

56th IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)  
Recent Developments in Space Law (5)

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PERSPECTIVES FOR A NATIONAL GI POLICY (INCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING  
NATIONAL REMOTE SENSING, MAP AND DATA SHARING POLICIES)

**Abstract**

Government of India is taking up the implementation of a National GIS – the core of which is a well-founded Geographic Information (GI) Asset that is seamlessly available for the whole nation, is continuously maintained/updated and would power many a GIS Decision Support applications for governance, enterprises and citizens. Space- and aerial-based Earth Observation (EO) data; survey and satellite-based positioning data; Geographical Information Systems or GIS databases/applications will be mainstay around which such a National GIS would be built.

A Department of Science and Technology (DST) sponsored policy-research project was taken up by National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS). As part of the project, the international scenario of EO and GIS and Image Policies has been studied and compared and emerging policies of some nations active in this field across the world have been analysed – which helped trend-definition of the EO and GI Policy scene in the international domain. Similarly, the national eco-system and environment of GI policy has been analysed – especially from the technology, user needs and national security considerations. In specific, a key assessment and analysis of the existing individual policies for satellite remote sensing and EO, in the form of Remote Sensing Data Policy (RSDP), Open Map Policy for topographic maps and the National Data Sharing Policy that spells out sharing principles of information generated using public funds have been detailed. Thirdly, 62 key parameters (14 parameters pertain to EO Imaging; 11 to satellite-based positioning; 9 to advanced surveying; 7 to mapping/cartography; 14 to GIS databases/applications and 7 to eco-system issues) of national importance for GI policy definition have been identified and analysed in GI Policy context for India. Finally, an integrating framework of a National GI Policy has been determined – integrating EO images, satellite-based positioning, advanced surveying, mapping and GIS geo-databases/applications – ultimately outlining national guidelines for GI creation, usage, sharing and also creating a national regime for its protected interests and development.

This is a first of the kind study on GI Policy – comprehensively covering EO imaging, mapping, surveying, GIS and positioning a holistic policy perspective for National GIS. The report (available at <http://eprints.nias.res.in:8081/339/>) has built a foundation for a national debate on GI Policy.

The paper will discuss the report and provide an over-arching perspective of what is the National GI Policy and its next implementation steps.