

Earth Observation Data Policy and Europe (EOPOLE)

University College London has been successful in leading an international team to win a European Commission (EC) project to explore at a European level the issues of Earth observation data policy. The project, entitled Earth Observation Data Policy and Europe (EOPOLE), is a concerted action within the European Commission's Framework IV research budget and is a part of the activities being developed by the EC Centre for Earth Observation (CEO). The project has a contribution from the European Commission of 509,000 ECU.

While there is investment in Europe on space infrastructure for Earth observation, and there are national and international initiatives to develop applications of Earth observation data, there has been little research on the policies which will apply to the data from space. Yet the policies which apply to Earth observation data will condition the success or failure of many of the missions by influencing the use of their data.

The primary objectives of the EOPOLE project are therefore:

- To review and co-ordinate relevant European national research in Earth observation data policy with a strong user perspective.
- To identify and recommend improvements to Earth observation data policy with a distinctly European perspective in order to provide better conditions for the expansion of the Earth observation sector.

The project also has four supporting, secondary objectives:

- To collate and review the Earth observation data policies of European member states and international agencies in which Europe plays an active part.
- To transfer knowledge and experience of Earth observation data policy issues, particularly those which directly affect users, among European member states.
- To increase awareness in the Earth observation sector of: (1) the obstacles which current Earth observation data policies produce, and (2) the opportunities for improving the conditions of access to Earth observation data by changing Earth observation data policies.
- To build broadly-based European expertise in Earth observation data policy so that European perspectives can be articulated in global Earth observation fora.

The project team consists of universities, research laboratories and companies from across Europe. The members of the project team are listed below.

EURIMAGE, Rome, Italy

German Aerospace Research Establishment (DLR), Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany

Infocarto, Madrid, Spain

Microwave Consulting Engineering, Cosenza, Italy

National Technical University of Athens, Greece

Observation, Mapping and Monitoring, Märsta, Sweden

PG Consultants, Ijsselstein, The Netherlands

Swedish Space Corporation, Stockholm, Sweden

University College London, UK

University of Leiden, The Netherlands

The project will tackle the following issues in Earth observation data policy in Europe through a series of workshops held at different sites across Europe over a two year period, 1998 - 2000.

Workshop 1 State of the art review of Earth observation data policy

Workshop 2 User issues: real time versus off line, operational, different sectors

Workshop 3 Ground infrastructures, distribution and dissemination policies

Workshop 4 New technologies and data integration

Workshop 5 Archives: short, medium and long term

Workshop 6 Pricing policy: options, new models

Workshop 7 Legal issues: constraints, new opportunities

Workshop 8 Conclusions, finding and recommendations: Presentations to the CEO team

The project is led in University College London by Professor Ray Harris, the Director of the Remote Sensing Unit and Deputy Head of the Department of Geography. Contact details: tel +44 171 504 4283, fax +44 171 504 4293, email r.harris@geog.ucl.ac.uk.

More information about EOPOLE is available on the project web site at:

<http://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/~eopole>

More information is available about the EC Centre for Earth Observation (CEO) through its web site at: <http://www.ceo.org>