

The Northern Eurasia Earth Science Partnership Initiative for Implementing a Regional, Integrated Research Program

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A regional emphasis that is directed toward concrete action for developing the goal of understanding and managing our planet's environment has recently gained added momentum. A strategy toward broadening the international participation in the Northern Eurasia Earth Science Partnership Initiative, or NEESPI is being realized. In order to meet the major goals of many national and international programs of global change and carbon research, as well as many other global and regional scientific endeavors, an integrated, regional study of northern Eurasia that will systematically address potentially critical issues of the Earth system is concurrently being developed and implemented. NASA and the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) initially collaborated in the first phase and developed the NEESPI Science Plan, which prioritizes the key research that needs to be accomplished in this region to meet the needs global change and sustainable development. The next step has been to develop the organizational structures that will enable full international participation and implementation through partnership. Due to the size of Northern Eurasia and the scope of the multidisciplinary integration required at many levels, the expertise and support from many international sponsors is needed in order to achieve the comprehensive NEESPI objectives. This requires a project organizational structure that enables full voice and participation by many countries and many agencies (governmental, public and private). The study region is enormous – thus making remote sensing the essential tool for its study and monitoring -- and encompasses many sovereign countries (e.g., Russia, China, Ukraine, Mongolia). Each country has its own interests regarding participating with extra-nationals, and these must be understood and respected. Many countries outside of the host region have funded research programs and their own working relationships with the "host countries." The NEESPI intends to build upon these, not replace them. The overriding and guiding principals for the formal organizational structure are that at maturation of the project organization no one country, agency or organization or individual be in a position to dominate the development and implementation of the NEESPI. Rather, each having their own national, agency or other mandates and interests should desire to and work collectively toward meeting the needs of the other partners such that all partners will be able to meet their requirements (national, agency or scientific) and achieve the collective NEESPI goals. The first phase of the mature, international NEESPI will begin in 2005 with the establishment of the NEEPSI International Project Office and is expected to run for ten years.