

EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
Improving Earth Observation thru Data Sharing (6)

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THE PROGRESS OF SETTING UP GEOSS AFTER NOVEMBER 2010 – THE NECESSITY TO
SECURE ADHERENCE TO ITS DATA SHARING GUIDELINES

Abstract

Beijing Ministerial Summit in its declaration of November 5, 2010 stressed the importance of the adoption of the GEOSS Data Sharing Implementation Guidelines and of the Action Plan for the success of GEOSS and improved access to global Earth observation data and resources. Adherence to the data sharing principles embodied in them by all actors involved in GEOSS is essential for the development and operation of the system of systems. The Declaration furthermore urges GEOSS participants to adopt more open data policies in order to ensure that the Data Sharing Principles are effectively implemented.

This paper aims to suggest the strategy of advocating in favour of the open access to data within GEOSS by establishing the strongest link possible with the GEOSS activities and the common good. The link is formulated on the basis provided by the theories of the common good that were developed by various philosophers of the past and elaborated by the thinkers of the present. Its essence lies in the emphasis on interdependence of the necessity to share and the value of the activity in question for the society on the whole.

The society has the interest in secured access to Earth observation data because their use contributes to sustainable development, and this is only one, the most obvious, argument that this paper identifies as calling for the recognition of the principle of sharing as part of the legal regime governing Earth observation activities and the relationship of GEOSS with its participants. The plea to nation states, agencies and other involved organisations to open up access to Earth observation data, particularly for the purposes of the successful operations of GEOSS, can reach its aim if it is focused on the realisation and acceptance of the necessity to make decisions that accommodate interests not only of the actual or potential owners of information, but also of its users. This is particularly true because Earth observation data and information have little value without use, and the benefits of their use cannot be achieved without data sharing.