

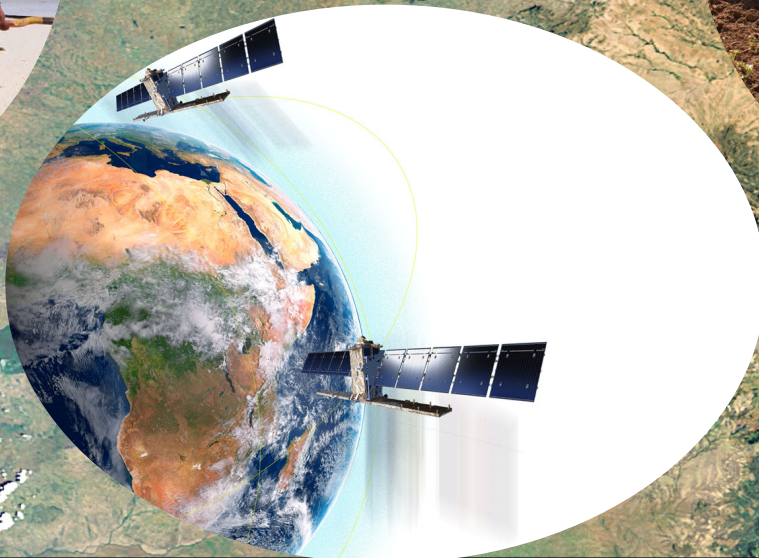


Newsletter

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AUC awards 13 consortia to implement the GMES & Africa grants



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Biannual Newsletter



H.E. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Science, Technology and Human Resource, AUC

Message from
the Commissioner,
HRST

Message from the Commissioner, HRST

Dear reader,

It is a special honor for me to introduce you to the maiden edition of the GMES & Africa Newsletter, which is conceived to remain one of our permanent brands highlighting key developments in the programme's implementation. It is a corporate product, emergent from the need to utilize communication in engaging stakeholders, driving impact, generating results and monitoring progress. This imperative has been well elaborated in the action plan and communications strategy of GMES & Africa – two major blueprints that underpin the programme's operational framework.

It has been well over a year since the launching of the long-awaited joint AU-EU initiative designed to address global developmental challenges using Earth Observation, whilst enormous progress has already been made in establishing and operationalizing GMES & Africa. Following the signing of the joint agreement between the African Union and European Commissions, the Programme Management Unit was staffed, the Technical Assistance Team instituted and deployed, and the various governing and supervisory structures constituted. Crucially, the open Call for Proposals was launched, winners were selected through an official evaluation process, and the successful institutions were awarded at an official ceremony.

This Newsletter highlights the above milestones among other major undertakings of GMES & Africa through the year 2017. The publication delves into groundbreaking events that place the programme under the global spotlight - such as the award of thirteen consortia of African institutions that won the open bidding for the GMES & Africa Grants.

This edition also features captivating pieces on policy and strategic dialogue between the GMES & Africa team and both partners as well as other stakeholders in the EO and broader Space fraternity.

I therefore invite you to dig deep into these narratives about GMES & Africa, and much more about natural resources, the environment, blue economy, climate change, as well as other insightful stories bordering on sustainable development in Africa.



Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo, Director of Human Resources, Science and Technology Department, AUC

Introduction by the
Director, HRST

Implementing GMES and Africa - a key priority in 2018

Earth Observation information supports the developmental needs of African countries. Preceding Earth Observation Programmes in Africa, namely PUMA (2001-2006), AMESD (2007-2013) and MESA (2013-2017), built African human and infrastructural capacities in accessing satellite information for marine, land and meteorological applications. The GMES and Africa Support Programme is designed to build on the achievements, lessons and experiences of the aforementioned programmes.

The first year (2017) of GMES & Africa's implementation will mark the practical implementation of GMES and Africa services – both land and marine. As Delegated Authority in the implementation agreement with the European Commission, the African Union Commission will oversee the practical implementation of the GMES & Africa programme by the thirteen Consortia at the regional, continental and national levels as per their identified needs and priorities. In this endeavour, strong collaboration with other partner and affiliate institutions, programmes and projects is crucial.

To address the identified priorities of the regions and Member States, providing reliable and timely information to stakeholders is equally pertinent. This is a duty to the African people, as well as to the continent's development through the sustainable management of its environment and natural resources. By a large measure, this will contribute to the realization of the African Union's vision to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.



Message from
Programme Coordinator

Dr. Tidiane Ouattara, GMES & Africa Support Programme Coordinator, AUC

Ready and Willing, GMES & Africa Takes off

GMES & Africa has entered a defining chapter of its history, after the initial phase of designing the programme framework, establishing its constituent structures and identifying institutions suitable for the implementation of the Grants. Now is the time to deliver the goods.

This stage is no doubt the most practical, as we begin the journey of active engagement with consortia of institutions with a due diligence exercise meant to strengthen their capacities and streamline their levels of preparedness to implement the Grants. In tandem with the AUC's grant management system, the consortia are appraised against meticulous benchmarks on procurement, budgeting, reporting, training and communications, among other technical parameters. It is the African Union Commission's enterprise to measure, guide, monitor and evaluate performance through an integrated, virtual grant management system.

GMES & Africa has the mandate to address two main Services which reflect the identified needs of the continent and the expediency deduced from the predecessor projects, especially MESA. The Natural and Water Resources Service focuses on long-term management of natural resources, and water resources management; whilst the Marine and Coastal Service is entirely dedicated to the Marine & Coastal thematic area.

The process of implementation will rest on key modules where concrete outcomes are discernable. Through education and training, GMES and Africa will build the capacity of African public and private sectors in engendering and utilizing EO information for sustainable development in Africa. Overall, the imperatives are timely access to data by stakeholders, efficient processing and analysis, proficient information packaging, and harmonious communication between decision makers and end users.

Technically, the implementation will involve the development of new applications, and the fusion of previously disjointed services under MESA to generate and maximize much needed capacity and infrastructure. At the same time, prudence will dictate that some existing applications be extended to other institutions that are in need of such facilities, in order to economize resources, strengthen capacity and foster collaboration among regional players. Indeed, such partnership will be powered by strategic communications through extensive outreach and awareness-raising to inform and engage policy makers, the private sector, scientists, academia and end users.

Leaning against such a strategic policy and operational edifice, and with the support of all stakeholders, GMES and Africa is positioned to enable the continent's provision of basic necessities such as food, shelter, a clean and healthy environment, and proper education for its growing population.

AUC officially awards grants to thirteen successful consortia of institutions



Grant award ceremony for thirteen successful consortia of African institutions

On the sidelines of the AU-EU Summit held in December 2017 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, the African Union Commission (AUC) officially awarded thirteen successful consortia of African institutions that will serve as Regional Implementing Centres for the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and Africa (GMES and Africa) Support Programme grants.

Following a Call for Proposals in May 2017, a number of African institutions operating in the areas of water, natural resources, marine and coastal areas, applied for the GMES and Africa Support Programme grants. To evaluate the applications and select the most suitable consortia of institutions that submitted proposals, the African Union Commission instituted a committee supported by a team of assessors comprising African earth observation experts. Thirteen consortia of institutions were finally selected and awarded at the Abidjan ceremony:

Central Africa: Agence Gabonaise d'Etudes et d'Observations Spatiale (AGEOS); and Commission Internationale du Bassin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha (CICOS) - for the Water and Natural Resources Service.

East Africa: IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC); and the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) - for Water and natural resources service; and Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) - for the Marine and Coastal Areas Service.

North Africa: National Authority for Remote Sensing & Space Sciences (NARSS) - for the Marine and Coastal Areas Service; and Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel (OSS) - for the Water and Natural Resources Service.

Southern Africa: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) - for the Marine and Coastal Areas Service; Southern African Development Community Climate Services Centre (SADC-CSC); and Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management (SASSCAL) - for the Water and Natural Resources Service.

West Africa: Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE) and Obafemi Awolowo University; Ile-Ife, Nigeria (CSSTE-Obafemi) - for the Water and Natural Resources Service; and University of Ghana (UG) - for the Marine and Coastal Areas Service.

At the award ceremony graced by representatives of winning consortia and senior officials of the Ivorian government, the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology at the African Union Commission, Professor Sarah Anyang Agbor, felicitated the successful institutions on their selection, which she said was based on their experience and proven capacities. She implored them to deliver the goods, and promised the African Union Commission's unflinching support.

The GMES and Africa Support Programme is a 30 million Euro joint programme co-financed by the European Commission and the African Union Commission.

The programme will use and adapt the Copernicus Programme data and services to the African context. It is designed to specifically respond to African needs with respect to services related to water, natural resources, marine and coastal areas, and to address global needs to manage the environment, mitigate climate change and ensure civil security.

Award ceremony in pictures



Grant award ceremony for thirteen successful consortia of African institutions-Abidjan

Earth Observation for the Africa We Want

The Africa GIS 2017 Conference was held from 21 to 24 November 2017 at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The conference brought together policy makers, academics, private sector operatives, data providers and partners in the field of Earth Observation from Africa and beyond.

The Coordinator of the GMES and Africa Support Programme and Space Science Expert at the African Union Commission, Dr. Tidiane Ouattara, addressed the conference as a keynote speaker. He underlined the significant role of Earth Observation and monitoring of Africa's abundant natural resources in conserving the welfare of current and future generations.

Dr Tidiane Ouattara posited that The Africa We Want is not an unrealistic dream or wish, or a series of promises; rather a clarification call for each and every African to contribute towards realizing our developmental aspirations. The motto, he continued, should be seen as a collective enterprise where several experts and specialists from various fields and disciplines, including the Geospatial and statistics communities, are

required to work together to properly transform the African dream into a reality.

Dr. Ouattara alluded to the need to address the huge gap in terms of the requisite infrastructure and critical human resources at all levels to fully realize the potential benefits that would accrue from the sustainable use and conservation of Africa's natural resources.

Thematic experts of the GMES & Africa Support Programme also discussed the possible contribution of Earth observation for transforming land based natural resources in Africa and the potential of GMES & Africa contribution for the growth of Blue Economy in Africa. Services, Training, infrastructure and awareness raising are the four key pillars of the GMES & Africa Support Programme. How the GMES and Africa Support Programme operates, how fifty five African States benefits from the Programme discussed in detail at the Exhibition area dedicated for GMES & Africa Programme.



Dr. Tidiane Ouattara, GMES & Africa Programme Coordinator

Earth Observation and the monitoring of Africa's abundant natural resources are important for conserving the welfare of current and future generations.

Dr. Tidiane Ouattara



GMES and Africa's Support Programme Exhibition at Africa GIS 2017

Earth Observation for the growth of blue economy in Africa

The potential for Earth Observation applications to contribute to the growth of Blue Economy in Africa, under the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) & Africa Support programme was a subject of discussion at the Africa GIS 2017 Conference held at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Conference Center in Addis Ababa, from 20th to 24th November 2017. The Conference brought together policy makers, academics, private sector operatives, Earth Observation data providers and partners in the field of EO from Africa and beyond.

The Marine and Coastal Areas Expert for the GMES & Africa Technical Assistance Team, David Kirugara, noted that Africa's maritime industry is valued at more than 1 trillion revenue every year. The African Union Commission, he said, promotes the development of the Blue Economy and encourages African countries to formulate strategies that will diversify their economies and catalyze socioeconomic transformation by exploiting huge and potential opportunities in a range of productive sectors, including fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transport, shipbuilding, energy, bio-prospecting, as well as underwater mining and related activities.

The African Union's 2050 Africa's Integrat-

ed Maritime Strategy describes the Blue Economy as the new frontier of African Renaissance and recognizes and encourages African countries of the importance of paying greater attention to their maritime interests including securing the conditions for those working and living off the oceans. Mr. Kirugara dwelt on how GMES & Africa programme will leverage on the rapidly evolving Earth Observation technologies for the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources management in Africa. He sounded caution that Blue economy is not just about oceans, but also about seas, lakes, rivers, ponds and groundwater, therefore an issue of crucial importance to Marine and Coastal as well as Water Resources Management, which are primary concerns of the GMES and Africa Support Programme.

The GMES & Africa Support Programme uses Earth Observation and space technologies to generate information and services for sustainable development in Africa, through environmental and natural resources management. The programme aims to improve African policy-makers' and planners' capacities to design, implement, and monitor national, regional and continental policies and to promote the sustainable management of natural resources through the use of Earth Observation data and derived information.



Fishing in Dakar



Biodun Adeyemo Head of Division, Programming, Budgeting, Finance & Accounting, AUC

Training on AUC grant management standards

The Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and Africa (GMES & Africa), conducted a capacity development workshop for the thirteen consortia of institutions that were awarded grants to implement GMES & Africa, on the margins of the AU-EU Summit in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

The overall objective of the training workshop held from 29 November to 01 December 2017, was to enhance the capacity of the regional implementing centers on the African Union Commission's grant management procedures and processes, to enable them efficiently manage the grants.

The GMES & Africa Programme Coordinator, Dr. Tidiane Ouattara, welcomed the participants and briefed them on how the GMES & Africa Support Programme's the state of play.

Key topics covered by the workshop included rules and procedures on the AUC's financial management, procurement and reporting standards. The workshop also addressed the GMES & Africa Communication and Engagement Strategy, and the upcoming due diligence missions intended to assess the technical capacities of the regional implementation centers in implementing the grants. Twenty delegates attended the workshop.

Transforming land-based resources: the role of GMES & Africa

Extreme weather events, climate change, land degradation, droughts and floods severely affect the Earth, and Africa is severely impacted by these environmental challenges.

As a result, land-based and other natural resources are at risk. Ultimately, the socioeconomic development of Africa is threatened. Improved environmental and natural resources management and earth observation technologies play a significant role in improving the socioeconomic conditions of the people of Africa.

The GMES & Africa Support Programme is intended to serve as a catalyst in this regard, by using Earth Observation and space technologies to generate information for sustainable development in the conti-

nent- Africa.

The GMES & Africa Support Programme builds on the achievements of its precursors (PUMA, AMESD, and MESA Projects) and broadens the use of Earth Observation to serve multiple needs for sustainable management of the environment, as well as the climate, and natural resources. The Climate Data aspect of GMES & Africa is also in tune with the objectives of the World Meteorological Organization's programme called Global Framework for Climate Service (GFCS).

Improved environmental and natural resources management and earth observation technologies play a significant role in improving the socioeconomic conditions of the people of Africa.



River flooding



Jaris Photography

The PCAC: setting the pace for GMES & Africa governance



Group photo of GMES and Africa Policy Coordination and Advisory Committee

The GMES & Africa Support Programme Policy Coordination and Advisory Committee (PCAC) held its inaugural ordinary session in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 4 to 6 September, 2017. PCAC is a key governance pillar of the GMES & Africa Support Programme.

According to Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo, Director of Human Resources, Science and Technology at the African Union Commission, who officially opened the meeting, Space is an important enabler for Africa's sustainable development as well as for the advancement of Science and Technology on the continent.

Christer Hermansson, a representative of the European Commission, underlined the continental dimension of the GMES & Africa Programme and the strong support it stands to gain from Copernicus programmes and services.

In order to facilitate continental and regional policy and priorities alignment with the GMES and Africa Support Programme result areas, the AUC organizes two continental forums, and the annual Policy Coordination and Advisory Committee (PCAC)

meeting is one of them. Its role is to ensure policy coordination among various stakeholders as well as facilitate the delivery of results by the Programme. The recommendations and action points of the PCAC meeting is shared with the GMES & Africa Programme Coordination Team for consideration during the implementation process.

Space is an
important
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of science and technology
on the continent

Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo

Forging closer linkages with European partner institutions

A delegation of the GMES & Africa Support Programme paid a visit to the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), from the 2nd to 5th of July 2017.

The aim of the visit was to map out possible scientific and institutional collaboration on access to Earth Observation data and infrastructure, possible services and applications derived from EO data, and their role in capacity building for the GMES & Africa Support Programme.

During the visit, delegation, led by the GMES & Africa Programme Coordinator, Dr. Tidiane Ouattara, discovered the existing capacities and capabilities of the three European partner institutions in the field of Earth Observation data acquisition and applications. Dr. Ouattara and delegation observed that the institutions' EO data access and their applications are in line with the context of the implementation of the GMES & Africa Support Programme.

Both the GMES & Africa Support Programme delegation and the three partners expressed their commitment to collaborating on the three pillars of the GMES & Africa Support Programme: access to EO data, service development and training.

Following the visits, a Memorandum of Understanding with detailed roles and responsibilities are expected to be signed between the African Union Commission and the three partners.

Space technologies for Africa's development



GMES & Africa briefing on Space awareness high level workshop

The African Union Commission participated in the high level awareness raising workshop on space science applications held on 7 October 2017, at the UNECA in Addis Ababa. The GMES & Africa Support Programme Coordinator and Space Expert, Dr. Tidiane Ouattara, of the African Union Commission, briefed participants on how GMES & Africa will use images of Earth from space for marine and land resource management in Africa.

The purpose of the workshop was to raise awareness regarding applications of space based technologies for development, and to share experiences of stakeholders and actors in the field. It was also aimed at engaging the education sector to enhance capacity development on space and Earth Observation related issues in Africa.

The Space Awareness high level workshop was officially opened by Prof. Afework Kasu, State Minister of the Ethiopian Ministry of Science and Technology, who underlined the importance of space science, outreach and education in stimulating youth in science and technology for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. He further added that teacher training and exposure to space oriented events and educational materials will enhance teachers'

self-confidence in teaching and assisting to produce students who will be attracted towards STEM fields.

The workshop was organized by the International Astronomical Union's Office of Astronomy for Development (IAU-OAD), the European Union Space Awareness Project, Ethiopian Space Science and Technology Institute (ESSTI), and the East Africa Regional Office of Astronomy for Development (EAF-ROAD).

The GMES & Africa Support Programme uses images of earth from space for marine and land resource management in Africa

Dr. Tidiane Ouattara,

Due diligence, a cardinal principle of GMES & Africa

The GMES and Africa Call for Proposals was launched in May 2017, attracting a number of applicants from across the African continent. Following the close of the Call, the AUC constituted an evaluation committee comprising representatives of various departments, supported by a team of assessors to evaluate the proposals received and identify those suitable for the implementation of the GMES and Africa Grants. In conjunction with the Guidelines on the Call, the evaluation committee scrutinized the proposals and selected 13 consortia of institutions representing the five regions of Africa. The selected institutions will lead the implementation of the GMES and Africa Support Program grants.

GMES and Africa has been embarking on a due diligence exercise, by visiting lead institutions of the consortia to assess their technical capacity and verify their readiness to implement the pledges made in their proposals. The missions cover eight African countries across the continent's five regions and are expected to enable the winning consortia to discharge their contractual obligations effectively and efficiently, and alleviate potential drawbacks in the implementation of the Grants that could arise as a result of limited understanding of the grants management system. The exercise is therefore set the work of Consortia on a sound and solid administrative footing.

The due diligence teams comprise the GMES and Africa Programme Management Unit and representatives of other AUC stakeholder departments including Procurement; Programming, Budgeting Finance and Accounting (PBFA); as well as Strategic Planning, Policy, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilization (SPPMER). The role of the other stakeholder departments is to ensure that the implementing institutions conform to AUC procurement, grant management, financial and reporting rules and standards.



Due Diligence Mission at OSS, Tunisia



Due Diligence Mission at RCMRD, Nairobi



Due Diligence Mission at Ile Ife University, Nigeria



Due Diligence Mission at NARSS, Egypt



Due Diligence Mission at MOI, Mauritius

GMES & Africa: underpinning collaboration among Earth Observation data users and stakeholders

Involving stakeholders and end users from the onset of continental and joint projects is a cardinal principle of the African Union. This position of the AU was amplified during the kick off meeting of AfriCultuReS (African Agricultural Systems with the Support of Remote Sensing) Project, which was held from 23 to 24 November 2017, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Programme Coordinator of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security, and Africa (GMES & Africa) Support Programme, Dr. Tidiane Ouattara, who represented the African Union Commission at the event, posited that AfriCultuReS project can make a difference because it involves stakeholders and end-users of Earth Observation right from inception.

The Ethiopian Minister for Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Dr. Seleshi Bekele, also emphasized the importance of cooperating with the EU for the achievement of sustainable development goals, especially through initiatives such as AfriCultuReS.

AfriCultuReS is the Horizon 2020 project that won a Call on using Earth Observation assets for improving food security in Africa. The project has 17 partners, 7 of which are in African (Tunisia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, Mozambique, and South Africa). It is one of the cornerstones of the strategy of the European Commission to intensify cooperation with African partners.

AfriCultuReS expected to deliver a broad range of climatic, production, biophysical and economic information, for various regions in Africa by applying geospatial science to sustainable agricultural development, natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, and poverty alleviation.

The Global (GMES & Africa) Support Programme also uses Earth Observation data and information for both the management of water and land based natural resources and marine and coastal resources in Africa. All fifty-five African States are beneficiaries of the GMES & Africa Support Programme.



EU representative



Minister of Energy, Water & Electricity-Ethiopia



Dr. Tidiane Ouattara, AUC representative



Group photo of participants

About GMES & Africa

GMES and Africa Support Programme is a 30 million Euro joint programme co-financed by the European Commission and the African Union Commission. The Programme will use and adapt the Copernicus Programme data and services to the African context. It is designed to specifically respond to African needs with respect to services related to water, natural resources, marine and coastal areas and to address the global needs to manage the environment, and ensure civil security. It is to enable the implementation of the African Space Policy and Strategy, formulated to harness the continent's capabilities in utilizing space science and technology for economic growth and sustainable development. In the implementation agreement, the African Union Commission is the 'delegated authority' responsible for the management of the programme.

GMES and Africa Support Programme aims to improve African policy-makers', planners', scientists', business and private sector and citizens' capacities to design, implement, and monitor national, regional and continental policies and to promote sustainable management of natural resources through the use of Earth Observation data and derived information.

Unlike prior Earth Observation Programmes, the GMES and Africa introduces four key innovations: The inclusion of the North African countries; the programme is managed entirely by the African Union Commission; the engagement of African private sector and academia; it uses data from Copernicus Programme.

GMES & Africa team at the AUC



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