

Concept Note (draft)
Follow-up Webinar on Utilizing Big Earth Data for the SDGs in SIDS

Date and time: 24 October, Friday, 6:30PM New York Time; 04 November, Tuesday, 7:00AM New York Time

Format: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Organizers:

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

International Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals (CBAS)

1. Background and Rationale:

The 2025 Capacity Building Workshop on “Leveraging Big Earth Data to Evaluate SDGs Progress” held in Beijing, China from 1 to 8 September 2025, brought together more than 20 representatives from 11 Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The workshop aimed to strengthen participants' technical and institutional capacities in applying geospatial technologies and Big Earth Data for sustainable development. Participants gained hands-on experience in utilizing satellite-based datasets, AI-powered platforms, and innovative Earth observation tools to support SDG monitoring, disaster risk reduction, and climate resilience planning

The workshop also introduced the concept of strategic foresight as a complementary approach to data-driven decision-making, highlighting its potential to anticipate emerging risks, develop STI roadmaps, and support long-term planning

As a next step, UN DESA and CBAS will host a follow-up webinar to assess how participants have applied the tools and knowledge gained during the workshop, identify implementation challenges, and explore practical ways to further integrate Big Earth Data into national planning processes. The session will also provide a platform for participants to exchange experiences, seek collaboration opportunities, and consider how foresight approaches can enhance the strategic value and impact of geospatial data in development planning. It also responds directly to one of the workshop's key outcomes, that is the proposal to establish a SIDS Network on Big Data for Development Policies and Actions.

2. Objectives

The follow-up webinar aims to:

1. Review how SIDS participants have applied Big Earth Data tools, methodologies, and platforms since the workshop.

2. Identify key technical, institutional, and policy challenges encountered during implementation.
3. Facilitate peer exchange on practical solutions, collaboration opportunities, and future support needs.
4. Introduce practical entry points for linking data applications with strategic foresight approaches to inform long-term decision-making.
5. Discuss about developing a password-protected online platform to connect SIDS representatives to the Big Earth Data experts, providing timely technical advice, guidance, and knowledge sharing. This platform will allow SIDS participants to post questions, share experiences, and receive responses from CBAS and DESA. Once operational, this platform could serve as a concrete function of the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism Online Platform (2030 Connect), facilitating the transfer of technologies like geospatial data and STI roadmap policy tools to Member States.

3. Expected Outcomes

- A consolidated understanding of how Big Earth Data is being used in national SDG monitoring and planning processes.
- Identification of common capacity gaps and institutional barriers across SIDS.
- A set of actionable recommendations for targeted follow-up support, partnerships, and capacity building.
- Greater awareness of how data specialists can contribute to forward-looking policy and planning efforts.
- Feedback on development of an online platform for real-time interactions and exchanges between SIDS representatives and experts.

4. Target Participants

Participants will include those who attended the 2025 Capacity Building Workshop for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – Leveraging Big Earth Data to Evaluate the SDGs Progress, including trainees and mentors. This session will be in English and by invitation only.

5. Proposed Agenda (1.5 hours)

Time	Session	Description
	Opening & Framing (10 minutes)	Welcome remarks and recap of key outcomes from the 2025 capacity building workshop.
	Data and Strategic Foresight (15 minutes)	Short presentations will discuss how Big Earth Data can be applied to support future-oriented decision-making, illustrating its use in detecting early signals, informing scenario development, and guiding science, technology, and innovation (STI) planning. They will also discuss CBAS data intelligence platforms and highlight ways these tools can be used to enhance evidence-based planning and policy development.
	Country Updates (30 minutes)	Short interventions (around 3 minutes each) from participants on how they have applied Big Earth Data tools, results achieved, and challenges faced, including, where possible, reflections on how their work could support longer-term planning and policy development.
	Group Discussion and Q&A (30 minutes)	A facilitated dialogue on common challenges, technical gaps, and opportunities for collaboration, including a brief exchange on approaches to strengthen the link between data work, long-term planning, and policy. Participants will also identify key areas where further support is needed. Suggestions and professional guidance will be shared by experts accordingly.
	Wrap-Up and Next Steps (5 minutes)	Summary of key points, proposed follow-up actions, and closing remarks.

6. Next Steps

The outcomes of the webinar will inform the design of targeted technical support initiatives, future capacity-building activities, and potential collaboration frameworks under the ABAS and Pact for the Future agendas. It may also help identify opportunities for peer exchange and collaborative learning among SIDS institutions working on integrating geospatial data, strategic foresight, and sustainable development planning.