

# Integrating North African, Middle East and Balkan Earth Observation capacities in GEOSS

Specific Challenge: The specific challenge is to strengthen the Earth Observation networks (space-based, airborne, and particularly in-situ) of the broad European and North African, Middle East, and Balkan region to reinforce its contribution to the knowledge base for climate, natural resources, and raw materials.

The EU's contribution to the monitoring of our planet by land, sea, air and space-based Earth Observation systems remains too fragmented. In addition, geopolitical and economic events in recent years in the EU's southern and south-eastern neighbourhood regions have had adverse effects on infrastructures and services as well as on its already quite modest Earth Observation capacities. An improvement is therefore urgently needed to enable effective, sustainable planning and management of measures to cope with regional and global challenges such as food security, climate change and access to raw materials and energy.

Scope: Proposals should focus on Earth Observation related research activities with the aim of continuously providing timely and accurate information, forecasts and projections. In line with the EU's strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation[1] proposals should contribute to implementing the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and Copernicus.

Proposals shall address the following issue:

**Integrating North African, Middle East and Balkan Earth Observation capacities in GEOSS**: integrating, coordinating and supporting initiatives in these countries to deliver Earth Observation information services that will benefit critical economic and social sectors such as tourism, agriculture, transportation, health, research and education, while involving service providers in those sectors. Regional observational systems that are needed to complete GEOSS are of particular importance. In line with the EU's strategy for international cooperation in research

and innovation[2] international cooperation is encouraged, ensuring a sufficient number of international partners from the target region to ensure adequate scale and scope of cooperation.

Expected impact:

Improved food security, access to raw materials and energy, and adaptation to climate change in the North-African, Middle-East, and Balkan regions due to improved Earth Observation data and information services. Rapid re-installation of the required infrastructures by the relevant public services and decision makers. Future investments in this region, leading to sustainable development of resources and activities. Strengthened competitiveness and performance of critical economic and social sectors such as tourism, agriculture, transportation, health, research, and education.

Type of action: Coordination and support actions

[1] COM(2012)497

[2] COM(2012)497

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