

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

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN EARTH OBSERVATIONS: A QUESTION OF WHAT, HOW
AND WHY FOR SECONDARY NATION

Abstract

The successful launch of first satellite into orbit about six decades ago has led to a new era of Earth observations from space. For the first time, human can make numerous measurements about phenomena and processes occur at the Earth's surface or within the atmosphere. Spaceborne Earth observations missions have flourished since the day one of space age concurrent with the advancement of sensor and space technology. Recognizing the fact that adding up the resources and human capital of each nation is more than the sum of their parts, namely the one plus one equal to three effect, countries are actively seeking cooperation with other countries in planning and executing spaceborne Earth observations mission. The benefits of forming cooperation, among others, are to leveraging the existing resources and reducing redundancy since the Earth geophysical information investigated by each country is largely similar. Country with abundant Earth observations resources tend to collaborate bilaterally with another similarly resourceful country to achieve win-win results, especially considering the growing budgetary constraint in space sector worldwide. In multilateral cooperation framework, these primary nations are normally dictating the direction of the collaborative efforts in proportion to both financial and non-financial resources committed by them. Participation in such international cooperation is believed still benefiting country with lesser Earth observation capability but may or may not align with their desired needs. This paper is authored to discuss viewpoint of these countries, designated as "secondary nation", towards international cooperation in Earth observations. This article will discuss the motivations for them to collaborate internationally and the options available, the requirements or commitments to becoming the partnering nation and the expected outcomes of participating in it.