

The POSTEL Land Surface Thematic Center

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POSTEL (<http://postel.mediasfrance.org>) is a thematic center aiming at associating in a perennial way research laboratories and services in order to produce spatialized biogeophysical products derived from space observations, and distribute them to the scientific community and other users. It is intended to become a service element in the forthcoming GMES environmental monitoring services to be implemented in 2008 and beyond.

POSTEL is structured around 1) research entities, such as INRA CSE, CNRM/Météo-France, CESBIO, LSCE, CNES/SI, which have the role to conceive and validate new remote sensing products, and 2) a Service Centre located at Medias-France, responsible for the development of operational processing lines, and for the production and distribution of biogeophysical products to the users. The latter assures the contact with the users (user needs, product customization, data acquisition and quality status). POSTEL is funded by national institutions, CNES, CNRS, Météo-France, INRA, and IRD, and by European and other funding through the participation to a number of projects, including CNES / POLDER and PARASOL, CNES / VEN μ S, FP6 / AMMA, FP6 / GEOLAND, FP5 / CYCLOPES, ESA / GLOBCOVER, and FP6 / VGT4AFRICA.

POSTEL distributes free of charge to the scientific community through its Web interface a series of biogeophysical products derived in the framework of the various projects above and characterizing land surfaces at regional to global scale. They concern the description of vegetation (leaf area index, fraction of vegetation cover, burnt areas ...), radiation at surface level (albedo, downwelling radiation, temperature), and water (soil moisture, water bodies, evapotranspiration ..).

The paper describes the POSTEL thematic center and the first products available, and outlines its present status and perspectives of development.

