



**Digital Earth**  
AFRICA

# Digital Earth Africa

## Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy



## About this document

This Digital Earth Africa Phase II Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy serves to guide DE Africa's activities and approach to advancing gender equality, diversity and social inclusion in line with DE Africa Phase II Outcomes. Implementation will be overseen by the Governing Board. The details within the document are subject to change and an up-to-date version will be maintained by the DE Africa GEDSI Coordinator.

Version Date      14 July 2020      *Approved by*

# Contents

Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy .....	1
Overview .....	4
Introduction .....	4
Context .....	4
DE Africa's GEDSI Strategy .....	6
Guiding principles.....	6
Implementation Plan .....	8
GEDSI Strategies to achieve DE Africa Phase II Outcomes.....	8
Outcome 1: DE Africa is an operationally, technically, and financially sustainable, and inclusive entity in Africa.....	8
Outcome 2: DE Africa is demonstrating environmental and development impact .....	8
Outcome 3: DE Africa is a flagship initiative that promotes the benefits of open and free earth observation data .....	9
Operationalising the GEDSI Strategy .....	10
Roles and responsibilities .....	10
Planning and reporting.....	11
Monitoring, evaluation and learning .....	11
Building internal capacity .....	11

# Overview

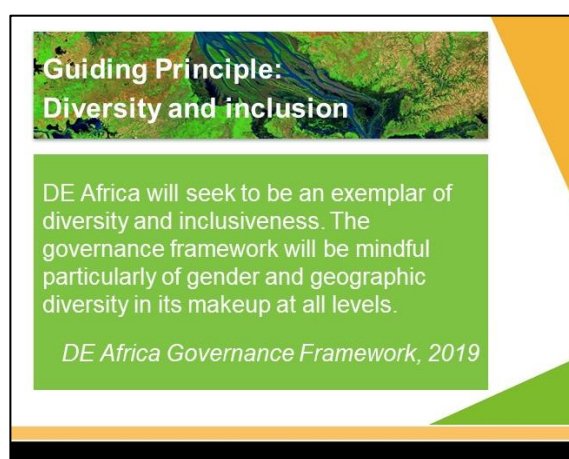
## Introduction

Digital Earth (DE) Africa aims to improve the lives of Africans through access to tailored information for better decision making. DE Africa will provide a routine, reliable and operational service, using earth observations (EO) to deliver decision-ready products enabling policy makers, scientists, the private sector and civil society to address social, environmental and economic changes on the continent and develop an ecosystem for innovation across sectors.

DE Africa Phase II is an AUD 24 million investment over 3 years (2019-22) to support the establishment of the DE Africa platform; support uptake and application; and establish DE Africa as trusted EO infrastructure and capability for the continent. This Phase will deliver three outcomes:

1. DE Africa is an operationally, technically, and financially sustainable, and inclusive entity in Africa
2. DE Africa is demonstrating environmental and development impact
3. DE Africa is a flagship initiative that promotes the benefits of open and free earth observation data

Diversity and inclusion is a Guiding Principle of DE Africa's Governance Framework (see adjacent). *Agenda 2063* calls for 'an Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of its people, especially its women and youth.' Leaving no one behind is a central commitment of the *2030 Agenda* and its *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs). SDG 10 targets reduced inequalities, while SDG 5 specifically targets gender equality. Gender equality and inclusion are also priorities for the Australian aid program, as outlined in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's 2016 *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, and *Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*. Geoscience Australia shares this commitment to diversity and inclusion as outlined in its *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2022*.



## Context

Despite high rates of economic growth, the majority of the world's extreme poor live on the African continent and progress towards the SDGs is slow. While development challenges across Africa's 54 countries are diverse, across the continent women and girls, youth, people with disabilities and marginalised groups face significant barriers to participating in and benefiting from development processes.<sup>1</sup> Many of these barriers are exacerbated by COVID-19 and other pressures across Africa. Increasing food insecurity is a growing concern, particularly for women.<sup>2</sup> Women's roles in water collection in many contexts have also been impacted by COVID-19, both in terms of increasing their workload and the risks of infection they face in collecting water.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> African Union and UN Women (2018) *Women's Rights in Africa*; World Health Organisation and World Bank (2011) *World Report on Disability*; World Bank (2014) *Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

<sup>2</sup> UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (2020) *2019 Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition*.

<sup>3</sup> UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2020) *COVID-19 and Women's Human Rights*.

**Harnessing the potential of all people across Africa is critical to fuelling Africa's pathway out of poverty.** Women are important drivers of development in Africa as leaders of social and political change and as entrepreneurs, however their contributions are understated.<sup>4</sup> With around 100 million youth expected to enter the workforce over the next decade, young people offer great potential for Africa's digital transformation if they can be equipped with skills and employment opportunities.<sup>5</sup> Africa has more younger people with disabilities than other regions of the world and while data is limited, globally their employment rates are estimated to be extremely low.<sup>6</sup> These groups bring untapped skills and expertise, as well as knowledge and experience that can expand the reach and impact of development initiatives.

**Significant data gaps mean women and girls, people with disabilities and marginalised groups are often invisible in analysis,** concealing any discrimination and exclusion across the African continent and limiting targeting of policies and programs to meet the needs of these different groups.<sup>7</sup> In Africa, six of the 17 SDGs have no indicators to monitor progress for women and girls, and data is often not spatially refined enough to support localised programming decisions.<sup>8</sup> Creating a full data picture is a fundamental building block to achieving gender equality and social inclusion.

**New forms of data – such as EO data – offer promising opportunities** to help bridge these data gaps. They are typically less expensive than conventional data collection methods and can be used to collect data in remote and conflict-affected locations. The regularity and granularity of data available through these sources also enables monitoring of rapid environmental, social and economic changes.<sup>9</sup> EO data can also be a driver of economic growth. In addition, skills and information have been identified as key barriers to the success of female-led start-ups and entrepreneurs in Africa.<sup>10</sup>

**Inequalities are also evident within the geospatial sciences sector, where representation of women is low.** Globally, women represent around 30% of researchers in STEM-related fields and there are almost twice as many men as women working in the GIS industry, with greater imbalances in more specialised and senior roles.<sup>11</sup> Contributors to these imbalances include: social norms that deter women from pursuing STEM studies at all levels; limited diversity of leadership across the geospatial sciences sector and lower visibility of these leaders; and barriers to professional development opportunities.<sup>12</sup>

There is **growing commitment to gender equality, diversity and social inclusion globally and across the African continent**, both as important outcomes themselves and as a critical means of achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Many organisations in the geospatial sciences sector are taking steps to strengthen their approach to diversity and inclusion and to change their ways of working. Numerous organisations and networks have been established to specifically address barriers to participation and leadership in geospatial sciences for women, youth, and people with disabilities. Change is slow, but these efforts provide a strong foundation for raising awareness and driving action to create sustained, inclusive change across the sector.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank Group, *Profiting from Parity: Unlocking the Potential of Women's Businesses in Africa*.

<sup>5</sup> African Development Bank (2020) *African Economic Outlook: Developing Africa's Workforce for the Future*.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Data2x (2017) *Big Data and the Well-Being of Women and Girls*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid; UN Women (2019) *Advancing Administrative Sources of Data for Monitoring Gender-Specific Sustainable Development Goals in Africa*.

<sup>9</sup> Data2x (2017) *Big Data and the Well-Being of Women and Girls*.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank Group, *Profiting from Parity: Unlocking the Potential of Women's Businesses in Africa*.

<sup>11</sup> Dempsey, C (2014) *Gender in the GIS Workforce*, [www.gislounge.com/gender-gis-workforce/](http://www.gislounge.com/gender-gis-workforce/), accessed 9 April 2020.

<sup>12</sup> UNESCO (2017) *Cracking the code: Girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics*, UNESCO eAtlas of Research and Experimental Development, Section 3: Women in Science, <https://tellmaps.com/uis/rd/#!/tellmap/-1341198154>, accessed 10 April 2020.



## DE Africa's GEDSI Strategy

The DE Africa Phase II Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Strategy will frame DE Africa's GEDSI-related activities until the end of Phase II in 2022. It also aims to drive DE Africa's establishment as a genuinely GEDSI-oriented entity by embedding GEDSI considerations across DE Africa's systems, activities and organisational culture. In this way the GEDSI Strategy provides the foundation for DE Africa to advance GEDSI outcomes beyond Phase II and into the future.

The Strategy will focus on geographic diversity across the African continent, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion, noting that inclusive practices and decision-making are likely to deliver benefits for all individuals who face barriers to participation.

DE Africa recognises that there are opportunities to advance GEDSI outcomes across all of its work and that concerted efforts are required to ensure these opportunities are realised. GEDSI considerations will be mainstreamed into all DE Africa's existing work areas and additional targeted activities will be undertaken to advance GEDSI outcomes under each of DE Africa's outcomes.

The Implementation Plan section of this Strategy details how GEDSI will be addressed across each program outcome and this is summarised in the GEDSI Strategy Summary diagram on page 7.

### Guiding principles

To maximise the sustainability and impact of its efforts advancing gender equality, diversity and social inclusion, DE Africa will pursue its work in accordance with the following Guiding Principles:

- **Value diversity and actively involve people from diverse groups** and the organisations representing them in all its work.
- Prioritise initiatives that **align with DE Africa's strengths and value-add** to leverage its organisational expertise.
- **Collaborate with and support existing initiatives** wherever possible to combine its efforts and increase the sustainability of its work.
- **Adopt a twin track approach** of embedding GEDSI considerations across all DE Africa activities as well as undertaking targeted activities to advance GEDSI outcomes.
- **Generate knowledge and learning and actively share this** with partners and across the geospatial science sector.



Photo: DE Africa Establishment Team, Nairobi 2019

## Digital Earth Africa

### Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy Summary

Phase II Components	 <b>Sustainable Supply</b>	 <b>Demand and Uptake</b>	 <b>Regional and Global Engagement</b>
DE Africa Phase II Outcomes	<b>EOP0 1: DE Africa is an operationally, technically, and financially sustainable, and inclusive entity in Africa</b>	<b>EOP02: DE Africa is demonstrating environmental and development impact</b>	<b>EOP03: DE Africa is a flagship initiative that promotes the benefits of open and free earth observation data</b>
GEDSI Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diverse membership of the Governing Board (GB), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Stakeholder Community Group (SCG) and discussion of GEDSI issues by these bodies</li> <li>GEDSI Champions within the GB and TAC</li> <li>GEDSI Reference Group in the SCG</li> <li>Integrate GEDSI considerations into DE Africa's operational strategies</li> <li>Diverse and inclusive co-design teams</li> <li>Diversity in DE Africa's management, technical and operational staffing profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product Development Plans will outline GEDSI priorities</li> <li>GEDSI lens applied to the prioritisation of use cases and user testing</li> <li>Embed GEDSI in partnership MOUs and seek to collaborate with all partners</li> <li>Ensure DE Africa's capacity building opportunities benefit diverse groups and promote diversity in partners' capacity building activities</li> <li>Establish partnerships with GEDSI-oriented groups and networks</li> <li>Convene professional development activities for diverse groups to support networking and career development</li> <li>Conduct a digital accessibility review of DE Africa's website and key documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to GEDSI policy processes and raising the profile in geospatial science global forums</li> <li>Collaborate with and drawing on the expertise of African-based initiatives that advance GEDSI outcomes</li> <li>Target communications to reach diverse groups and to promote GEDSI messages</li> <li>Promote and support diverse participation and representation at events</li> <li>Public diplomacy and policy engagement to raise awareness and influence policy outcomes</li> <li>Showcase diverse leaders to challenge stereotypes</li> <li>Engage in events to profile and share learning on advancing GEDSI outcomes</li> </ul>



# Implementation Plan

## GEDSI Strategies to achieve DE Africa Phase II Outcomes

The following section details the GEDSI strategies to be delivered within each of the three DE Africa Phase II Outcomes. Indicators that will be used to assess progress towards these GEDSI strategies are included in the DE Africa Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework and summarised at Annex 1.

### Outcome 1: DE Africa is an operationally, technically, and financially sustainable, and inclusive entity in Africa

Diversity in DE Africa's governance and operations is important to ensure participation of diverse groups from across the African continent and to provide leadership in advancing GEDSI outcomes, and because of the benefits this will bring to DE Africa's sustainability and impact.

#### GEDSI Strategies

To **mainstream GEDSI considerations** into its governance and operations, DE Africa will:

- Ensure that membership of its Governing Board (GB), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Stakeholder Community Group (SCG) reflect its commitment to broad geographic representation from across the continent, gender equality and diversity.
- Include GEDSI as a standing item on GB and TAC meetings and invite experts who represent diverse groups to these meetings to ensure an informed and expert discussion.
- Identify male and female champions within the GB and TAC to actively promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion in all decision-making.
- Integrate GEDSI considerations into DE Africa's operational strategies as relevant.
- Ensure that co-design teams are diverse and inclusive.
- Ensure diversity in DE Africa's management, technical and operational staffing profile.

In addition, DE Africa will undertake the following **targeted activity** to advance GEDSI outcomes:

- Establish a GEDSI Reference Group within the SCG to provide ongoing expert input into DE Africa's activities.

### Outcome 2: DE Africa is demonstrating environmental and development impact

DE Africa is committed to ensuring that that development impacts benefit diverse groups across the African continent. Ensuring early consideration of GEDSI factors in DE Africa's technical program and integrating GEDSI consideration up-front in 'use-case' strategy development is key to ensuring data, products and services will benefit women, youth and people with disabilities across the African continent. Ensuring that diverse groups participate in capacity building opportunities and are supported to use and apply DE Africa products is also critical.



## GEDSI Strategies

To **mainstream GEDSI considerations** into its data, products and service development and delivery processes, DE Africa will:

- Require Product Development Plans to identify how and which GEDSI priorities the products will address.
- Apply a GEDSI lens to prioritisation of use cases and user testing to ensure a diversity of users is considered, and product marketing will include deliberate strategies to reach diverse audiences.
- Seek to collaborate with all partner organisations to increase our collective impact on GEDSI outcomes. DE Africa's commitment to GEDSI will guide decisions about potential partners and diversity and inclusion will be included as a core value in partnership memorandums of understanding (MOUs). DE Africa will work with partners to identify priorities and opportunities to advance diversity and inclusion throughout each partnership.
- Work with partners to ensure that capacity building opportunities include a diverse range of individuals, in line with the diversity and inclusion principles of its Capacity Development Strategy. Where representation opportunities and trainings are led by DE Africa itself, deliberate strategies will be used to foster diverse participation including accessible venues and advertising in diverse networks.

In addition, DE Africa will undertake the following **targeted activities** to advance GEDSI outcomes:

- Establish partnerships with organisations and networks whose core focus is addressing development needs for women, youth and people with disabilities across the African continent.
- Convene professional development opportunities for women in geospatial sciences to support them to build a professional community, for example through mentoring, networking events or hackathons.
- Conduct a digital accessibility review of DE Africa's website and key performance documents to increase accessibility of key documents for diverse groups such as people with disabilities.



Photo: Deputy Minister for Republic of Sierra Leone, the Hon Mamadi Gobeh Kamara, speaking at DE Africa Day, Nairobi 2019

## Outcome 3: DE Africa is a flagship initiative that promotes the benefits of open and free earth observation data

DE Africa recognises that being a flagship initiative includes being a leader in advancing GEDSI through all its activities. DE Africa will actively promote the benefits that EO data can deliver for diverse groups. It will use its position to engage in policy processes and national, regional and global forums to raise the profile and advance opportunities for diverse groups. DE Africa will also be a leader in promoting and showcasing diversity and the benefits this brings.

## GEDSI Strategies

To **mainstream GEDSI considerations** into DE Africa's work raising the profile and demonstrating the benefits of EO data, DE Africa will:

- Use its position in global forums to contribute to global initiatives such as the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) Secretariat's gender and diversity policy process, to convene and participate in sessions at geospatial sciences forums, and to publish in academic journals to raise the profile of gender equality, diversity and inclusion and to share learning across the sector.
- Engage with African-based initiatives that advance GEDSI outcomes to amplify the impact and reach of those groups in line with our principles and also to tap into knowledge, skills and networks across the African continent.
- Include a specific GEDSI plan within its Communications Strategy to actively reach out to diverse groups and embed GEDSI considerations into its communications.

In addition, DE Africa will undertake the following **targeted activities** to advance GEDSI outcomes:

- Promote and support diverse participation in events across the geospatial sciences sector by advocating to organisers for diverse speakers at events and funding targeted individuals to attend.
- Leverage public diplomacy and policy networks across the region to raise GEDSI awareness and influence policy outcomes.
- Challenge stereotypes by profiling and showcasing diverse leaders across the sector through social media networks and in all its communications.
- Engage in geospatial science forums on events focused on diversity and inclusion.

## Operationalising the GEDSI Strategy

### Roles and responsibilities

#### DE Africa Staff

Implementation of the GEDSI Strategy will be the responsibility of all DE Africa staff under the leadership of the GA Establishment Team Managing Director reporting to the Governing Board. GEDSI deliverables will be included in Program Implementation Workplans and individual performance plans for ongoing and non-permanent staff to drive accountability for delivery of these actions.

#### GEDSI Champions

GEDSI champions will be identified among members of DE Africa's Governing Board and Technical Advisory Committee. Their role will be to raise GEDSI issues and actively promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion in decision-making within these governance bodies. The Champions will be supported to fulfill this role by the DE Africa GEDSI coordinator.

#### GEDSI Reference Group

The GEDSI Reference Group will comprise members of the Stakeholder Community Group who have expertise and experience advancing diversity and inclusion. They will provide input to the Program Office on GEDSI-related aspects of DE Africa's work and participate in teleconferences and webinars on GEDSI-related topics where possible. They will also provide input on the programme for the DE Africa annual meeting. The GEDSI Coordinator will coordinate the Reference Group.

## GEDSI Coordinator

The GEDSI Coordinator will coordinate implementation of the GEDSI Strategy and will build the individual and institutional capacity within DE Africa to deliver on GEDSI priorities into the future. The GEDSI Adviser will have expertise in relevant gender, diversity and social inclusion issues in African contexts and will draw on additional external expertise where required. Key responsibilities include:

- Delivering training for staff and partners, with external input as required.
- Coordinating input of GEDSI activities into the DE Africa Annual Plan in consultation with DE Africa staff and stakeholders, and support the Managing Director to lead implementation, monitoring and reporting on these activities.
- Providing advice across DE Africa's operational teams on incorporating GEDSI considerations into policies, planning and activities
- Supporting DE Africa's governing bodies to consider and address GEDSI-related issues including through analysis and briefings
- Identifying potential new partners and supporting engagement with partners

## Planning and reporting

GEDSI actions and responsibilities will be integrated into DE Africa's planning and review cycle as set out in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework. GEDSI priorities will be included in the Program Implementation Workplan and monitored through quarterly and annual review processes. GEDSI priorities will be specifically addressed through the annual planning process and reported on through a dedicated GEDSI section in DE Africa's annual report.

## Monitoring, evaluation and learning

A summary of the GEDSI Strategy performance indicators, which form part of DE Africa's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework, is at **Attachment A**. Beyond these indicators, DE Africa operational, governance and capacity development data will also be disaggregated by geographic diversity, gender and disability.

DE Africa's annual 'whole of program reflect and refocus' workshop will also include a specific session on GEDSI, providing an opportunity to reflect on progress and adjust strategy and actions.

Independent evaluations set out in DE Africa's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework will also assess the extent to which DE Africa is achieving the outcomes of this strategy and how this strategy has increased the impact of DE Africa.

## Building internal capacity

DE Africa will embed GEDSI considerations within its operational systems to build its capacity and culture to deliver on this strategy.

## Leadership

DE Africa's management team will be leaders in actively fostering and supporting diversity and inclusion within their teams and across the organisation. This will include participating in training and supporting their teams to apply learning in their workplace and work. They will also support celebration of diversity, such as by participating in events. Managers will support employees with any special

needs to actively expand their professional opportunities. They will also ensure diverse representation and professional development opportunities within their teams and work areas.

### **Training and awareness raising**

Training on gender equality, diversity and disability inclusion will be conducted for all staff to ensure they are equipped to give effect to DE Africa's GEDSI commitments. In addition, all staff will participate in training on this strategy and their responsibilities for its implementation. Staff may also need additional training to enable them to fulfill GEDSI-related components of their work, depending on their role.

DE Africa will also engage in events to raise awareness of issues related to GEDSI. For example, this could include campaigns such as 16 Days of Activism and White Ribbon Day, or celebrations of diversity across the African continent.

### **Human resource management**

Gender equality, diversity and inclusion will be specifically addressed within DE Africa's human resources policy. DE Africa is committed to maintaining a diverse management, technical and operational staffing profile (see Outcome 1). It will do this by explicitly encouraging diverse groups to apply in employment advertisements and disseminating advertisements through networks that reach diverse audiences. In addition, recruitment approaches will be designed to meet particular needs of women, people with disabilities and people from diverse backgrounds and to eliminate unconscious bias against these groups. Reasonable support, adjustments and/or modifications will be provided to accommodate diverse abilities and needs within DE Africa's workplace.



## Annex 1: Summary of Performance Indicators

See *DE Africa Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework* for information on data collection and reporting

Outcome	Performance Indicators
Outcome 1: DE Africa is an operationally, technically, and financially sustainable, and inclusive entity in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diversity of individuals and organisations represented through the Governing Board (GB), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Stakeholder User Group.</li> <li>- Evidence of the effectiveness of governing bodies, including in regards to advancing GEDSI outcomes.</li> <li>- Diversity of co-design teams.</li> <li>- Assessed accessibility of key products, reports and web portals.</li> <li>- Number and diversity of management, technical and operational positions established within DE Africa.</li> </ul>
Outcome 2: DE Africa is demonstrating environmental and development impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number, diversity and type of policy, program, operational (etc) decisions improved by using DE Africa.</li> <li>- Number and diversity of benefits resulting from DE Africa.</li> <li>- Number, diversity and type of partnerships established.</li> <li>- Number, diversity and type of individuals/ organisations accessing / using DE Africa.</li> <li>- Number, diversity and scope of third-party applications developed using DE Africa</li> <li>- Number and diversity of individual use cases/case studies (notebooks) with a Champion user who are demonstrably using the notebook to inform innovations.</li> <li>- Number and diversity of capacity building and professional development support recipients (and satisfaction with training).</li> </ul>
Outcome 3: DE Africa is a flagship initiative that promotes the benefits of open and free earth observation data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of DE Africa's profile as an organisation driving gender equality, diversity and social inclusion.</li> <li>- Evidence of DE Africa influencing the EO sector (including free and open policy, programming, and GEDSI approaches).</li> <li>- Number of communication products / events (including with a GEDSI focus) tailored and available for a diversity of stakeholder groups.</li> <li>- Number and diversity of audiences reached.</li> </ul>