

Space42, Microsoft, and Esri Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Enhance Mapping Capabilities Across Africa

- MoU will support the “Map Africa Initiative,” a program designed to create a continent-wide base map and increase access to intelligent solutions
- Over the next five years, the initiative will map 54 African countries and benefit over 1.4 billion people
- The detailed mapping will support economic growth across the continent

Abu Dhabi, UAE, July 29, 2025 – Space42 (ADX: [SPACE42](#)), the UAE-based global AI-powered SpaceTech company, part of technology group G42, announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft and Esri to deliver high-resolution, scalable base maps across all 54 African countries, serving over 1.4 billion people. Known as the “Map Africa Initiative,” the project will create the most comprehensive base map of the continent to date, addressing challenges in infrastructure, investment, and institutional gaps.

The updated mapping system will catalyze economic development through increased access to intelligent solutions that support governments, businesses, and communities. The five-year collaboration aims to strengthen geospatial capabilities across Africa and the UAE, and provide precise and accessible data to national and regional stakeholders. The MoU was signed at Esri’s 2025 User Conference.

Hasan Al Hosani, CEO of Smart Solutions at Space42, said, “Partnership is core to the UAE’s DNA, and is central to how Space42 operates. This collaboration with Microsoft and Esri is more than technical; it’s strategic. It advances Space42’s business priorities, strengthens our role as a trusted partner to governments, and delivers meaningful benefits to communities across Africa. Accurate, high-quality mapping and the intelligence solutions built on it are essential for growth, resilience, and inclusive innovation. With reliable data, communities and economies prosper.”

Jack Dangermond, President of Esri said, “We are proud to support the Map Africa Initiative in partnership with Space42. Transforming satellite imagery into detailed, accurate base maps at continental scale requires advanced geospatial technology and professional production workflows. These same capabilities have supported similar national and regional mapping efforts around the world. With Map Africa, we are helping to establish a foundational resource that will drive infrastructure planning, economic growth, and sustainable development across the continent.”

A Transformative Investment in Africa’s Digital Future

Africa’s maps are fragmented, outdated, or inaccessible, leaving governments and businesses to make major decisions with inaccurate and incomplete data. The Map Africa Initiative seeks to change that by producing continent-wide geospatial data that is accurate, timely, and locally managed.

The process itself is collaborative from start to finish, bringing together the complementary strengths of each organization. Space42 will lead fundraising efforts and project management, in addition to providing satellite data through sovereign capacities and commercial partners. It will process data using AI-powered Digital Twin models to produce dynamic, use-specific outputs and lead the Research & Development roadmap for new AI models and automation of map production workflows.

Esri will orchestrate base map production workflows with its GeoAI and remote sensing capabilities, while also supporting regional hubs to train local teams and build long-term capacity. Microsoft will provide the secure cloud infrastructure and AI framework through Azure to support data processing, sharing, and integration at scale.

Enabling Economic Opportunity, Resilience, and Innovation

The initiative is expected to unlock long-term value across multiple industries:

- Ports and logistics: Detailed terrain and infrastructure mapping will improve route planning, reduce inefficiencies, and support Africa's emergence as a global logistics hub.
- Renewable energy: Site selection models will support optimal solar and wind deployment, improving efficiency and return on investment.
- Security and disaster response: Governments will be better equipped to monitor borders, track natural resources, and coordinate emergency responses.
- Smart cities and digital economies: Accurate maps are foundational to urban planning, public services, and technology deployment.

The data will be licensed to national governments, enabling ownership and long-term updating by National Mapping Agencies. Over time, the initiative will also support a new commercial ecosystem of African startups. The data will eventually be housed in G42 and Microsoft-managed data centers across the continent.

Strategic positioning for Space42

For Space42, the initiative represents more than a single project. It deepens long-standing partnerships with Microsoft and Esri, expands Space42's presence in Africa, and opens new commercial opportunities in analytics, licensing, and infrastructure support. The Map Africa Initiative is a testament to Space42's position as the global partner of choice for governments seeking geospatial data at scale, serving as both a strategic proof point and a commercial gateway to new markets.

Peng Xiao, Group Chief Executive Officer at G42, said, "We believe intelligence is the foundation for societal progress, yet it remains out of reach for millions across the Global South. This partnership is a decisive step toward closing that gap. Together with our partners, we will deliver AI-powered insights that enable African

nations to plan smarter, build better, and grow more sustainably and responsibly. From agricultural optimization and natural resource management to strengthening public services infrastructure and economic empowerment, this partnership will help turn data into development, and intelligence into impact.”

“G42’s partnership with Microsoft represents a shared commitment to harnessing AI as a global force for good. Together, we are building the infrastructure and applications that will extend the benefits of intelligence to communities across the world, transforming lives through technology that is trusted, responsible, and inclusive.”

The initiative further pushes the limits of how technological innovation can advance communities and unlock economic opportunities.

Aligning with the UAE’s Global Investment and Innovation Agenda

The UAE is Africa’s largest foreign investor, with \$44 billion in capital deployed in 2024 alone, nearly matching the combined investments of the UK and China. As the UAE’s national space champion, Space42 advances this agenda by exporting AI and geospatial capabilities that enable data-driven development.

By expanding the UAE’s space ecosystem and fostering knowledge transfer across industries, Space42’s geospatial mapping capabilities play a crucial role in building a future-ready, innovation-driven economy in both the UAE and Africa. For African countries, the mapping capabilities enable smarter land use, improved disaster response, modern infrastructure planning, and the foundations for smart cities and digital economies. For the UAE, this strategic engagement opens high-growth markets, deepens diplomatic and commercial ties, and consolidates its role as a global leader in AI-enabled space solutions.

About Space42

Space42 (ADX: SPACE42) is a UAE-based AI-powered SpaceTech company that integrates satellite communications, geospatial analytics and artificial intelligence capabilities to enlighten the Earth from space. Formed in 2024 by the successful merger of Bayanat and Yahsat, Space42’s global reach allows it to address the rapidly evolving needs of its customers in governments, enterprises, and communities. Space42 comprises two business units: Space Services and Smart Solutions. Space Services focuses on upstream satellite operations for both fixed and mobile satellite services. Smart Solutions integrates geospatial data acquisition and processing with AI to inform decision-making, enhance situational awareness, and improve operational efficiency. Major shareholders include G42, Mubadala, and IHC. For more information, visit: www.space42.ai; follow us on X: [@space42ai](https://twitter.com/space42ai)

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