens and governments by harnessing geospatial technologies to foster transparency, accountability, and civic engagement, thereby improving public service delivery and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063.

4. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of Geo4Cit are:

1. Promote Active Citizenship: Empower citizens to use geospatial tools to monitor public services, track development projects, and engage in governance processes at local, national, and regional levels.
2. Enhance Government Transparency and Accountability: Support governments in adopting geospatial technologies for planning, decision-making, and public service delivery, with a focus on transparency and accountability.
3. Facilitate Sustainable Development Monitoring: Provide tools and platforms for tracking progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 63 and regional/national level development plans using spatial data.
4. Build Capacity in Geospatial Literacy: Facilitate training programs and workshops to increase geospatial literacy among citizens, government officials, and civil society organizations.
5. Foster Partnerships for Innovation: Establish partnerships with governments, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and private sector players to create a robust ecosystem for geospatial-enabled governance and citizen engagement in Africa.

5. KEY FOCUS AREAS

To achieve its mission and objectives, Geo4Cit will concentrate its efforts on five interconnected focus areas designed to create a comprehensive ecosystem for geospatial-enabled governance and citizen empowerment across Africa.

5.1 Citizen Engagement

Geo4Cit will develop and deploy accessible tools and platforms that enable citizens to actively participate in governance processes through geospatial technologies. These initiatives will empower citizens to:

- Monitor public service delivery in real time across critical sectors including healthcare, education, water and sanitation, and infrastructure development
- Track the progress and implementation of development projects in their communities, from local roads to national programs
- Report issues, challenges, or service gaps related to public infrastructure and services through community reporting systems

- Participate actively in spatial planning and decision-making processes at local and municipal levels

5.2 Spatial-Enabled Governance

Geo4Cit will work collaboratively with governments at local, national, and regional levels to integrate geospatial technologies into core governance, planning, and decision-making processes. This focus area includes:

- Training and capacity building for government officials on the application and interpretation of geospatial tools and data
- Developing robust spatial databases and data infrastructures to support evidence-based policymaking and resource allocation
- Applying geospatial analysis to improve the delivery and equity of public services, including mapping healthcare facilities, schools, roads, water points, and other critical infrastructure
- Promoting transparency and accountability by making spatial data publicly accessible through open data platforms

5.3 Sustainable Development Monitoring

Geospatial data and analysis are essential tools for tracking progress on continental, regional, and national development agendas. Geo4Cit will provide governments, civil society, and citizens with platforms and tools to:

- Monitor environmental sustainability, including deforestation, land degradation, climate resilience, and natural resource management
- Track urbanization trends, land use changes, and their implications for sustainable development
- Assess health, education, and infrastructure development through spatial analysis and visualization
- Measure progress on specific indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 2063, and regional and national development plans
- Generate accessible reports and visualizations for policymakers, civil society, and the general public

5.4 Capacity Building and innovation

Sustainable impact requires sustained investment in human capital and innovation. Geo4Cit will facilitate comprehensive capacity-building programs to increase geospatial literacy and technical skills across all stakeholder groups:

- Workshops and training programs for citizens, civil society organizations, and government officials on geospatial tools, data interpretation, and applications
- Online training courses and resources on geospatial data collection, processing, analysis, visualization, and dissemination
- Collaboration with universities, training institutions, and research centers to develop and integrate geospatial curricula

- Executive-level seminars for policymakers and senior government officials on the strategic value of geospatial technologies
- Youth innovation programs to engage the next generation of geospatial leaders and entrepreneurs

5.5 Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnerships are fundamental to the success and sustainability of Geo4Cit. The initiative will actively cultivate and maintain strategic collaborations with:

- **Governments, international organizations, and regional bodies:** To support the adoption of geospatial technologies for governance, public service delivery, and development planning, and to align with continental frameworks including the African Union's Agenda 2063
- **Academic and research institutions:** To promote research, innovation, and curriculum development in geospatial applications for governance and development
- **Civil society organizations:** To engage citizens in using geospatial data for advocacy, civic engagement, accountability, and community development
- **Private sector companies and technology partners:** To leverage cutting-edge geospatial technologies, platforms, expertise, and innovation for the implementation and scaling of Geo4Cit programs
- **Development partners and philanthropic organizations:** To mobilize resources, share knowledge, and support pilot initiatives and continental scaling

These partnerships will be operationalized through joint projects, knowledge exchange platforms, collaborative research, policy dialogue, and resource mobilization efforts that advance the shared vision of a geospatially-informed and actively engaged African society.

6. EXPECTED IMPACT

6.1 Improved governance and service delivery

Geo4Cit's use of geospatial tools will enhance government decision-making and planning, leading to more efficient and effective public service delivery. Governments will be able to allocate resources more equitably, track the performance of development projects, and make data-driven decisions.

6.2 Empowered citizens

Citizens will be better informed and equipped to engage in governance processes. By having access to spatial data and platforms for civic participation, they can hold governments accountable and advocate for their rights and needs.

6.3 Progress toward the SDGs and Agenda 63

Geo4Cit will provide governments and civil society with the tools needed to monitor progress on the SDGs and Agenda 63, particularly in areas such as environmental sustainability, urban planning, and infrastructure development.

6.4 Strengthened civic engagement

GeoCit will foster a culture of transparency and accountability by promoting the use of geospatial data to track government performance. This will lead to stronger relationships between citizens and governments and greater public trust in governance institutions.

7. GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

7.1 Geo4Cit as an organisation

Geo4Cit will be established as a continental, non-partisan organisation dedicated to promoting geospatial technologies for governance and citizen empowerment.

Core Functions

- Policy advocacy for spatially-enabled governance.
- Development of citizen-oriented geospatial platforms.
- Research and knowledge production.
- Capacity building and training.
- Partnership facilitation.
- Pilot project implementation.
- Continental coordination and networking.

Governance Structure

- Governing Board
- Executive Secretariat
- Technical Advisory Committees
- Thematic Working Groups
- National and Regional Chapters (*progressively established*)

Geo4Cit will operate in collaboration with governments, regional bodies, and development institutions, while maintaining institutional independence.

7.2 The Geo4Cit biennial conference

The Geo4Cit Conference will serve as the flagship event of the organisation and will be held every two years.

Purpose of the Conference

- Convene policymakers, technologists, civil society, and development partners.
- Showcase innovation and best practices.
- Facilitate dialogue between governments and citizens.
- Promote research and thought leadership.
- Mobilize partnerships and resources.

Conference Outputs

- Policy recommendations.

- Thematic declarations.
- Launch of pilot initiatives.
- Publication of proceedings and research.
- Strengthening of continental networks.

The conference will not be a standalone event but a central pillar of the Geo4Cit movement and organisation.

8. CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

To make Geo4Cit a reality, we are calling on potential contributors and members from across the geospatial, governance, and development sectors to support this initiative. Contributions can take the form of:

Technical Expertise: Providing knowledge and expertise in geospatial technologies, data analysis, and governance.

Capacity Building: Supporting training programs and workshops to build geospatial literacy.

Funding and Resources: Offering financial support or in-kind resources to support the development of Geo4Cit platforms and programs.

Partnerships: Collaborating on pilot projects, research, and advocacy efforts to advance the use of geospatial data in governance.

9. STEPS FOR ESTABLISHMENT

To move forward with Geo4Cit, we are planning the following steps:

Formation of a Core Group: Establish a leadership team to guide the development and launch of GeoCit.

Strategic Planning: Develop a detailed roadmap, including key activities, timelines, and resource needs.

Pilot Projects: Identify key areas for pilot projects that demonstrate the potential of geospatial tools for governance and citizen engagement.

Partnership Development: Engage with governments, civil society, academic institutions, and the private sector to build partnerships for implementation.

Resource Mobilization: Secure funding and technical resources to support GeoCit's launch and long-term sustainability.

Geo4Cit will adopt a phased approach:

Phase 1: Institutional establishment and first Geo4Cit Conference

Phase 2: Pilot projects and platform development

Phase 3: Regional expansion and chapter creation

Phase 4: Full continental operationalization

Resource mobilization will involve partnerships with governments, development partners, academia, and private sector actors.

10. CONCLUSION

Geo4Cit represents a bold continental initiative to place geospatial technologies at the heart of governance, transparency, and citizen empowerment in Africa. By fostering a geospatially-informed society, Geo4Cit will enable citizens and governments to work together to achieve sustainable development goals, promote transparency, and strengthen accountability.

Through a combination of a permanent organisation, a biannual high-level conference, practical implementation platforms, and capacity development programs, Geo4Cit will catalyse a new era of spatial democracy and participatory governance across the continent. We invite you to join us in building this transformative initiative for the future of Africa.

