

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

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IMPROVING GEOSS DATA SHARING PRINCIPLES TO MAXIMISE SOCIETAL BENEFITS OF
EARTH OBSERVATION

Abstract

The societal benefits of Earth observation (EO) cannot be achieved without data sharing. Access to data and information by GEOSS users is an integral part of the GEO objective “to monitor continuously the state of the Earth, to increase understanding of dynamic Earth processes, to enhance prediction of the Earth system, and to further implement our international environmental treaty obligations.”

One of the first accomplishments of the Group on Earth Observations was the acceptance of a set of high level Data Sharing Principles as a foundation for GEOSS in 2005. The 2010 Beijing Ministerial Declaration announced the creation of the GEOSS Data Collection of Open Resources for Everyone (GEOSS Data-CORE) to be shared without any restrictions on access or use. Since then the commitment to share data as part of the GEOSS Data-CORE has increased, and more and more members of the GEO community support this data sharing option. In 2013 the consensus regarding the benefits that full and open exchange of data can bring is very strong. Within this changing landscape the Data Sharing Working Group now believes that the time is right to revisit the 2005 GEOSS Data Sharing Principles, particularly taking into account the current stage of preparing for the next GEO decade 2016-25 and the work on the new GEOSS Implementation Plan.

This paper presents the background, basis, main elements being considered and the rationale behind introducing them for the next proposed GEOSS Data Sharing Principles. It focuses on the assessment of terms, concepts and trends such as open data, cost of data provision, and the requirement of registration for access and use of data. While new revised Data Sharing Principles are not yet approved by GEO, the purpose of this paper is to call attention to the growing acceptance of free, full and open data sharing as a default mechanism within many activities that utilise EO data. It also highlights the cooperative efforts that lead to popularisation of open data and their value and contribution for the overall success in this field. The aim of this paper is to further emphasise the importance of this collective effort for the success of GEOSS, full achievement of societal benefits of EO, and sustainable decision-making in many areas.