

IAF EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
Earth Observation Applications, Societal Challenges and Economic Benefits (5)

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LEVERAGING THE EXPERTISE OF A SPACE AGENCY AND A DEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO
INCREASE IMPACT OF EARTH OBSERVATION IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Abstract

SERVIR is a joint initiative of NASA and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with leading technical organizations around the world—or SERVIR Hubs—that serves and encourages developing countries to use satellite data addressing critical challenges in food security agriculture; water water-related disasters; land cover, land use ecosystems; and weather climate. Over the past fourteen years, the program has worked with stakeholders in almost 50 countries across the world, partnered with 250 institutions, and generated and shared over 70 products from 27 satellites and sensors. In that process, almost 5,000 specialists have been trained in the application of Earth observation data and technology. In its lifetime, the program has been agile and innovative in shifting from what was essentially an incubator for testing and deploying Earth observation science and technology to making co-development the hallmark of its work, exemplified by both South-South and North-South scientific collaborations. SERVIR’s approach has embodied the concept that to solve really big problems, big, creative solutions are needed. SERVIR represents the world working together to address environmental challenges using spaced-based and geospatial technologies.

Aligning with the very meaning of SERVIR, i.e. “to serve,” the program continues to be demand-driven in developing and deploying services (versus one-off products) which address development challenges using geospatial tools and Earth observation science. Neither has the program been solely inward-facing, as in 2016, as another instance of SERVIR’s evolution, USAID and NASA released to the world the ‘SERVIR Service Planning Toolkit,’ a guidance document which provides a framework for how geospatial services can be used to tackle development challenges in a sustained manner. Since then, the service planning toolkit’s systematic approach has begun to catch on in other Earth observation efforts. To improve access and use, SERVIR Global launched their Service Catalogue in February 2019, a searchable collection of demand-driven geospatial services that use Earth observations to support decision making. The

SERVIR implementing Hub partners –include SERVIR-West Africa at the Agriculture, Hydrology and Meteorology (AGRHYMET) Regional Center, in Niamey, Niger; SERVIR-Eastern Southern Africa at the Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development in Nairobi, Kenya; SERVIR-Hindu Kush Himalaya at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in Kathmandu, Nepal; SERVIR-Mekong at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center in Bangkok, Thailand; and SERVIR’s newest Hub, SERVIR-Amazonia, at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in Cali, Colombia.