

EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
International Cooperation in Earth Observation Missions (1)

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN LAND IMAGING SATELLITE SYSTEMS

Abstract

On February 11, 2013, the Landsat Data Continuity Mission achieved orbit and began its checkout period. It is anticipated that by the end of May 2013, checkout will have been completed and the mission will be declared operational and renamed Landsat 8. This satellite is the future of the Landsat series and will obtain imagery to be used throughout the world in agriculture, education, business, science, and government. Landsat 8 data will carry the same free and open data policy that has been in place for the entire Landsat archive since 2008.

Landsat Multi-Mission International Cooperator (IC) agreements are in the process of being established around the globe, including a number of developing countries. The IC network has evolved into much more than a collection of ground stations simply downlinking Landsat data. ICs are strategic global partners, which enable a foundation for scientific and technical collaboration and an internationally recognized US Landsat leadership and presence.

Land Remote Sensing Coordination is actively taking place among the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), foreign governments, and international organizations through bilateral and multilateral agreements with the goals of obtaining unique and valuable foreign Earth observation data for scientific and natural hazards applications by the USGS and other U.S. agencies and augmenting future global coverage capacity for freely shared land remote sensing data.

The USGS continues to be an active participant in Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) activities through working groups, virtual constellations and societal benefit area teams. The USGS has also been a major participant in the International Charter for Space and Major Disasters.

This paper will describe the enhanced capabilities of the Landsat 8 satellite related to land change science and societal benefits and will examine current and future U.S. cooperation with foreign governments, international organizations, and international coordination groups.