2nd India-Australia Space & Geospatial Business Meet

Key Take Away

Introduction: Geospatial World Chamber of Commerce (GWCC) organised the 2nd Space & Geospatial Bilateral Business Meet in association with Geospatial World (GW) and AustCham india (Indo-Australian Chamber of Commerce) on 4th March 2025 at Vivanta Dwarka, New Delhi, India on the sides of 15th edition of Indo Pacific GeoIntelligence Forum (IPGF) 2025. The event provided a collaborative platform for stakeholders from both countries to discuss the expanding space and geospatial business sectors. The meet focused on strengthening the strategic bilateral relationship between India and Australia, fostering collaboration across diverse sectors, including maritime, defence, space, geospatial, manufacturing, infrastructure and disaster management. This Meet Summary captures the key discussion points, opportunities, challenges, and recommendations that emerged during the meet.

1. Bilateral Relations: A Strategic Partnership

India-Australia relations are seen as increasingly strategic, particularly in the domains of maritime security, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), and defence. The growing cooperation in space and geospatial technologies represents a critical area of focus. Australia is emerging as a key player in the space sector, positioning itself as one of the best locations for satellite launch activities.

The meet emphasized the potential of India and Australia collaborating across government and private sectors. The partnership is designed to support both nations in regulating private companies involved in space and geospatial services, helping foster a more robust and secure commercial environment.

2. Geospatial Industry Focus

The geospatial sector has been critical in addressing disaster management and emergency response in India. Geospatial companies have contributed significantly to enabling better disaster preparedness and response strategies across the country. Government officials emphasized the need for high-resolution mapping of India, with schemes like "Antriksh" being introduced to encourage innovation and data collection.

Key discussion points included:

- **Data Sharing:** Both countries agreed on the importance of sharing geospatial data to enhance disaster management and support strategic defence initiatives.

- **Make in India and Design for Development:** Encouraging local production and innovation was discussed, with a focus on developing capabilities that are tailored to the needs of both India and Australia.
- **Exports and Collaborative Atmosphere:** Promoting joint ventures (JVs) and cross-border technology exchange was considered vital for the long-term success of the space and geospatial sectors.
- **AI and Data Analytics:** The integration of AI, machine learning (ML), and analytics with Australian manufacturing processes was emphasized, highlighting their potential to enhance predictive analysis and data-driven solutions.

3. Capacity Building and Skills Development

A strong emphasis was placed on the need for capacity building, particularly in skills development and training. India has a large resource pool, while Australia is a more mature market, providing an opportunity for collaborative workforce development. The role of institutions like IIT Tirupati, which has established a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Geospatial Technologies, was highlighted as a significant step in bridging knowledge gaps.

Key Focus Areas:

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Both countries agreed on the importance of enhancing the quality of technical education and practical skills in geospatial and space-related sectors. There was a call for increasing collaboration between educational institutions in India and Australia to facilitate curriculum development, faculty exchanges, and joint research programs.
- **Industry Collaboration:** The Indian government encouraged private companies to contribute to the sector by bringing in their own technologies, projects, and investments, rather than solely depending on government contracts.
- **Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) Round 16 Call for Proposals, 2025-** The Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) is a bilateral program that supports collaborative research projects between Australia and India. It aims to strengthen the scientific relationship between the two countries and address common challenges through joint research efforts.
  The AISRF Round-16 Call for Proposals, 2025 between Indian and Australian Researchers is now open and invites applications from Indian Researchers in the following 'Thematic Areas' as mentioned below:
  1. Critical minerals processing technologies and methods
  2. Quantum computing and communications
  3. Remanufacturing and product end-of-use recovery including electronic waste recycling

  The detailed guidelines and format for the submission of Project Proposals may be seen at: https://onlinedst.gov.in/ Last Date and Time for Submission of Online Proposals: 11/04/2025, 5:00 PM

4. Challenges and Trade Considerations

The discussions also delved into the challenges faced by the space and geospatial sectors. Some of the key barriers to smoother collaboration included:

- **Regulatory Frameworks and Export Controls:** Regulatory complexities, including patent issues and export controls, were identified as significant challenges. A call for a more seamless

regulatory environment was made to ensure smoother cross-border exchanges of technology, equipment, and intellectual property (IP).
- **Standardization and Innovation:** There was recognition of the need for standards in the geospatial sector, but it was also acknowledged that such standards should be dynamic to avoid stifling innovation.

5. The Way Forward: Strategic Recommendations

The meet concluded with a series of strategic recommendations to enhance bilateral cooperation and foster growth in the space and geospatial sectors:

- **Focus on R&D and Technological Transfer:** Greater emphasis should be placed on facilitating research and development activities and supporting technological transfer between the two countries.
- **Encouragement for Startups:** The Indian government should provide more opportunities for startups in the space and geospatial sectors, encouraging them to explore new markets and expand their innovations.
- **Skill Development Programs:** Focus on developing skills that are critical for the space and geospatial industries, ensuring that the workforce is adequately trained to handle emerging technologies.
- **Joint Ventures and Industry Collaborations:** The establishment of Co-Development or Joint Development Centers (JDCs) and partnerships between Australian and Indian companies will foster collaboration in areas such as AI, ML, and space manufacturing.
- **Regulatory Reforms:** Streamlining regulatory processes and encouraging joint patenting mechanisms could enhance IP protection and simplify export procedures.
- **Strengthening the Export Market:** Both countries should facilitate the export of space and geospatial technologies, with an emphasis on reaching Australian markets and expanding the startup ecosystem.
- **Strengthen F2F Connections:** Establish clusters of Indian institutions collaborating with Australian counterparts on curriculum development and faculty exchanges.
- **Promote Data and Information Sharing:** Encourage joint initiatives in defense, disaster management, and high-resolution mapping services to boost cooperation.
- **Support Defence and Infrastructure Development:** Enhance defense collaboration and explore natural resource management and urban infrastructure development through geospatial technologies.
- **Patents (Intellectual Property) – Joint Patenting:** The idea of **joint patenting** was proposed as a potential solution to fostering innovation while ensuring that intellectual property (IP) is shared and protected across countries and companies. Joint IP agreements can help improve global collaborations while safeguarding the interests of both parties.

6. Conclusion

The 2nd India-Australia Space & Geospatial Business Meet demonstrated the immense potential for cooperation between the two nations in the rapidly evolving space and geospatial industries. Key areas such as high-resolution mapping, disaster management, AI integration, and technological collaboration were explored in-depth, with both countries recognizing the need to harmonize efforts in workforce development, regulatory frameworks, and exports.

To ensure continued success, it is critical that both India and Australia build on the momentum created during this meet and take concrete steps toward the implementation of the discussed strategies. By enhancing bilateral cooperation in space, geospatial, and related sectors, both nations can create a robust foundation for addressing current challenges and seizing future opportunities.

Recommendations for Action:

1. **Establish a Joint Working Group** to streamline regulatory frameworks and facilitate trade and technology transfer.
2. **Increase investment in R&D** by fostering collaboration between Indian and Australian research institutions and industries.
3. **Promote and scale capacity-building initiatives** through joint training programs, workshops, and curricula.
4. **Create a more enabling environment for startups** by providing access to markets, funding, and opportunities in both India and Australia.
5. **Facilitate cross-border collaborations** in the geospatial and space sectors, focusing on data sharing, technology integration, and joint production of high-end solutions.

This ongoing collaboration has the potential to not only benefit India and Australia but also contribute to global advancements in space and geospatial technologies.