

Evaluating the potential of UAV technology to enhance the realization of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Fundamental Geospatial Themes: Evidence from SASDI and DLRRD's drone initiatives

Sandy Mufamadi and Vutomi Ndlovu (South Africa)

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SUMMARY

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) characterizes geospatial information as a “digital currency” essential for evidence-based planning and decision-making (UN-GGIM, 2018). Geospatial information is increasingly recognized as a critical resource for monitoring progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly through the use of Fundamental Geospatial Datasets. This paper examines the potential of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) technology to accelerate and strengthen efforts toward achieving the SDGs, with a specific focus on its role in enhancing the availability, accuracy, and implementation of Fundamental Geospatial Data. The study draws on the case of the South African Department of Land Reform and Rural Development's national drone programme to illustrate the application of UAV technology in supporting sustainable development initiatives.

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