GISCI Three-Year Strategic Plan

2027–2029

Strategic Priorities and Activity Descriptions

Implementation-oriented companion to the GISCI Three-Year Strategic Implementation Matrix

Introduction

The GISCI Three-Year Strategic Plan for 2027–2029 is organized around six strategic priorities intended to guide organizational growth, certification development, professional engagement, partnerships, capacity, and governance. This document expands the accompanying implementation matrix by providing a short description of the intent of each initiative. The descriptions are deliberately concise: they clarify what each activity is intended to accomplish while leaving the detailed methodology, work plans, and annual operating decisions to GISCI staff, committees, and the Board.

The matrix identifies the responsible staff or groups, the primary key performance indicator (KPI), and annual targets for 2027, 2028, and 2029. Those measures are retained here so that each activity can be understood in the context of both its purpose and its expected progression over the three-year period.

The 2029 outcomes included under each priority describe the intended cumulative result of the initiatives rather than a separate task. Together, they provide a picture of what successful implementation should look like at the end of the planning period.

Strategic Plan at a Glance

Strategic Priority	Strategic Objective
Priority 1 — Demonstrate and Communicate the Value of GISP	Establish GISP as a clearly understood, valued, and differentiated professional credential for individuals and employers.
Priority 2 — Build a Strong Education-to-Certification Pipeline	Create a clear, accessible pathway from GIS education through PreGISP and ultimately to GISP certification.
Priority 3 — Grow and Modernize Certification While Maintaining Quality	Increase participation in GISCI certification while maintaining the rigor, credibility, fairness, and relevance of the credentials.
Priority 4 — Expand Strategic Partnerships and Targeted Outreach	Extend GISCI's influence and reach through purposeful partnerships with organizations that can advance professional certification.
Priority 5 — Build Organizational Capacity and Financial Sustainability	Build the organizational infrastructure, staffing, technology, and financial resources necessary to support sustainable growth.
Priority 6 — Strengthen Governance, Leadership, and Data-Driven Decision Making	Maintain an engaged and effective Board while creating an organizational culture in which decisions and resources are guided by evidence and strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority 1: Demonstrate and Communicate the Value of GISP

Strategic Objective. Establish GISP as a clearly understood, valued, and differentiated professional credential for individuals and employers.

2029 Outcome. Employers, professionals, educators, and government organizations clearly understand why GISP matters and can articulate its value.

1.1 Develop a GISP Value Framework

Activity description. Create a clear, shared framework that defines the professional, career, employer, and organizational value associated with GISP certification. The framework will give GISCI a consistent foundation for explaining why the credential matters and for aligning future communications, outreach, and measurement activities.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE, Marketing	Value framework completed	Framework established	Annual update

2029 target: Embedded in GISCI communications

1.2 Measure GISP career and employer value

Activity description. Establish a practical set of indicators that can be used to assess how GISP certification is perceived and used by professionals and employers. GISCI will establish a baseline and then collect comparable information over time so that claims about certification value are supported by evidence.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE, Marketing	Value indicators established; data collected	Baseline established	Annual measurement

2029 target: Demonstrated positive trends

1.3 Develop GISP success stories and case studies

Activity description. Build a continuing collection of real-world examples that demonstrate how GISP certification supports professional development, career advancement, employer recognition, or organizational professionalism. Stories and case studies will provide concrete evidence that can be used across GISCI communications and outreach.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE, Marketing	Stories/case studies published	6	10

2029 target: 12+ annually

1.4 Launch coordinated GISP marketing campaign

Activity description. Develop and launch a coordinated campaign that communicates the value of GISP consistently across GISCI channels and audiences. Campaign performance will be measured from an established baseline so that GISCI can evaluate reach and engagement and adjust its approach as needed.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE, Marketing	Campaign reach/engagement	Campaign launched; baseline established	+25% reach

2029 target: +50% reach from baseline

1.5 Increase employer recognition of GISP

Activity description. Increase the number of employers that recognize, support, or otherwise demonstrate awareness of GISP certification. The effort will focus on making the credential more understandable and relevant to organizations that employ geospatial professionals.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE, Marketing	Employers recognizing/supporting GISP	100+	150+

2029 target: 200+

1.6 Expand Endorsing Employer participation

Activity description. Grow participation in the Endorsing Employer program as a practical mechanism for employers to demonstrate support for professional certification. Expansion should reinforce the broader effort to increase employer recognition of GISP and create a visible network of organizations supporting professional geospatial practice.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE, Marketing	Endorsing Employers	0.2	0.2

2029 target: 0.2

1.7 Develop employer resources

Activity description. Create practical materials that help employers understand GISP, explain its value to their workforce, and support employees pursuing or maintaining certification. The resource set will be launched as a core toolkit, expanded as needs become clearer, and refreshed annually.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE, Marketing	Resources produced and usage	Core toolkit launched	Expanded resources

2029 target: Annual refresh

Strategic Priority 2: Build a Strong Education-to-Certification Pipeline

Strategic Objective. Create a clear, accessible pathway from GIS education through PreGISP and ultimately to GISP certification.

2029 Outcome. GIS students and emerging professionals recognize professional certification as a natural part of their career pathway, with PreGISP serving as a strong bridge to GISP.

2.1 Expand PreGISP program

Activity description. Increase the reach of PreGISP by expanding the number of participating institutions and programs. Growth will make the emerging-professional credential more accessible and strengthen its role as an entry point into GISCI's broader certification pathway.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
PreGISP Comm, ED, CE	Participating institutions/programs	20	35

2029 target: 50+

2.2 Implement Pathways to GISP

Activity description. Expand use of Pathways to GISP resources by academic institutions and other organizations serving emerging professionals. The initiative is intended to make the progression from education and early career development toward GISP more visible and understandable.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE	Institutions using pathway resources	15	30

2029 target: 50+

2.3 Expand PreGISP Faculty initiative

Activity description. Increase faculty participation in the PreGISP Faculty initiative so instructors have greater access to resources that support professional preparation and alignment with GISCI's emerging-professional pathway. Growth will build institutional capacity to introduce students to professional certification.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
CE	Faculty engaged/trained	50	100

2029 target: 150+

2.4 Develop academic partnerships

Activity description. Establish and deepen relationships with academic organizations that can help GISCI reach students, faculty, and emerging professionals. Partnerships will provide a foundation for expanding the education-to-certification pipeline and increasing awareness of professional certification earlier in a GIS career.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
CE	Active academic partnerships	10	20

2029 target: 30+

2.5 Establish PreGISP-to-GISP tracking

Activity description. Develop the ability to follow participants from PreGISP through subsequent progression toward GISP certification. Establishing a baseline and reporting conversion annually will allow GISCI to understand whether the education-to-certification pathway is functioning as intended.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
CE	Conversion data available	Baseline established	Annual conversion report

2029 target: 20%+ improvement from baseline

2.6 Increase GISP awareness among students

Activity description. Increase direct engagement with students so professional certification becomes a familiar concept during their education and early career planning. Outreach will use the education pipeline and related resources to introduce students to the longer-term pathway toward GISP.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
CE, Marketing	Student outreach engagements	2500	4000

2029 target: 6,000+

2.7 Strengthen emerging-professional resources

Activity description. Build out the resources available to individuals who are beginning their geospatial careers and working toward professional certification. The initiative will establish a core resource set, expand it as the pathway matures, and ultimately create a more complete experience for emerging professionals.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE, Marketing	Resources/programs implemented	Core resources complete	Expanded resources

2029 target: Mature pathway

Strategic Priority 3: Grow and Modernize Certification While Maintaining Quality

Strategic Objective. Increase participation in GISCI certification while maintaining the rigor, credibility, fairness, and relevance of the credentials.

2029 Outcome. GISCI supports a larger professional community through modern, relevant, accessible, and rigorous certification programs without compromising credential quality.

3.1 Grow active GISP population

Activity description. Increase the number of professionals actively maintaining GISP certification. Growth will be pursued while preserving the credibility and quality of the credential and will be supported by the recruitment, retention, employer-recognition, and education-pipeline activities elsewhere in the plan.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ALL	Active GISPs	8,500+	9,250+

2029 target: 10,000+

3.2 Increase new GISPs

Activity description. Increase the number of new GISP certifications awarded each year, progressing toward 1,000 new GISPs annually by 2029. This initiative provides a direct measure of growth in the certification program and complements efforts to build stronger pathways into the profession.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ALL	New GISPs annually	700+	850+

2029 target: 1,000+

3.3 Modernize certification processes

Activity description. Identify and complete priority improvements to the processes through which GISCI administers certification. The goal is to make certification more modern and accessible while preserving appropriate rigor, consistency, and quality.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
PM	Priority improvements completed	3	5

2029 target: Continuous improvement

3.4 Review GISP exam and blueprint

Activity description. Conduct a structured review of the GISP examination and its blueprint to ensure continued relevance to the profession. Recommendations will be implemented following the review, with an ongoing review cycle established so the examination remains aligned with professional expectations.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
PM	Review completed	Begin review	Implement recommendations

2029 target: Ongoing review cycle

3.5 Review PreGISP assessment

Activity description. Evaluate the PreGISP assessment to determine whether it continues to serve its intended purpose and provides an appropriate measure for emerging professionals. Improvements identified through the review will be implemented and outcomes evaluated.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
PM	Assessment review	Complete	Implement improvements

2029 target: Evaluate outcomes

3.6 Improve candidate experience

Activity description. Identify and address opportunities to make the certification experience clearer, more efficient, and more user-friendly for candidates. Candidate satisfaction will be measured from an established baseline and used to guide improvements.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
PM, CC	Candidate satisfaction	Baseline	0.1

2029 target: 0.2

3.7 Maintain certification quality

Activity description. Maintain the rigor, validity, fairness, and credibility of GISCI certification as participation grows. GISCI will establish baseline quality measures and continue monitoring examination and certification indicators to ensure growth does not come at the expense of credential quality.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, PM	Exam validity/pass-rate/quality measures	Establish baseline	Maintain standards

2029 target: Maintain standards

3.8 Improve recertification experience

Activity description. Improve the experience of professionals completing the recertification process by identifying barriers and opportunities for greater clarity and ease of completion. GISCI will establish a baseline completion rate and use subsequent results to measure improvement.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
PM, CC	Recertification completion rate	Baseline	0.05

2029 target: 0.1

3.9 Explore responsible use of technology and AI

Activity description. Evaluate opportunities to use technology and artificial intelligence responsibly within GISCI operations and certification activities. The approach will begin with assessment, move to appropriately scoped pilots, and expand only those applications that demonstrate sufficient value and fit.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, PM	Technology initiatives evaluated	Assessment	Pilot appropriate uses

2029 target: Implement successful pilots

Strategic Priority 4: Expand Strategic Partnerships and Targeted Outreach

Strategic Objective. Extend GISCI's influence and reach through purposeful partnerships with organizations that can advance professional certification.

2029 Outcome. GISCI has a broader and more diverse network of organizations actively supporting professional certification and a measured international presence.

4.1 Develop partnership strategy

Activity description. Create a deliberate framework for deciding which partnerships are most valuable to GISCI and how those relationships should be developed and maintained. The strategy will provide a consistent basis for prioritizing organizational relationships and will be reviewed annually.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE	Strategy completed	Completed	Annual review

2029 target: Annual review

4.2 Establish strategic partnerships

Activity description. Build new relationships with organizations whose missions, audiences, or capabilities can advance professional certification and GISCI's strategic objectives. The emphasis is on meaningful partnerships rather than simply increasing the number of organizational contacts.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED, CE	New meaningful partnerships	5	7

2029 target: 8+

4.3 Strengthen existing partnerships

Activity description. Move key existing relationships toward more intentional partnership planning, with clear expectations and annual evaluation. The initiative will help GISCI focus limited resources on relationships that provide meaningful strategic value.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE	Partnership plans	Top 10 relationships	Annual plans

2029 target: Annual evaluation

4.4 Expand government outreach

Activity description. Increase GISCI engagement with government organizations that employ geospatial professionals or influence workforce and professional practices. The objective is to increase understanding of GISP and identify opportunities for broader institutional recognition.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE	Government organizations engaged	25	40

2029 target: 60+

4.5 Expand industry outreach

Activity description. Increase engagement with employers and industry organizations across the geospatial community. Outreach will focus on communicating the value of professional certification and developing relationships that can support employer recognition and participation.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE	Employers/industry organizations engaged	50	75

2029 target: 100+

4.6 Expand academic outreach

Activity description. Increase GISCI's engagement with academic organizations beyond the specific institutions participating in PreGISP or Pathways. Broader academic outreach will support awareness of professional certification and strengthen the pipeline of future GIS professionals.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE	Academic organizations engaged	50	75

2029 target: 100+

4.7 Develop GISP Ambassador Network

Activity description. Create a structured network of GISP volunteers who can represent GISCI, share professional experiences, and support outreach to their communities. The network will extend GISCI's capacity to communicate with the profession while creating additional opportunities for active GISP involvement.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
CE	Active ambassadors	25	50

2029 target: 100+

4.8 Establish international growth strategy

Activity description. Develop a focused strategy for international growth that identifies priority markets, evaluates opportunities, and establishes a measured approach to expanding GISCI's international presence. The strategy will provide a basis for deciding where GISCI should concentrate limited resources.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE	Strategy and priority markets	Strategy completed	2 priority markets

2029 target: 3–4 active markets

4.9 Expand international participation

Activity description. Increase participation in GISP certification outside the United States by building on the international growth strategy and focusing on priority markets. Growth will be measured from an established baseline and evaluated as part of GISCI's broader international objectives.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CE	International GISP population	Baseline established	0.15

2029 target: +30% from baseline

Strategic Priority 5: Build Organizational Capacity and Financial Sustainability

Strategic Objective. Build the organizational infrastructure, staffing, technology, and financial resources necessary to support sustainable growth.

2029 Outcome. GISCI has the staff, systems, technology, and financial resources necessary to operate effectively at approximately 10,000 active GISPs without sacrificing service or quality.

5.1 Develop organizational capacity plan

Activity description. Assess the people, systems, technology, and operational capabilities required to support GISCI's anticipated growth. The resulting capacity plan will identify priorities and be reviewed annually so organizational resources remain aligned with program needs.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED	Capacity plan	Completed	Annual review

2029 target: Annual review

5.2 Increase staffing capacity

Activity description. Add staff or contracted capacity where necessary to support increased certification volume, outreach, partnerships, and organizational operations. Capacity decisions will be tied to growth and ultimately aligned with the needs of an organization serving approximately 10,000 active GISPs.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED	FTE/contract capacity	Add priority capacity	Add capacity based on growth

2029 target: Capacity aligned with 10K GISPs

5.3 Modernize operational systems

Activity description. Identify and improve priority operational systems that support GISCI's work. Modernization should reduce friction, improve reliability, and create systems capable of supporting a larger organization without sacrificing service quality.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, CC	Priority systems improved	2	4

2029 target: 6+

5.4 Increase automation

Activity description. Identify repetitive or manual processes that can be responsibly automated to improve efficiency and staff capacity. Automation targets will increase over the three-year period, allowing GISCI to direct more staff time toward higher-value activities.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
CC	Processes automated	3	6

2029 target: 10+

5.5 Maintain financial reserves

Activity description. Maintain a strong financial reserve position while the organization grows and invests in strategic priorities. Reserve targets will increase over the plan period to support long-term stability and provide resilience against unexpected financial or operational pressures.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, Financial	Months of operating reserves	≥30 months	≥33 months

2029 target: ≥36 months

5.6 Diversify sustainable revenue

Activity description. Strengthen the sustainability of GISCI's revenue model by identifying and reinforcing revenue sources beyond reliance on a single stream. The objective is a diversified, sustainable model that can support organizational growth and strategic investment.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, Financial	Revenue sources	Baseline established	2 new/reinforced sources

2029 target: Sustainable diversified model

5.7 Establish organizational performance dashboard

Activity description. Create an organizational dashboard that brings key performance information together in a form that can be reviewed regularly by management. The dashboard will launch in 2027, move to quarterly use in 2028, and become integrated into ongoing management by 2029.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
ED, Financial	Dashboard implementation	Launch	Quarterly use

2029 target: Fully integrated into management

5.8 Conduct annual resource allocation review

Activity description. Conduct a formal annual review of how organizational resources are allocated against strategic priorities. This provides the Board with a recurring opportunity to ensure that funding and organizational effort remain aligned with the plan.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board	Annual reviews completed	1	1

2029 target: 1

Strategic Priority 6: Strengthen Governance, Leadership, and Data-Driven Decision Making

Strategic Objective. Maintain an engaged and effective Board while creating an organizational culture in which decisions and resources are guided by evidence and strategic priorities.

2029 Outcome. GISCI's Board and staff operate from a shared strategic framework, use meaningful data to make decisions, and consistently direct resources toward initiatives with the greatest organizational impact.

6.1 Implement Board leadership succession strategy

Activity description. Establish a deliberate succession approach for Board leadership so GISCI can maintain continuity, preparedness, and effective governance as leadership changes. The plan will be updated annually to reflect organizational needs and the evolving Board.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED	Succession plan	Completed	Annual update

2029 target: Annual update

6.2 Maintain Board diversity and expertise

Activity description. Monitor Board composition against the skills, experience, and diversity needed to govern GISCI effectively. Baseline measures will be established and then used to guide improvement and sustain a strong mix of perspectives and expertise.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED	Board competency/diversity measures	Baseline	Improve against baseline

2029 target: Sustained improvement

6.3 Strengthen Board development

Activity description. Provide recurring education and development opportunities for Board members so they understand their governance responsibilities and the organization's strategic environment. Three Board education sessions annually will create a consistent development rhythm.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED	Board education sessions	3	3

2029 target: 3

6.4 Conduct Board effectiveness assessment

Activity description. Establish a regular process for evaluating Board effectiveness and using the results to identify opportunities for improvement. A baseline will be established in 2027, followed by annual assessments.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED	Assessment completed	Baseline	Annual

2029 target: Annual

6.5 Establish strategic KPI dashboard

Activity description. Create a Board-level view of the key indicators that demonstrate progress against GISCI's strategic priorities. The dashboard will launch in 2027, move to quarterly reporting in 2028, and become fully integrated into governance by 2029.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED	Dashboard	Launch	Quarterly reporting

2029 target: Fully integrated

6.6 Establish annual strategic review

Activity description. Create a formal annual review of strategic progress so the Board and staff can assess results, identify changes in circumstances, and maintain alignment with the plan. The review will occur each year of the planning period.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED	Review completed	1	1

2029 target: 1

6.7 Align budget with strategic priorities

Activity description. Ensure that annual budgeting decisions explicitly support the organization's strategic priorities and the initiatives identified in the plan. This creates a direct connection between strategic intent and resource allocation.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED, Finance	Strategic initiatives funded	1	1

2029 target: 1

6.8 Evaluate initiatives based on impact

Activity description. Establish a consistent approach for evaluating major initiatives based on their results and organizational impact. Baseline practices will be established first, followed by annual evaluations that can inform future resource and priority decisions.

Lead / Staff	KPI	2027	2028
Board, ED	Major initiatives evaluated	Baseline	Annual

2029 target: Annual

Appendix A — Three-Year Strategic Roadmap

The implementation matrix concludes with a three-year roadmap summarizing the intended progression from 2027 'BUILD' through 2028 'EXPAND' to 2029 'SCALE.' The wording below is retained from the source matrix.

Strategic Priority	Lead	2027 — BUILD	2028 — EXPAND	2029 — SCALE
Strategic Priority	Lead	2027 — BUILD	2028 — EXPAND	2029 — SCALE
1. GISP Value	ED	Establish value framework and baseline data	Expand marketing and employer recognition	Demonstrate measurable GISP value
2. Education Pipeline	CE	Build PreGISP and academic foundation	Expand institutional participation	Establish a mature education-to-GISP pipeline
3. Aligned Professions Pipeline	CE	Build a pipeline to include non-geography professionals from other fields who wish to pursue a GISP-E	Expand non-traditional participation	Establish a mature alternative profession-to-GISP pipeline
4. Certification	CC	Modernization and establish growth foundation	Increase certification participation	Reach 10,000 active GISPs / 1,000 new annually
5. Partnerships	CE	Identify and establish priority relationships	Expand national and international reach	Sustain broad, measurable partnership network
6. Capacity & Finance	ED	Assess and address capacity gaps	Add staff, systems, and automation	Operate sustainably at increased scale
7. Governance & Data	ED	Establish KPIs and governance framework	Integrate data into decisions	Fully mature performance-driven organization

Note: The roadmap supplied in the implementation matrix contains seven roadmap lines, including an 'Aligned Professions Pipeline' line, while the detailed matrix is organized under six strategic priorities. This document preserves the roadmap as supplied rather than attempting to reconcile or renumber it.

Appendix B — Staff Abbreviations

ED — Executive Director
CC — Certification Coordinator
PM — Testing Program Manager
CE — Community Engagement Coordinator
Financial — Financial Committee / financial leadership identified in the matrix
PreGISP Comm — PreGISP Committee