

China Announces Worldwide Coverage by BeiDou



At the end of 2018, China's Satellite Navigation Office announced that the country's GNSS (called BeiDou or 'BDS') is now available as a global service. Originally, worldwide coverage was not expected to be achieved until 2020, but this early completion of the system means that China now joins the USA's GPS, Europe's Galileo and Russia's GLONASS as the only four global providers of satellite-based positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) services.

Ran Chengqi, director general of the China Satellite Navigation Office, is quoted as saying that BeiDou has "officially entered the global era as [it] expands from a regional system to a global navigation system. From now on, no matter where you go, BDS will always be with you". BeiDou offers positioning accuracy to 5 metres in Asia and just 10 metres in the

rest of the world, but this is expected to be further improved over the years ahead.

China's development of BeiDou stems from the nation's desire to have its own independent [global navigation satellite system \(GNSS\)](#) rather than being reliant on PNT services owned by other countries. This strengthens China's defence and national security position, but other applications for BDS are also being developed to benefit the Chinese economy and private sector. This supports Beijing's 'Made in China 2025' policy that promotes strategically high-tech solutions such as autonomous driving, satellite technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and 5G networks. Chinese products such as smartphones and cars are being designed to be compatible with BDS. The *Nikkei Asian Review* recently reported that China has shipped 70 million items of ancillary products such as BDS microchips primarily for use on ships and public transportation to 90 countries. It also claimed that China leads the world for satellite navigation patent applications at 54,000.

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