

Land Cover & Vegetation Services for Environmental Monitoring

- **100 participants from across Europe join 1st geoland Forum in Germany**
- **European Commission co-funds € 20 Million GMES Project within its FP6 programme**
- **OpenDay introduces project to European stakeholders**

Potsdam/Berlin: The first major meeting of the European project geoland, the geoland Forum, has taken place in Potsdam and Berlin on February 25th-27th. More than 100 participants, representing 56 user organizations, private and public service providers and researchers from 15 European member and accession states, spent two full days on the premises of GeoForschungsZentrum (GFZ) in Potsdam, harmonizing their joint project work in dedicated discussions. Subsequently, an OpenDay held at the Presse- und Besucherzentrum of the German government in Berlin, was dedicated to the presentation of the geoland project, its position within the European political context, and the projects' goals and ambitions; as well as the demonstration of links and complementarity to other projects.

geoland is carried out in the context of GMES, a joint initiative of European Commission (EC) and European Space Agency (ESA), which aims to gradually build up a European capacity for **Global Monitoring of Environment and Security** by the year 2008¹. geoland is designed to fundamentally support this initiative, focusing on the GMES priorities "Land Cover Change in Europe", "Environmental Stress in Europe", and "Global Vegetation Monitoring".

The joint ambition of the geoland consortium is to develop and demonstrate a range of reliable, affordable and cost efficient European geo-information services, supporting the implementation of European directives and policies. Thus, the GMES initiative is considered a unique opportunity to integrate various already existing and scientifically sound elements into sustainable services.

Within eight sub-projects (observatories), the 56 partners will develop geo-information products and services, utilizing available Earth Observation resources in combination with in-situ measurements, and integrating them with existing models into pre-operational geo-information services. These will support global, national and regional authorities and institutions in fulfilling their increasing monitoring and reporting obligations.

¹ see COM (2004) 65 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES): Establishing a GMES capacity by 2008 – (Action Plan 2004-2008). Brussels, 03 February, 2004.

geoland particularly addresses environmentally relevant issues such as water quality, nature protection, various Kyoto-processes or food security issues. The project is structured into three regional and three global observatories, each of them supported by a core service providing basic geo-information inputs. An Operational Scenario will be established to define the geo-information infrastructure and satellite technology requirements to achieve a fully operational service.

Regional Observatories *focus on implementation of newly established European directives*

Observatory Nature Protection	Habitats and Bird Directive, Ramsar Convention, Convention on Biological Diversity
Observatory Water and Soil	Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection, Water Framework Directive
Observatory Spatial Planning	European Spatial Development Perspective, European Spatial Observatory Network

Global Observatories *address Global Change and Sustainable Development issues*

Observatory Natural Carbon Fluxes	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
Observatory Global Land Cover & Forest Change	UN Forum on Forest, Forest Development Communication of the EC
Observatory Food Security & Crop Monitoring	council regulations on Food Aid Policy, Environmental Measures in Developing Countries

Core Services *support the observatories with cross-cutting issues*

Core Service Generic Landcover	Support of the regional observatories with cross-cutting landcover and landcover change products
Core Service Bio-geophysical Parameters	Supports the global observatories with cross-cutting parameter products
Operational Scenario	Development of service infrastructure design for all sub-tasks

All services are designed to fulfill the policies' and users' needs providing the sustainability, availability, reliability and cost efficiency they have long desired.

50 percent of the overall project volume is funded by the European Commission (EC), while the other € 10 Mio are covered by the participating companies and institutions. This proves that the consortium members are convinced to be able to develop scientifically sound and equally valuable and sustainable services.

The geoland consortium took the opportunity of this first joint meeting to initiate an OpenDay at the *Presse- und Besucherzentrum* of the German government. Here, speakers representing responsible stakeholder organizations such as the European Commission's (EC) Directorate General Environment (DG-Env), the European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Space Agency (ESA), and the French

and German national space agencies (CNES and DLR), recognized geoland's significant position within GMES and the vital role of the project in the consolidation of ESA's GSE² projects and the EC's FP-6³ activities. In addition, the speakers took the opportunity of being able to address the entire geoland consortium, to express the high expectations they have for this project.

Representatives from geoland's key user organizations –Federal Environment Agencies of Austria and Germany, EUMETSAT-LandSAF⁴, PUMA⁵ Task Force– took that same opportunity to specify their precise service requirements for the geoland services, and to describe their individual contributions to the project.

Finally, representatives from two of ESA's GSE projects, namely GMES Urban Services (GUS) and Global Monitoring of Food Security (GMFS), spoke together with "counterparts" addressing similar issues within geoland observatories. The speakers explicated their common vision, their cooperation approaches, and their complementarity, as well as the fundamental differences distinguishing their projects from each other.

For further information, please contact:

Mareike Doepke	Infoterra GmbH
geoland Communications	88039 Friedrichshafen
	T +49 7545 8 3924
www.gmes-geoland.info	F +49 7545 8 1337
www.gmes.info	mareike.doepke@infoterra-global.com

² **GMES Service Element**

³ **6th Framework Programme of the European Commission**

⁴ **European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites / Satellite Application Facility for Land Surface Parameters**

⁵ **Preparation for the Utilisation of Meteosat Second Generation in Africa**