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Author: Dr. Chris van Dijk
Cosine Research BV, The Netherlands

Dr. Marco Esposito
Cosine Research BV, The Netherlands
Dr. Pierluigi Foglia Manzillo
Cosine Research BV, The Netherlands
Mr. Simon Silvio Conticello
Cosine Research BV, The Netherlands
Dr. Nathan Vercruyssen
Cosine Research BV, The Netherlands
Mr. Rick Koeleman
Cosine Research BV, The Netherlands

IN-ORBIT DEMONSTRATION OF A MINIATURISED HYPERSPECTRAL INSTRUMENT WITH ONBOARD HIGH-LEVEL DATA PROCESSING

Abstract

The first ever miniaturised hyperspectral instrument with onboard analytics will be demonstrated in-orbit as part of a CubeSat mission contracted by the European Space Agency. The instrument named HyperScout operates in the VNIR with unprecedented low mass and volume. A compact fully reflective telescope design has been realised within a 1U CubeSat unit. The large field of view and the onboard intelligence deployed on a CubeSat platform enables a large variety of land and vegetation applications, for which cost efficiency and timeliness are of foremost importance.

A novel approach to the bandwidth limitation on small platforms is taken, namely that L2 data is processed onboard. This is particularly advantageous due to the large volume of raw hyperspectral data produced in each acquisition, which can be efficiently compressed in an application-specific manner into the required geophysical parameters. A heavily optimised L2 processing chain has been developed specifically for the available hardware. By providing L2 data on board, the system can be reconfigured in orbit to serve different applications.

The launch is expected to take place in August 2017. The aim of the demonstration mission is to assess the quality of the data that will be acquired and the consequent suitability for the intended applications. Furthermore, the basic functionalities of the instrument as well as the onboard processing of L1 and L2 data in real time will be demonstrated.