

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

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RO-CEO: ROMANIAN CLUSTER FOR EARTH OBSERVATION

Abstract

During the last two decades Romania has contributed to approximately 30 scientific and technological space missions. However, except for the initiatives coordinated by, and involving directly the Romanian Space Agency, most of the contracts with European Space Agency were narrow-scoped and targeted, addressing to the very exclusive expertise of few Romanian institutions. Therefore multi-disciplinary activities remained inaccessible to the Romanian players. Limited access to information about the existing capacities and expertise, coupled with the lack of tradition in collaboration had also a negative impact on the investments. Many institutions have built (with significant costs) similar infrastructures, instead of sharing resources. Also, the representation in international committees is at a low level, since the community is still not consolidated and not well organized. In order to increase their competitiveness, Romanian organizations had to build up a common strategy which include: the identification of the opportunities and correctly evaluate their capacity; the understanding how the business with space agencies works and what are their requirements; the revealing of particular fields / niches / needs where they can contribute; and the proving their expertise and capacity, to be considered reliable by the space agencies. One of the best manners to speed up the transfer of expertise and good practices in doing business with space agencies is to organize a dedicated innovation cluster. The ongoing interaction between researchers, developers and users in an innovation cluster is highly dynamic, enabling cluster members to share data right away in order to identify opportunities for immediate changes. Although a certain number of clusters exist in Romania, none is related to the specifics of Earth Observation. In this context, a consortium of seven partners (research institutions, academia, and private sectors) is trying to build the Romanian Cluster for Earth Observation. The cluster's main goals are to mobilize the most relevant Romanian capacities and expertise in the field of Earth Observation, and to identify and exploit new domains with high potential (from agriculture to energy, environmental protection, risk and hazards, urban planning, transport, etc.). The consortium acts as a nucleus to coagulate relevant capacities and to achieve a critical mass of expertise and initiatives, to support and further develop the EO capacities in Romania. The RO-CEO main achievements so far will be presented in the paper.