

4.1. Final publishable summary report

4.2.1. Executive summary

The main objective of the Project was to identify and coordinate EO activities in the wider Balkan region and to pave the way for future full inclusion of all Balkan countries into GEO.

The first step was to create a well-structured methodology for assessing the EO community in each Balkan country in terms of existing stakeholder institutions and their various EO-related projects. Based on this methodology partners from each Balkan country approached stakeholders and generated databases with information about 276 institutions and 235 projects throughout the first year of the project. During these phases the project was closely cooperating with the FP7 project OBSERVE – a clustered project addressing the same call. Based on collected data a comprehensive gap analysis was performed which was described in details in the deliverable D4.1. Also a prospective contribution of the Balkans to the EO was analysed and summarized in the deliverable D4.2. Following the gap analysis project partners envisaged possible 2- and 5-year development scenarios described in details in the deliverable D5.1. Finally, roadmaps and recommendations were created to set priorities for the future capacity building policy in the region with the respect to GEO priorities and implementation plan. These activities were extensively supported with networking of stakeholders and knowledge dissemination activities in forms of web sites, trainings, promotional packages, media promotion, organization of workshops and national promotional events, as well as participation at the high-level special interest meetings across Europe and the World.

The project generated wide-ranging foreground for a coordination and support action both of significance for the scientific community – including methodologies, training materials and booklets – and for policy makers – such as scenarios, roadmaps, etc. During the three years of the project partners actively interacted with over 3000 persons from the wider Balkan region, including live meetings with representatives of 85 governmental bodies and agencies from Balkan countries and 8 from the EU.

It is always difficult to evaluate the concrete impact of such activities. But the events in course of the project's lifetime unquestionably generated an increased interest in the topic, a better understanding of the underlying phenomena and technology, and thus – the most importantly – a willingness to commit and participate in EU and global Earth observation initiatives.

A huge amount of custom made materials and great number of carefully planned and executed events and meetings with relevant stakeholders created firm foundations and a positive atmosphere for further development. The B.GN partners hope that the generated momentum is strong enough to persist until tangible improvements and positive advancements are achieved and the Balkan EO starts significantly contributing to the GEOSS.