

ERS-1 DATA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AND THEIR VALUE FOR TROPICAL COUNTRIES

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The European Space Agency will launch in late '89 its first ocean remote sensing satellite called ERS-1. The mission is experimental and pre-operational and it is aimed at validating active microwave remote sensing techniques for ocean and ice monitoring, as well as all weather high resolution imaging of the earth's surface. ESA plans to offer to the world wide user community a global service about sea state, by providing in near real time ocean parameters like wind fields, wave spectra etc. It will also provide regional SAR service both in real time and in an off-line mode.

Furthermore, the whole data set collected by ERS-1 will be achieved in Europe and will be accessible for historical analysis.

ERS-1 data will provide a unique opportunity for all weather imaging with a Synthetic Aperture Radar which, in most instances, is the only space sensor able to provide high resolution data in tropical regions where cloud cover makes the usage of visible or infrared sensors very problematic.

The Agency plans to define the utilisation of the ERS-1 payload in the coming year through the analysis of the announcement of opportunity, the discussion with representatives of contributing countries and with the international partners with whom cooperation agreements would be established.

It would appear that Brazil with its long experience in remote sensing, both spaceborne (Landsat) and airborne (Radar project), would be a valuable potential partner in the exploitation of ERS-1 data.