

# 50 RISING STARS 2025



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## Foreword

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The geospatial industry is witnessing an era of transformation, driven by innovation, collaboration, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. At the heart of this evolution are young professionals who are shaping the future of geospatial technologies and their applications.

The **Rising Star Initiative** by **Geospatial World** is our endeavour to recognize and celebrate these dynamic individuals—leaders, innovators, and changemakers—who are making a tangible impact on their industries and communities.

Launched in 2021, the Rising Stars Initiative aims to showcase the remarkable achievements of individuals under the age of 40 who are proactively demonstrating the value of geospatial technology to society, the environment, and the economy. The initiative is committed to global representation, with a strong emphasis on fostering diversity, equality, and inclusivity.

**The 2025 Rising Star Booklet** brings together the stories of these emerging professionals who have demonstrated exceptional contributions to their organizations, industries, and communities. These Rising Stars represent the future of our sector, bringing fresh perspectives, technical expertise, and leadership that will drive geospatial intelligence and applications to new heights.

Through this initiative, we aim to not only highlight their achievements but also inspire the next generation of geospatial leaders. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the **2025 Rising Stars** and express our gratitude to the mentors, organizations, and industry leaders who continue to nurture and support young talent.

As you explore this booklet, we invite you to celebrate these trailblazers and engage with them to foster a more connected and collaborative geospatial ecosystem. The journey ahead is filled with possibilities, and these Rising Stars are leading the way!

Annu Negi  
President  
Geospatial World

## Here's the list of 50 Rising Stars to look out for in 2025

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# Abdulrahman Showaiter

**Head of Cadastral Survey Spatial Data and Development, Survey and Land Registration Bureau, Bahrain**

Leading Bahrain's cadastral survey digital transformation, Abdulrahman contributed to the country's first 3D property registration, developed the National Guide for Gated Communities, and spearhead the National Cadastral Database. His work enhances land management, decision-making, and sustainable development through accurate and accessible geospatial data.



# Juvvadi Jyothir Adithya Rao

**Product Manager  
Dhruva Space, India**

Adithya played a key role in developing Dhruva's ISOCs mission operations software and AstraView virtual constellation product, advancing space operations and geospatial solutions. ISOCs enables precise spacecraft control, while AstraView supports disaster management and environmental monitoring. His leadership has expanded space technology applications across commercial and government sectors.



# Ahmed Al Fazari

**Senior GIS Specialist, Public Authority for  
Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, Oman**

Ahmed Al Fazari leads a high-performing GIS team at OPAZ, managing critical projects across economic, free, and industrial zones. His expertise is especially distinguished in the design and management of enterprise geospatial databases and the development of GIS dashboards that deliver real-time, data-driven insights for decision-makers.



# Aiman Nabilah binti Noor Azmi

**Agriculture Engineer  
AECA Solutions Sdn Bhd  
Malaysia**

Aiman Nabilah binti Noor Azmi specializes in smart agriculture, particularly oil palm plantations. With expertise in geospatial technology, AI, and drone applications, she contributes to automation utilization in tree counting and environmental monitoring. She is also a certified drone pilot and is acquainted with advanced mapping techniques.



## Akshay Loya

**CEO, GISKernel Technologies Pvt. Ltd, India**

Akshay, a GeoInformatics expert and founder of GISKernel, has prioritized innovation within geospatial since 2018. Notably, SpatioSynth, the firm's novel application, integrates Earth Observation and GIS data for disaster management and agriculture. He has steadily solidified GISKernel's role in the current industry, positioning his company amongst key players.



## Ali Ibrahim AlAwaji

**Executive Director for Geospatial Data Governance General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information, Saudi Arabia**

Ali has played a pivotal role in shaping Saudi Arabia's geospatial landscape, leading national policy development and building robust spatial data infrastructure. With expertise in project management and strategic planning, he has achieved and implemented efficient, data-driven solutions that facilitates resource management, national infrastructure, and decision-making across various sectors.

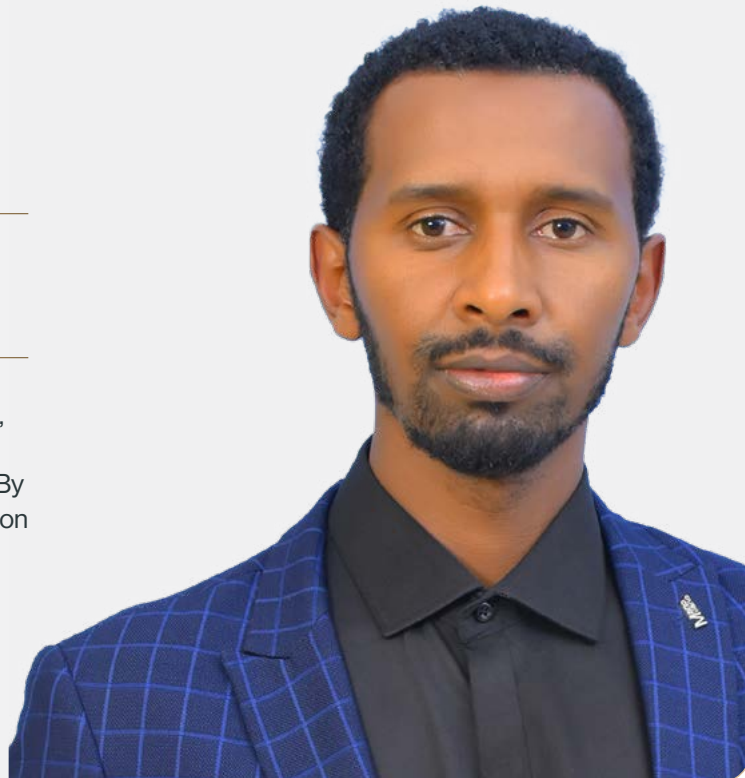




# Amanuel Kumsa Bojer

**Deputy Director - ML & GeoAI  
Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute  
Ethiopia**

Amanuel Kumsa is a leader in geospatial science, leveraging AI, remote sensing, and spatial data to address environmental and societal challenges. By incorporating AI-driven models and high-resolution satellite imagery, his research has enhanced the accuracy of predictions and provided actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders to mitigate climate impacts effectively.



# Amy Manefield

**Head - Data Operations, National Underground  
Asset Register, Geospatial Commission  
United Kingdom**

Amy Manefield, Head of Data Operations at the UK Geospatial Commission, plays a key role in the National Underground Asset Register (NUAR). She leads efforts to standardize and integrate buried asset data from over 600 organizations, ensuring interoperability and alignment with the OGC MUDDI standard.



# Angela Omamuyovwi Anyakora

**Research and Business Development  
Sambus Geospatial limited, Nigeria**

Angela Omamuyovwi Anyakora is a leader in Surveying and Geo-Informatics, driving sustainability and inclusion in the geospatial industry. As Vice Chair of FIG Young Surveyors and Chair of Generational Sustainability, she aims to empower young professionals and advance climate resilience through geospatial solutions and impactful global initiatives.



# Dr. Anudeep Sure

**Associate Director, Analytics & Modeling  
MOODY'S, India**

Dr. Anudeep Sure, a satellite and aerial remote sensing specialist, has expertise in geoinformatics and agricultural applications. He earned his PhD from IIT Kanpur, where he researched soil moisture modeling using machine learning. In the corporate sector, he develops geospatial models for agriculture, climate, and risk assessment. Proficient in GIS, remote sensing, and hydrology models, he received the 2023 Individual Excellence Award and mentors scholars in R&D and industry.



# Ayushi Mishra

**COO, DronaMaps, India**

Ayushi Mishra, a Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree, co-founded DronaMaps, leading AI-driven drone analytics for infrastructure, urban planning, and disaster management. Managing the Drone Analytics Monitoring System (DAMS) for India's highway monitoring, she integrates geospatial technology at scale. Through DAMS and other innovations, she is setting new benchmarks for leveraging technology to address critical global challenges.



# Dr. Ana Puttonen

**Sales Software Engineer  
Terra Solid, Finland**

Dr. Anna Puttonen holds a Ph.D. in Photogrammetry and Laser Scanning. Throughout her career, Anna has received numerous prestigious awards, including the ISPRS Prize for Best Paper by a Young Author and the KUWI Research Grant. Her expertise spans 3D data processing, remote sensing, and geospatial technologies, with a strong academic and professional background in advancing laser scanning applications.





## Dr. Ayushi Vijhani

**Assistant Professor**  
**TERI School of Advanced Studies, India**

Dr. Ayushi Vijhani, Assistant Professor at TERI School of Advanced Studies, has uplifted geospatial education by integrating geoinformatics with data science. She has introduced innovative programs, expanded the scope of geospatial for students through interdisciplinary learning. Passionate about hydrological Modelling, climate change effects in the Himalayan River basins, she has actively contributed towards policy briefs, strategy papers and technical reports.



## Benjamin Schleider

**CTO**  
**United States**

Benjamin Schleider, Founder and CTO of GeoBit AI, has created a Chat-to-Map system and AI-enhanced GIS, integrating natural language processing, Geospatial AI, and a geospatial search engine to automate satellite imagery analysis. His novel and smart innovations are evolving geospatial data interaction, and enhancing accessibility, precision, and utility across industries.



# Dr. Chelsea Lissette Cervantes De Blois

**Environment, Science, Technology, & Health  
Specialist, Office of the Geographer and Global  
Issues, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S.  
Department of State, United States**

Dr. Cervantes De Blois supports Presidential Special Envoys and policymakers. Notably, she has recently won prestigious honours and awards for her expertise in addressing complex environmental challenges ranging from impact of climate change on conflict and migration to spatial modeling from both qualitative and quantitative datasets.



# Catherine DuBreck

**GIS Consultant, TRC Companies  
United States**

Catherine is a GIS Change Management Consultant and educator at Monroe Community College and Rochester Institute of Technology. She promotes MCC's GIST programs, tutors students, and has worked on GIS projects in Colombia, India, Bangladesh, and Rwanda. President-Elect of the New York State GIS Association, she keynoted the 2024 GIS/SIG Conference and won two GIS awards.



# Devika Jain

**GIS Data Science Project Manager  
Center for Geographic Analysis  
Harvard University, United States**

Devika leads Geospatial Data Science at Harvard University, advancing High-Performance Computing and Cloud technologies. She developed TSGL, a UN-recognized well-being metric, a K-NN method for voter segregation analysis, and RINX for raster data processing. A believer of open and accessible science, she mentors researchers and aims to increase geospatial knowledge.



# Elmira Orynbasarova

**Director of Geomatics Innovation Center,  
Satbayev University, Kazakhstan**

Elmira Orynbasarova, Director of the Geomatics Innovation Center at Satbayev University, is a leader in geospatial sciences with 12 years of experience. She has spearheaded state-funded projects, international collaborations, and geospatial education initiatives, earning recognition as Kazakhstan's "Best University Lecturer" for her contributions to the field.





# Euclides Paulo

**GIS Supervisor**  
**Providence Water, United States**

Euclides Paulo, GIS Coordinator, specializes in geospatial automation, ArcGIS Utility Networks, and interdisciplinary collaboration. He developed the Utility Network Validation Form, presented at GIS-Pro 2024, and contributed to climate-driven migration analysis with the Inter-American Development Bank. A URISA honoree and GIS-E advocate, he advances GIS accessibility for underserved communities.



# Eric Anderson

**CTO, SynMax**  
**United States**

Eric Anderson, is passionate about geospatial intelligence, advancing energy and maritime analytics. He developed Hyperion, a cutting-edge system for monitoring fracking levels and energy forecasting. The company's maritime intelligence platform-Theia tackling illegal fishing, sanctions violations, and covert paramilitary activities. His innovation greatly impacts the future of global intelligence and sustainability.



# Elsy Johana Cisneros Canales

**Geographic Information Systems Analyst,  
Secretariat of Strategic Planning, Government of  
the Honduras, Honduras**

Elsy is Honduras' lead geospatial analyst for national strategic planning and is currently formulating national geospatial data policy. Alongside, she is a major developer of the National Territorial Information System (SINIT), is secretary to the Interagency Geospatial Data Commission and supports municipalities use geospatial technologies and data. Elsy is committed to making development across Honduran society.



# Dr. Enkhjargal Natsagdorj

**Board Member and Lead of Technical  
Committee on GIS, Mongolian Geospatial  
Association, Mongolia°**

Dr. Enkhjargal Natsagdorj, Director of Spatial Data Analysis at the Centre for Policy Research and Analysis, is a leader in GIS and remote sensing with 15 years of experience. A key figure in Mongolia's geospatial community, she overlooks projects on capital city government using geospatial data analysis. She is a board member of two communities.



# Geoffrey Smith

**CEO, Australian Spatial Analytics  
Australia**

Geoff Smith, founder of Australian Spatial Analytics, is an inclusivity champion, acknowledging and appreciating neurodiversity in the workforce by aligning autistic talent with geospatial sector demands. His social enterprise provides paid training, creating careers for autistic individuals. ASA now employs 150+ people, partnering with 40+ organizations, showcasing neurodiverse strengths in Australia's digital economy.



# Dr. Gengchen Mai

**Tenure-Track Assistant Professor  
The University of Texas, Austin, United States**

Dr. Gengchen Mai, Assistant Professor at UT Austin and adjunct at UGA Geography, specializes in Geospatial data integrated with AI, Geo-Foundation Models, and Geographic Knowledge Graphs. A leading Geospatial AI researcher, he has published in top AI/GIScience journals and conferences. A three-time AAG dissertation award winner, he also received the WGDC Global Young Scientist Award.





# Helen McKenzie

**Product Marketing Manager, CARTO  
United Kingdom**

Helen is a geospatial analyst and cartographer specializing in data visualization. As CARTO's Geospatial Advocate, she leads technical marketing and customer enablement, making geospatial technology accessible and engaging. Beyond CARTO, she promotes geospatial through speaking engagements, social media, and her blog, inspiring the next generation of geospatial professionals.



# Dr. Hemlata Bharwani

**Scientist, India Meteorological Department  
India**

Dr. Hemlata is a geospatial expert specializing in disaster risk management and climate resilience. She has led transformative projects, including the South Asia Flash Flood Guidance System, enhancing early warning systems across multiple countries. Passionate about innovation, she integrates GIS and Earth observation to build climate resilience and disaster preparedness globally.



# Hessa Al Hammadi

**Spatial Information Section Head  
Department of Municipalities and  
Transport, UAE**

Hessa AlHammadi is a proactive GIS leader, managing the Smart Makani project with her team, it involves an AI-powered mapping system which is now adopted by 21 government entities. She is skilled in knowledge transfer, system unification, enhancing spatial analysis and data accuracy. Her commitment to training and mentorship sets a laudable standard within her organisation.



# Dr. Hao Chen

**Senior Data Scientist, Australian Urban  
Research Infrastructure Network (AURIN)  
- The University of Melbourne, Australia**

Dr. Hao Chen leads the Australian Urban Health Indicators (AusUrb-HI) project, integrating spatial health, socio-economic, and environmental data to address urban health inequities. His perseverance lead to overcoming ethical and logistical challenges to securely analyzing fine-grained datasets, creating a new approach for spatially detailed insights in public health decision-making across Australia.



# Isaxon Munhuwenhamo

**Scientist, Geospatial Science and Earth Observation  
Zimbabwe National Geospatial and Space Agency,  
Zimbabwe**

Isaxon, project coordinator for Zimbabwe's GNSS modernization, led the establishment of 19 Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS). A certified drone pilot, he has also expertise in precision aerial crop spraying. Currently, he is pursuing an MPhil in GIS and Remote Sensing, specializing in GeoAI for yield prediction in precision agriculture.



# Ivani Henrique Rodrigues Vieira Junior

**GIS Technical Lead  
RINA, Brazil**

Ivani is a GIS expert with 12+ years of experience, has contributed to geospatial innovations in renewable energy, both solar and wind. He has implemented GIS solutions and analytics for renewable energy projects worldwide. His expertise includes adapting GIS methodologies to a wide range of technical and cultural contexts, delivering tailored solutions for complex challenges around the global energy transition.





# Irina Khussainova

**Head of Division - Chief Aviation Inspector  
Aviation Administration of Kazakhstan**

Irina is a GIS specialist with 15+ years of experience, pioneering digital twins of cities in Kazakhstan, including Astana. She developed a 3D mapping methodology for underground utility networks and now leads aerodrome territory protection at the Aviation Administration of Kazakhstan, ensuring aircraft flight safety through advanced geospatial solutions.



# Jordan Steven Bates

**Researcher, EOSystM Lab  
University of Liège, Belgium**

Jordan is a researcher at the University of Liège, specializing in UAS applications for agriculture and environmental monitoring. His work with LiDAR, multispectral, and hyperspectral sensors deal with crop modeling and water stress detection. A NASA DEVELOP alumnus, he is passionate about knowledge sharing and advancing remote sensing technologies.



## Jara Villanueva

**Geospatial Solutions Lead  
Axelspace Corporation, Japan**

Jara is a geospatial engineer with over a decade in the space industry, specializing in EO-based solutions and future space missions planning for agriculture and environmental applications. Additionally, as the Founder of GEO4US, she aims aiming to democratize space and geospatial technology by expanding capacity-building programs across underserved communities worldwide.



## Kelsey Herndon

**Research Scientist, The University of Alabama  
in Huntsville/NASA SERVIR, United States**

Kelsey Herndon is a NASA and USAID SERVIR scientist. Her expertise lies in Earth observation for climate resilience across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Also an Associate Lead for Ecosystem & Carbon Management, she promotes geospatial accessibility and has co-authored the SERVIR SAR Handbook. She aims to leverage geospatial data to empower global communities and support future scientists.



# Khrystyna Bezborodova

**Product Manager - Feature Extraction**  
**Trimble, United States**

Khrystyna Bezborodova is an expert on AI-based feature extraction across photogrammetry, scanning, and mobile mapping. Her contributions enhance survey and construction workflows, improve worksite safety and efficiency. By integrating AI-driven reality capture, she reduces field data collection time and exposure to hazards, achieving pavement and roadway asset management standards.



# Nejc Dougan

**CTO, Flai**  
**Slovenia**

Nejc Dougan, CTO of Flai, merges geodesy with AI, innovating within geospatial processing. He also is, currently a PhD candidate exploring deep learning for LiDAR automation, bridging academia and industry. Recognized as a 2024 Young Geospatial Professional to Watch, he is on a mission towards achieving AI-powered aerial laser scanning and geospatial automation.





## Mickey NG

**Land Surveyor, Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, Government of HKSAR, Hong Kong SAR, China**

Mickey is a Land Surveyor currently practicing in Hong Kong, with over 10 years of experience in land surveying and geospatial data management. Through a combination of technological innovation integrated with new approaches he has embraced distinctive strategies to projects throughout the urban development cycle.



## Olamiposi Caleb Fagunloye

**GIS Analyst, Atlanta Regional Commission United States**

Olamiposi Caleb Fagunloye is a geospatial innovator with a Master's in Geography and GIS certification. He increased Atlanta's green transportation adoption by 50% using ArcGIS Dashboards and supports global initiatives with the World Bank. A URISA Young Professional of the Year and Vanguard Cabinet member, he advances GIS, drones, and machine learning for sustainable development and accessibility.



# Ogechukwu Okeke

**Flight Test Engineer**  
**Polaris Spaceplanes, Germany**

Oge is a geospatial and drone industry specialist. She has created opportunities, introduced diversity in this field by playing a key role in developing geospatial departments in Nigeria's top drone companies and advocating for women in tech. In her current role based out Germany, she contributes to space-based geospatial technologies, with the goal of making a global impact in the industry.



# Philipp Amon

**Manager, ULS Business Division**  
**RIEGL Laser Measurement Systems, Austria**

Philipp Amon has an exceptional expertise in laser scanning technology with over 15 years of experience in TLS, MLS, ALS, and ULS. As Business Division Manager for Unmanned Laser Scanning at RIEGL, he drives innovation in UAV LiDAR solutions. He believes in integrating flexible, lightweight LiDAR payloads to enhance coverage and efficiency in the laser scanning industry.



# Rushanka Pramod Amrutkar

**Senior Advisor - Earth Observation and Remote Sensing, Environment Agency, United Kingdom**

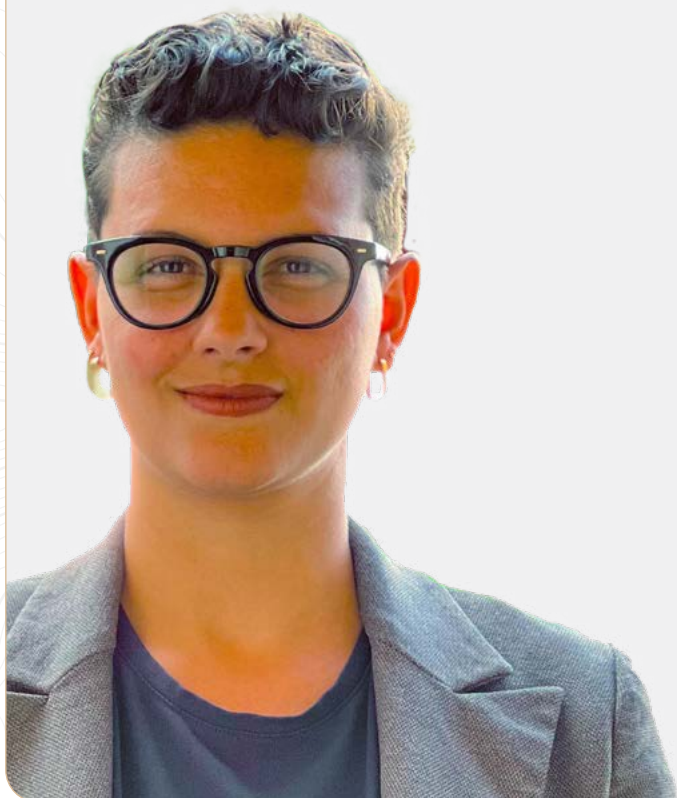
Rushanka is a Senior Advisor for Earth Observation and Remote Sensing at England's Environment Agency, responsible for the integration of space technology and environmental sustainability. An alumna of the Royal Agricultural University Leadership program, she serves on the board of the International Space University and facilitates the UN SDGs through global initiatives.



# Dr. Rafaela Tiengo

**Project Manager, Polytechnic University of Madrid (Spain)/Spotlite (Portugal), Spain**

Dr. Rafaela Tiengo is an outstanding researcher in nature conservation, focusing on climate change and nature-based solutions. A skilled science communicator, she shares geospatial insights through her newsletter and podcast, making complex topics easy & accessible. Her work connects interdisciplinary ideas, advancing understanding and accessibility for STEM outreach.





# Shagun Garg

**Doctoral Researcher  
University of Cambridge  
United Kingdom**

Shagun Garg has an expertise in flood monitoring, urban resilience, and Nature-based Solutions. His work in flood detection for arid regions and subsidence research provides crucial insights for disaster response and urban planning. As a Helmholtz AI fellow at GFZ Potsdam, Shagun uses satellite imagery to evaluate wetland and river restoration, quantifying their benefits in reducing risks.



# Suhas Banshiwala

**Co-Founder and CTO  
Aereo, India**

Suhas co-founded Aereo to advance geospatial mapping with drone technology. He led innovations like PPK-grade survey drones and Aereo Cloud, earning him eight patents to date. Under his leadership, Aereo has mapped land across India, improving land administration and impacting millions. His work and dedication have earned the company recognition in geospatial technology.



# Susanne Knorr

**Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society  
& Former Head of Place Intelligence,  
Connected Kerb, United Kingdom**

Susanne Knorr is improving the EV charging industry with an AI and spatial data-driven site selection tool. Her Place Intelligence Tool helps local authorities reduce investment risks, accelerate infrastructure rollout, and cut mobility-driven CO2 emissions. The tool sets new standards for public-private partnerships on sustainable mobility across the UK.



# Syed Ahmad Fadhli Syed Abdul Rahman

**Assistant Director of Survey  
Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia  
Malaysia**

Syed Ahmad Fadhli overlooks innovative research in urban resilience, climate adaptation, and smart cities. He has expertise across BIM-GIS and machine learning to advance digital twins and 3D city modeling, driving sustainable urban planning and disaster management solutions. His research and vision contribute to the empowerment of urban planners and citizens.



## Dr. Sergey Sukhanov

**CEO, FlyPix AI GmbH  
Germany**

Dr. Sergey Sukhanov is recognised for his ability to leverage AI, satellite technologies, and geographic information systems (GIS) for advanced remote sensing, real-time analytics, and satellite data applications. He has integrated AI-driven algorithms, led development of platforms and contributed to improving the resolution and accuracy of remote sensing technologies.



## Sapiens Ndatabaya Kanyunyi

**Founder and CEO  
World Disaster Centre, France**



Sapiens Ndatabaya is an advocate for using geospatial technology to save lives during disasters. He mapped Ebola in Goma to ensuring aid reached the most vulnerable in Sudan, and his work has always been towards making a difference. He founded the World Disaster Center to create tools that predict and track disasters and is now working on drones and IoT to stop them before they happen.



## Dr. VSS Kiran

**Founder and CEO  
Garudalytics, India**

Dr. V S S Kiran, Founder and CEO of Garudalytics, strives to accentuate geospatial analytics. In a span of two years, he expanded his company from two to 30 team members, delivering 50+ enterprise projects. An expert and looked upon figure in remote sensing and geospatial AI, he mentors students and advises academic institutions and is involved in CSR initiatives.



## Yumi Casualina Nafe

**Senior GIS Specialist & Acting Head of GIS Unit  
Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Tonga**

Yumi Casualina Nafe has effectively implemented GIS solutions for disaster risks and developmental challenges. In collaboration with SDG Data Alliance, she is establishing Tonga's SDG Data Hub for measuring sustainable development and SDG indicators. As the head of the Tonga GIS unit, she is recognized due to her efforts towards shaping sustainable development and with her work influencing GIS adoption across the Pacific.



