

IAF EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
International Cooperation and Business Ventures in Earth Observations (1)

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THE NEW SPACE PORTUGAL PROJECT – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EO

Abstract

The New Space Portugal project is an initiative developed by a consortium of more than 30 entities aimed at the development of a set of constellations and initiatives to increase the competitiveness and expertise of its members and the Portuguese economy in the Earth Observation market. The project features the Atlantic Constellation, a combination of high and very-high resolution Earth Observation satellites, supplemented by a VDES constellation. Additionally, it includes the Digital Planet, a digital platform for the archiving and dissemination of data. Moreover, this initiative comprises a series of cross-functional work packages, which cover demonstration services, capacity building, and entrepreneurship. The development of research studies on EO is one of the work packages of the project, aimed at understanding the challenges and opportunities related with the creation, acquisition and dissemination of EO data. The research being undertaken covers market, technical, social, policy and legal topics and will result in four outputs to be completed throughout 2024 and 2025. This paper describes the project highlighting its collaborative nature, synergies, and comprehensive approach to EO, whilst delving in more detail on the research studies being developed. Indeed, there is a lack of structured, multi-disciplinary and reproducible studies for promoting EO. As a result, the thorough analysis of current and expected market, technical, social, policy and legal frameworks is all the more urgent. Just as important, is the development of new scenarios, theories, guidelines and recommendations for EO that respond to the increasing societal challenges. The paper explains the analysis undertaken, the collaborative processes and governance mechanisms implemented for the research, as well as the challenges identified and how they were dealt with. The paper elaborates on the principal subjects examined and the interplay between market analysis, trends, technical scenarios, and social challenges and opportunities. It specifically addresses how these aspects relate to the SDGs and ESG criteria, highlighting the contribution of EO in achieving specific SDG targets. Additionally, it explores the implications for EO and the responsibilities of EO stakeholders stemming from policies and legislation across various market segments. This includes a focus on cross-sectoral topics such as data sharing, personal data protection, intellectual property, artificial intelligence, DLT/blockchain, cloud computing, and marketplaces. The paper closes with the main conclusions reached at this stage of the project and points to the next stages of analysis, aimed at formulating broad-scope guidelines for EO stakeholders essential for successful cooperation and business ventures in EO.