

INDIA GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) GEOSPATIAL & SPACE BUSINESS SUMMIT

Abu Dhabi, UAE | October 28, 2025

Concept Note



India & Gulf Cooperation Council

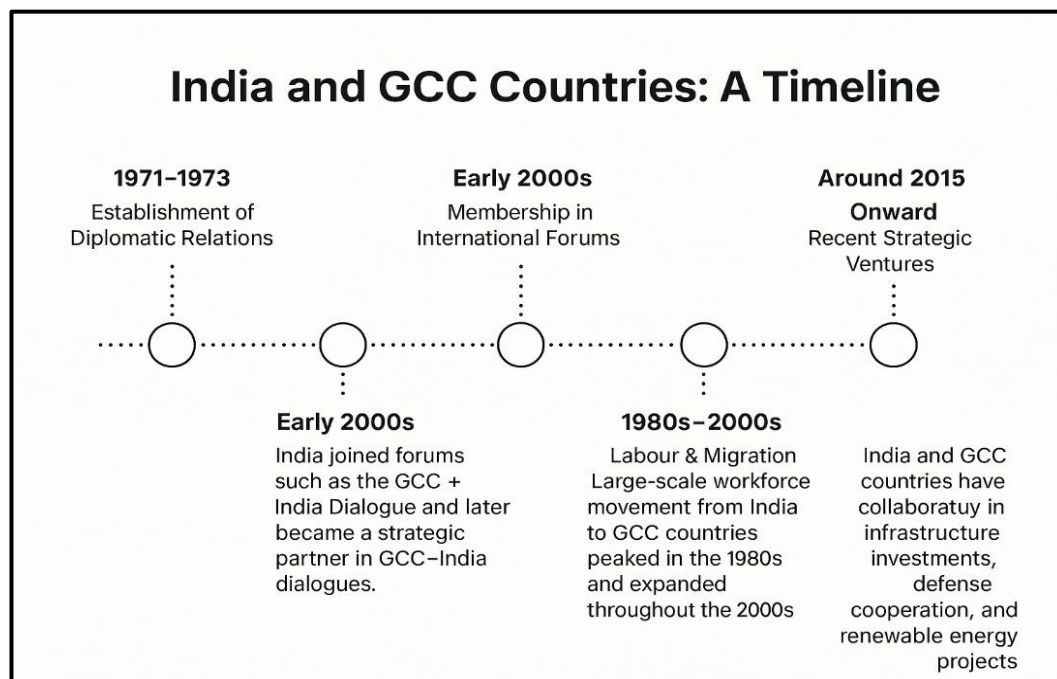
The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a collective entity (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) has vital significance for India and constitutes the “extended” neighbourhood of India. The region’s substantial oil and gas reserves are of immense importance for India’s energy security. Through collaborative initiatives in trade, investment, infrastructure development, and people to people ties, this partnership not only reinforces economic growth within the region and India but also contributes to a more stable and prosperous global economy.

Strategic Dialogue

From the strategic point of view, India and GCC jointly share the aspiration for political stability and security in the region and the same is translated into efforts for peace, security and stability in the Gulf region and South Asia creating further opportunities for India GCC cooperation in the future. The GCC states are also going through significant transformation, and therefore, the areas of cooperation are also broadening to new horizons.

- The first-ever India-GCC Political Dialogue was held on the side-lines of the United Nations General Assembly on September 2003 marking a new era in the India-GCC relationship. Further, during EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar’s visit to Riyadh in September, 2022, India and GCC signed an MoU on the Mechanisms of Consultations followed by the first India GCC Senior Officials Meeting held in March 20, 2023 in Riyadh.

- In year 2024, the first ever India GCC Joint Ministerial Meeting for Strategic Dialogue was held in September, 2024 in Riyadh. This was the first meeting between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) at the Foreign Minister's level witnessing the adoption of a **Joint Action Plan 2024-2028** for undertaking various joint activities in diverse areas including health, trade, security, agriculture and food security, transportation, energy, culture, amongst other common concerns.



Defence Cooperation

Military-security cooperation between India and some of the Gulf Cooperation Council states has gained steady momentum in recent years evidenced by frequent visits of high-level officials and conduct of bilateral military exercises. What has brought the military-security establishments of India and these states are their shared threat perceptions, particularly their concerns regarding cross-border terrorism. Another important contributory factor is the ongoing military modernisation both in India and the GCC countries.

Additionally, India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are deepening their defense technology cooperation, focusing on co-development of emerging technologies like AI, shipbuilding, and cybersecurity. This collaboration is driven by a shared interest in strategic autonomy and countering potential security threats, particularly in the maritime domain.

Key areas of cooperation:

- **Co-development of defence technologies:** India and GCC countries are exploring joint research and development in areas like AI, cybersecurity, and counter-drone technologies.
- **Joint exercises and training:** Military exercises, staff talks, and subject matter expert exchanges are being increased to enhance interoperability and operational capabilities.
- **Maritime security:** Cooperation on search and rescue, pollution response, and anti-piracy efforts is being strengthened, particularly between the Indian Coast Guard and the UAE National Guard.
- **Naval shipbuilding:** Opportunities for collaboration in shipbuilding, refits, and maintenance of common platforms are being explored, including potential co-development of larger projects like aircraft carriers.

- **Strategic partnerships:** Designation of India and the UAE as major defense partners by the US paves the way for potential trilateral cooperation with the US in the western Indian Ocean.

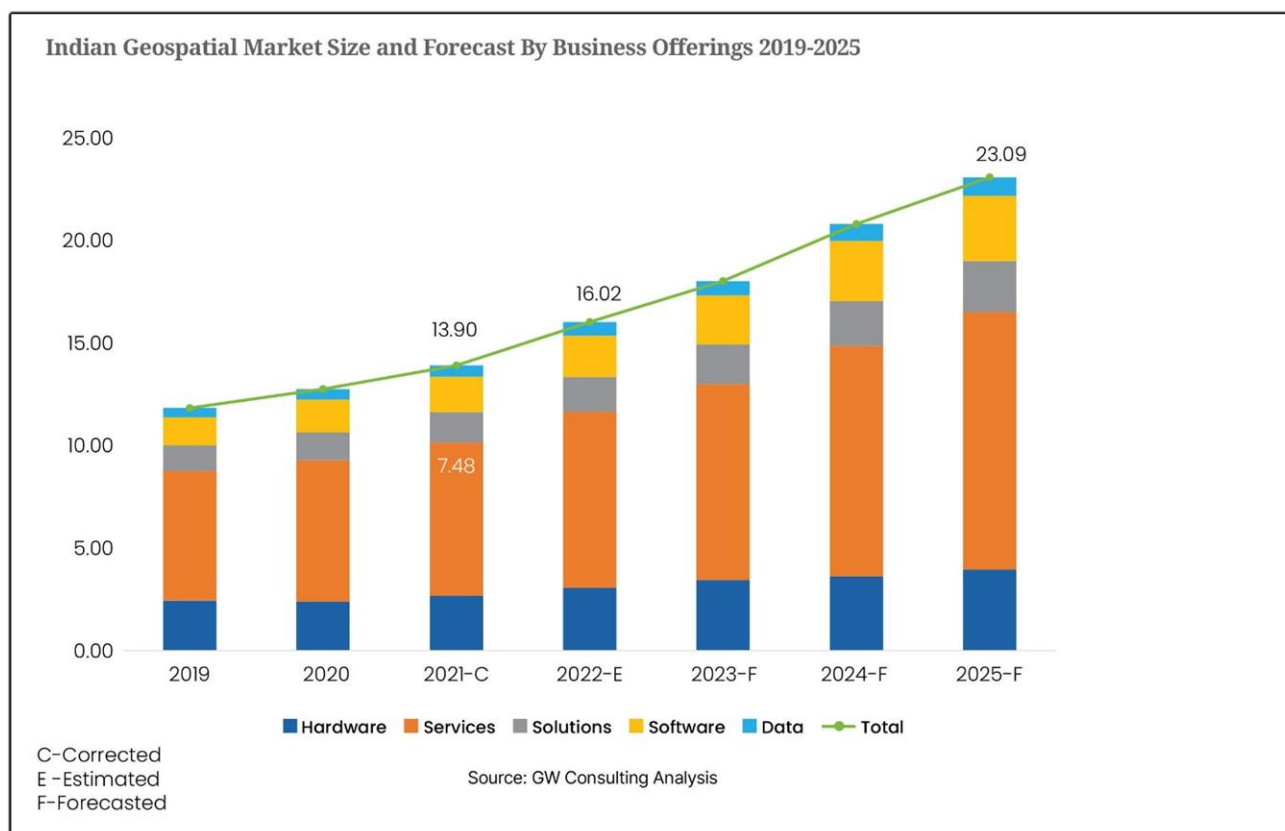
Specific examples:

- India and the UAE have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for enhanced cooperation between their coast guards.
- India and Oman have a strong defense partnership, including joint military exercises and access to Oman's Duqm port for the Indian Navy.
- India and Saudi Arabia are also exploring deeper defense and security cooperation, including discussions on cybersecurity and maritime security.



Indian Geospatial Market

The Indian government has recognised the critical role of geospatial technology across diverse sectors such as agriculture, urban planning, infrastructure development, disaster management, Defense, and transportation. Initiatives aimed at promoting the use of geospatial data and technology have been pivotal in this regard. A cornerstone of these efforts is the Digital India programme, which seeks to empower India digitally, enhancing governance and service delivery. Complementing this initiative is the National Geospatial Policy of 2022, which establishes clear guidelines for the acquisition, dissemination, and utilisation of geospatial data within the country. These policy measures not only facilitate efficient resource management and decision-making but also foster innovation and economic growth across sectors.



The Indian geospatial industry is undergoing a significant transformation, evolving from a data-centric approach to one focused on knowledge and solutions. Bolstered by recent policy reforms, this industry is poised to become the bedrock of India's digital infrastructure, offering immense socio-economic benefits. By leveraging advanced geospatial technologies, such as remote sensing, GIS and spatial analytics, India is enhancing its capabilities in areas ranging from precision agriculture to smart city development and disaster resilience. This transformation underscores the industry's potential to drive inclusive growth, empower local communities, and contribute substantially to India's journey towards becoming a global leader in geospatial innovation.

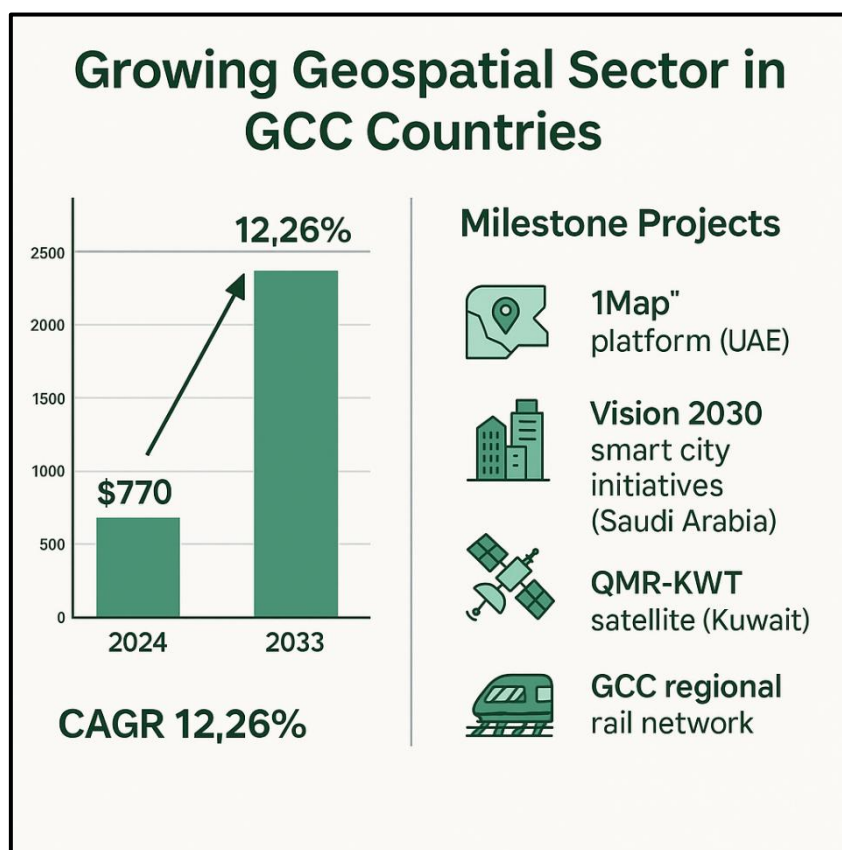
Indian Geospatial Industry Outlook (source: Geospatial Artha 2022)

- India's domestic geospatial market is estimated to grow at a significantly high CAGR, i.e., approximately 13.5 percent between 2021 and 2025. The market is forecasted to rise from INR 13 thousand crores (approximately 1.65 billion USD) in 2021 to INR 23 thousand crores (approximately 2.5 billion USD) in 2025.
- India's GNSS and Positioning to hold approximately 60 percent market share in 2022, followed by GIS and Spatial Analytics market with approximately 23 percent of the total market share.
- GIS and Spatial Analytics and Earth Observation (Satellites/Drones) to drive the Indian Geospatial Market between 2022 and 2025.
- The geospatial market of India in 2022, and 2025 is dominated by Defense and Intelligence, Urban Development, and Utilities sector. Together in 2022, these sectors accounted for 39 percent, up from 38 percent in 2021 – with each sector accounting for approximately 14 percent, 13 percent, and 11 percent, respectively.

Geospatial Market Potentials in GCC Region

Geospatial technologies are experiencing significant growth and adoption in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, driven by smart city initiatives, national development agendas, and increasing

investments in digital infrastructure and driving digital transformation initiatives across the region. The GCC geographic information system (GIS) market was valued at USD 770.0 Million in 2024 with a projection of a forecasted value of USD 2,296.0 million by 2033, with a growth rate of 12.26%.



The GCC region is witnessing a surge in geospatial applications across various sectors, including urban planning, environmental monitoring, resource management, retail and logistics, and national defence and security.

- **Smart City Development:** Ambitious smart city projects like NEOM in Saudi Arabia and Masdar City in the UAE are heavily reliant on geospatial technologies for planning, development, and management of urban infrastructure.
- **National Vision Programs:** Governments across the GCC are incorporating geospatial data and analysis into their national development plans, such as Saudi Vision 2030 and UAE Vision 2071, to drive digital transformation and improve public services.
- **Government Initiatives:** Several regional governments are actively promoting the adoption of geospatial data and technologies through initiatives like the Abu Dhabi Spatial Data Infrastructure program, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Geospatial Information Infrastructure, and the Bahrain Spatial Data Infrastructure.
- **Digital Transformation:** The pandemic accelerated digital transformation across various industries, and geospatial technologies have become crucial for adapting to changing consumer behaviors and optimizing operations.
- **Security and Resilience:** Geospatial intelligence plays a vital role in national security, defense surveillance, border control, disaster preparedness, and climate resilience.

India Gulf Space Cooperation

The Gulf States are relatively new to the extraordinary phenomenon of space exploration and have become conventionally wealthy through their booming oil trade; they have the potential to develop remarkable and extensive space programmes through their investments and cooperation with existing

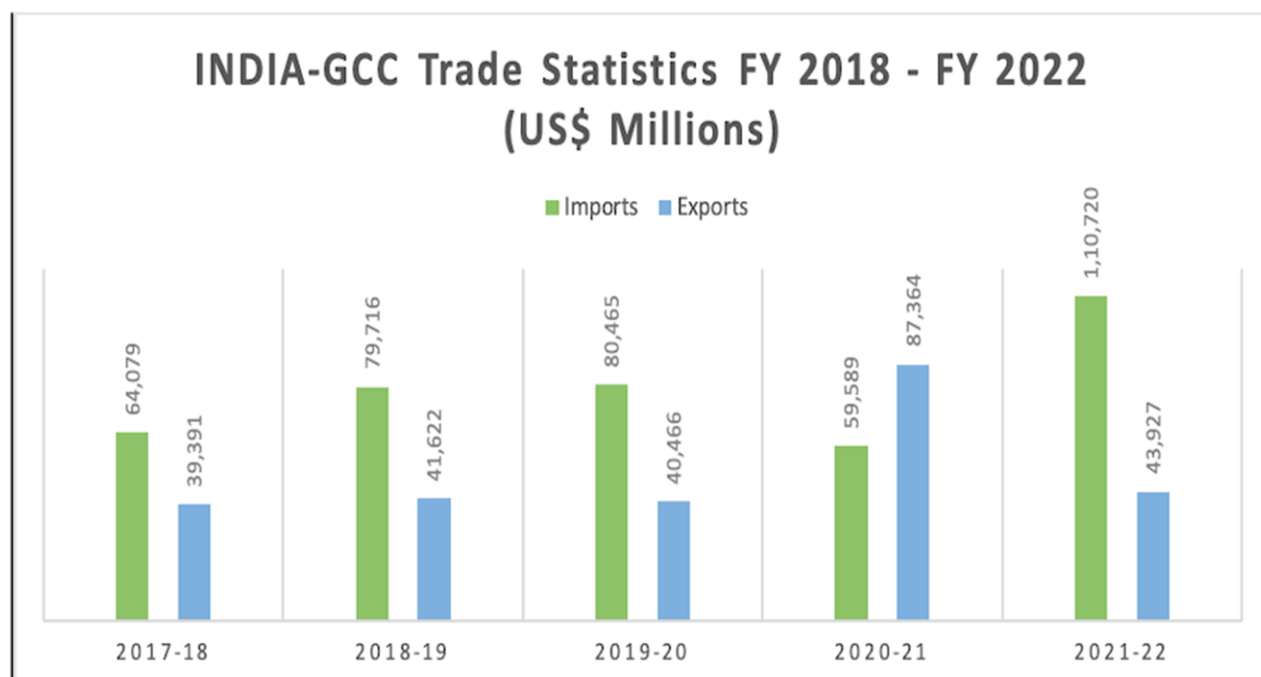
and new allies. Therefore, India is high on this list of potential allies for space cooperation due to its successful space capabilities and technological innovations, coupled with its geopolitical and strategic interest in the Persian Gulf. Taking the spirit of this space cooperation further, ISRO has been engaged in pursuing several bilateral relations with space agencies of an array of Gulf states, particularly with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Bahrain, to foster and strengthen existing relations, explore new scientific and technological challenges, and exploit and utilize outer Space for peaceful purposes.

- In this regard, the U.A.E. has emerged as a pioneer in helming the reins of space cooperation in the region, particularly with the launch of the Arab Space Cooperation Group in 2019, the launching of the [DubaiSat 1 and 2](#), and the much-hyped [KhalifaSat](#) in October 2018 (U.A.E.'s first home-grown advanced remote sensing observation satellite); the development of the Emirates Mars Mission and the Mars Hope Probe which successfully reached Mars orbit in February 2021. In the 2020 Dubai Expo, ISRO's scientific secretary [R. Umamaheshwaran](#) outlined the areas in which India's premier space agency could further cooperate with its U.A.E. counterpart, such as collaboration in earth stations, exchanging of remote sensing data, future prospects of performing joint experiment for collecting aerosol data in the upper atmosphere as well as exchanging data regarding climate change and farming.
- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been investing heavily in its space sector with plans to invest around \$2.1 billion into its space programme as part of its Vision 2030 reform agenda. The country recently launched its first domestic communication satellite, namely [SGS-1](#), and has also undertaken several other programmes, such as the [Ajyal Space Programme](#), catered towards creating a knowledge-based economy. India's bilateral agreement (MoU) signed between [ISRO and KACST](#) (King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) in 2010 regarding cooperation in the field of Space for peaceful purposes has led to an agreement to cooperate in several fields, such as [Remote sensing, Space meteorology, Disaster Management](#), Satellite communication and navigation, exploration of Space, building capabilities in space technology, implementation of joint programmes and undertaking projects that serve mutual benefits, training and exchange of personnel and scientists, [joint research programmes](#), conferences, symposia, exhibitions etc.
- Oman is one of India's oldest strategic and trade partners in the Gulf region with an interest in collaborating with India's space agency to develop its space programme. In March 2011 a [four-member delegation](#) from Oman's Department of Communication visited ISRO intending to collaborate with them. In 2018, a MoU was signed to include cooperation in peaceful exploration of Space as one of their agendas and also help further develop Oman's space programme. The MoU provides for cooperation in the use of the Indian satellite navigation system (NAVIC- a part of the IRNSS) by Oman, remote sensing of the earth, use of spacecraft, space exploration, sharing of expertise between scientists and space specialists of both the states, routine exchange of scientific data, organization of joint conferences, meetings, symposia as well as exploration and utilization of outer Space by governments, private sector and academic institutions. It is also projected that India-Oman joint space exploration can play a critical role in [maritime domain awareness](#), monitoring pipelines, ports and refineries, as well as generating employment by building human capacity in the country's space sector, thereby boosting Oman's economy.
- Bahrain established its [National Space Science Agency](#) (NSSA) in 2014 as part of the Bahrain 2030 Vision to induce technological and scientific development in the Kingdom. It aims at harnessing space technologies for national development and promoting space science applications. Some of its future projects include- establishing a lab for [high-resolution, multi-spectral images](#) and processing satellite data for research, observation and monitoring land, environment and agriculture; launching Bahrain's first space mission; launching low-cost, educational [nano-satellite](#) projects with the aim of capacity building; launching [L.E.O. satellites](#) and establishing a [ground station](#) for tracking and operating satellites. As part of this agenda, with the high-level visit of Indian PM Narendra Modi to Bahrain in 2019, the two states agreed to cooperate in areas

of space technology, solar energy, and research, as well as sending [Bahraini engineers](#) to India for training in satellite technologies and manufacturing. Helping Bahrain build its space programme could be another feather in ISRO's long line of achievements in the Gulf region.

Economic and Commercial Relations

India's economic linkages with the GCC have increased steadily. In FY 2024-25, India-GCC bilateral trade reached USD 178.56 billion (Exports: USD 56.87 billion; Imports: USD 121.68 billion), accounting for 15.42% of India's global trade. Saudi Arabia is India's second largest GCC trade partner after UAE. The GCC region is also a significant source of FDI, with over USD 28.28 billion GCC investment by December 2024. *The graph below shows the incremental growth of exports and imports between the regions.*



India GCC Geospatial and Space Business Summit

In view of above laid out scenario and opportunities, Geospatial World Chamber of Commerce (GWCC) is organising the **India GCC Geospatial and Space Business Summit** on October 28, 2025 as a Pre-Conference to GeoGov Middle East Summit 2025 at Abu Dhabi, UAE. The one-day summit shall witness participation from the key stakeholders from government agencies, civil societies, private sectors, and academia and research fraternity from both the regions. GWCC endeavours towards facilitating strategic dialogue between the Regions strengthening India GCC Geospatial and Space Business Partnership.

GWCC further strives to build on the mandate of Governments to provide broader framework of cooperation and develop an enabling environment of ease of doing business in their respective countries. This would further boost confidence of commercial companies to co-invest and embark on long term pathways for sustainable and profitable partnerships.

Summit Objectives

- Create a platform for Indian and GCC businesses to explore joint ventures, collaborations, and technology transfers in the space and geospatial sectors.
- Foster knowledge-sharing sessions and workshops to enhance technical capabilities and expertise between the two nations.

- Engage policymakers and regulatory authorities to streamline frameworks for easier collaboration and investment in space and geospatial industries.

Who will attend?

Industry Leaders | Government Functionaries | Thought Leaders | Business Users | Implementing Agencies | Trade Organisations.

Highlights of the Programme

- Dialogue forums consisting of participation from Government, Industry and Civil Society leaders
- Keynote addresses by renowned thought leaders and experts
- High Level Networking Reception

Tentative Programme Flow

0900 - 0930	Registration
0930 - 0945	Self Introduction of the Participants
0945 - 1000	Opening Session: Geospatial and Space Market Overview: Global and India - GCC
1000 - 1040	Collaborative Opportunities for Geospatial Products and Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Country wise Market Opportunities ○ Possible Collaborations and level playing fields ○ Opportunities, Challenges and Recommendations
1040 - 1120	Space Infrastructure and Downstream Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Country wise Market Opportunities ○ Possible Collaborations and level playing fields ○ Opportunities, Challenges and Recommendations
1120 - 1150	Networking Tea/ Coffee
1150 - 1230	Research, Innovation and Workforce Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborations between Academia, Industry and Policy Makers ○ Workforce Development and Partnerships ○ Opportunities, Challenges and Recommendations
1230 - 1310	Technology Transfer and Commercialisation: Opportunities and Potentials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need of the Hour ○ Opportunities, Challenges and Recommendations
1310 - 1330	Way Forward and Recommendations
1330 - 1430	Networking Lunch

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