

THE ROLE OF INDUSTRY IN GMES AND GEOSS
Recommendations for the GRAZ Symposium
Synthesis

The GMES and GEOSS initiatives, in concert with other activities, are creating a paradigm change in geo-spatial and environmental information sharing and recognise that geo-spatial products and services are a key to both economic return and managing global issues. For example, the Geospatial Industry is regarded as one of the top priorities of the US administration High Growth Job Initiative. Earth Observation is an important component of the geospatial industry and consequently an integral part of a Knowledge-driven economy. Nonetheless, these important initiatives are complex. They comprise numerous actors and there is a need for innovative approaches in a wide variety of domains including: political, organisational, technical, economic and financial arrangements.

Since the 1998 Baveno Declaration, European Industry has shown a strong interest in GMES and has supported the steps of the elaboration of a European consensus. However the real present and future role of industry at large in GMES and GEOSS has been little discussed. The success of GMES and GEOSS hinges largely on a proper and efficient role of industry, so that industry must make an overall assessment of GMES/GEOSS opportunities in socio-economic and industrial terms as well as study an action plan which would allow industry to play a role in insuring the success of these initiatives.

To help achieve these objectives the European Association of Remote Sensing Companies (EARSC) recently convened a workshop where industrial actors were able to exchange views and make recommendations to help clarify and optimise the role of Industry. Recommendations are synthesised below to be fed into the upcoming GMES GRAZ Symposium.

1. EO industry in Europe is strategically important and has considerable capabilities and levels of excellence but yet is still vulnerable.

GMES is a key to leverage several decades of industry investment. A major achievement already is the evolving user engagement and market pull. Users are identifying the potential of GMES services for their daily work. Consolidation of this demand through GMES will strengthen industry's capabilities for Europe and globally.

2. GMES is now the main way forward for the sector and it needs strong EU political leadership.

The GMES initiative is the most important step forward to bring Europe into a leading position globally in the field of geo-information. GMES is an opportunity to stabilise the overall value chain for more continuity, to involve national and regional levels along with the European level and to help unlock the intellectual capital contained, but not necessarily accessible, in the research domain. In this undertaking EU must establish coherent synergies with ESA.

3. Policy makers on a wide basis must be informed of the GMES socio-economic benefits, emphasising the high Value-for-Money potential.

Considering the effective demonstration of the technical feasibility of GMES and the on-going user integration, the next big challenge of GMES implementation must be the sustainable allocation of operational budgets, at EC as well as at Member States level. For this, to occur, information on what GMES is, the value for money it represents and in particular the socio-economic benefits, must be prepared and made widely available for policy makers and citizens alike without delay.



4. EU must secure the availability of operational budgets.

To secure continuation and development of the impressive demonstration of GMES and supporting EO industry capabilities to date, the availability and accessibility of operational GMES budgets must be realized through long term user commitments, thereby allowing industry to make suitable planning and investment – from project to services.

5. EU must be more pro-active to aggregate user demand and to foster focused investment.

One of the main aims of GMES is to set up information gathering infrastructures and services, which includes forecasting natural risks, management of resources, monitoring of international agreements amongst others. EU should gather the user needs enabling and fostering focused investment in GMES, and monitor the gradual evolution of users demand. In particular **to foster the development of forecasting tools** (such as assimilation, modelling and so on) building on GMES services and capabilities.

6. EU has to evolve in the way it procures services.

GMES represents a concerted attempt to produce better policy relevant information, bringing together data and information from a wide variety of sources and making it available to those who need it most. The simultaneous development of common procurement policies for such services across European members states will generate substantial order volumes and give industry a chance to grow.

7. GMES is user driven and EU and European Institutions at large must stimulate interest more widely amongst potential users to take a leading role and to participate in relevant financial schemes. New suitable economic model and financing schemes must be developed.

Joint stakeholders efforts are necessary, with a detailed action plan and visible benefits to all stakeholders.

8. GMES needs to be linked with existing standards and regulations programs such as INSPIRE and the like in Positioning and Telecommunications to foster the development of applications.

9. EU must tackle carefully the issue of public in-sourcing, preserving public out-sourcing to industry.

It is important to develop further GMES applications jointly with all stakeholders including industry. Industry already provides many GMES and GMES-supporting services and it will be important to avoid any unnecessary competition between public and private service providers for operational deliveries.

10. Foster GMES role on Export Competitiveness.

Identify in particular the services which will create positive effects leading to improved competitiveness of enterprises. Be strong in Europe to be strong worldwide. Explore commercial spin-offs.

In Summary

GMES needs a Long Term Commitment from institutions and users to achieve self-sustainability.

The expected results will be: stimulated economic growth, increased market size, a more structured offer, the creation of innovative services, industry structure consolidation, improvement of competitiveness and last but not least sustainable development. It will also bring more jobs and better decision capability for Europe, in line with the EU Growth Initiative and the Lisbon principles.

The involvement of Industry as a partner is crucial at all steps of this undertaking.