

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN REMOTE SENSING - THE ESA EXPERIENCE

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ESA's active involvement with remote sensing began with the establishment of the Earthnet programme in 1978. Earthnet acquires data from the American remote sensing satellites - Landsat, Seasat, HCMM and Nimbus from its stations in Fucino, Kiruna, Oakhanger and Maspalomas.

Earthnet acquires remote sensing data and preprocesses them. Each Member State of ESA has established a focal point who is responsible for remote sensing data distribution in their country. ESA also has contracts with other countries, in the coverage zone of its ground station. Regular meetings are held among the national points of contact and the other users of the data in the Earthnet coverage zone.

ESA participates in the Landsat Station Operators' Working Group, the committee for Earth and International Polar Orbiting Meteorological Satellites. ESA is included in summit discussions on space as part of the European Communities' delegation.

At bilateral level ESA has many projects with the European Community including airborne campaigns, pilot projects and training programmes.

Close contacts in remote sensing are also kept with Brazil, Canada, France, United States, Japan, India and Australia on a bilateral basis.

On the meteorological side ESA has launched Meteosats 1 and 2 and will be launching Meteosat 3 this year. These satellites cover not only Europe but also Africa, the far-East and most of Brazil.

An extensive promotion campaign was carried out in Europe and Africa to encourage countries to use the satellite. A project was established with the Moroccan meteorological service to test the usefulness of data

collection platforms in remote areas. A meteosat data collection platform has left with a European expedition to the Amazon. The ASDAR programme is expanding (data collection platforms mounted in aircraft which transmit weather data automatically during the flight).

Training programmes in meteorology and agrometeorology are conducted both by ESA alone and in cooperation with other organisations. ESA is a founder member of the CGMS (Coordination of Geostationary Meteorological Satellites).

ESA is also preparing ERS-1 and is in the process of negotiating terms for direct access with several States.