

CONFERENCE
**Future Challenges for Local and Regional Authorities:
How can Space Technology help?**
Barcelona, Spain, 29 and 30 May 2007

On May 29 and 30 2007, 120 professionals from Local and Regional Authorities, Value Added Service Industry, National and European institutions, met in Barcelona, Spain, to evaluate the benefits Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) can draw from satellite application for implementing environmental, economical and societal policies.

The Conference first provided insights into the role of Local Authorities in European Governance and in reaching the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda. It provided a general background on the European programmes dedicated to providing satellite services to local authorities, and explained the role of the different actors in bringing these services to use. Several examples of good practice on the implementation and use of satellite infrastructure-based services were then presented by regions, and subsequent discussions took place between the participants on the relevance of the use those services for regions, and their implementation.

Conclusions

The participants agreed to the following:

- Local and Regional Authorities are indisputably among the actors which have to gain the most from the successful implementation of new services based on satellite applications for reaching the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda of making Europe the most advanced knowledge-based society. All participants acknowledge that Regions, European and national institutions, and space actors, must cooperate very closely to make this happen.
- There are very relevant and successful examples of the use by Regions of new services based on satellite applications. Those examples show that the technology is ready in some application areas, and can be very cost effective. More and more applications are becoming possible every day, as progress in this area is very fast. Pertinent business cases exist.
- Services based on satellite applications can have strong advantages over other techniques, such as efficiency, geographical scalability, cost effectiveness (with the understanding that the satellite infrastructure is not included in the cost at the moment), and objectiveness.
- However, satellite services remain in a transition phase from pure research to being market driven, and therefore still suffer from some limitations to their use by Regions, such as availability and continuity of data. Those limitations should be overcome with currently planned programmes. The reality of the cost of data as a limiting factor remains to be assessed.
- The challenge for Regions for using such services lies in their integration within existing, proven systems and processes, with clearly identified objectives. The technology push to market causes issues of users' readiness, organisation changes, and maintenance of service. The example of users creating the market pull show that projects are more likely to be successful when they have clearer requirements and better defined business cases, and are politically more acceptable.

Recommendations

Following their conclusions, the Workshop participants wish to recommend to European and national actors the following actions.

- Services based on space applications must be further developed in order to be more efficient, more reliable and at lower cost. For this, it is essential to federate the demand - to identify the core needs of the Local and Regional Authorities – and to coordinate the experience and avoid the duplication of services. While the participants acknowledged the very good work done by EC, ESA and other agencies in this direction, they also welcomed initiatives like NEREUS (Network of European Regions Using Space applications) which will provide a clearly identified actor for addressing future needs. The participants encourage all those actors to further their coordination and collaboration to ensure that services be developed in response to the needs of Local and Regional Authorities.
- LRAs need support for the replacement of their trusted legacy systems. Regions are also facing human resistance to change, which can be overcome only by building up confidence in the effectiveness and sustainability of the new services. The participants request that European and National public actors be strongly committed to ensuring continuity of service, both over time and in frequency, and that services be made available to Local and Regional Authorities within an economical model that will make them cost effective.
- Raising of awareness of Public and Regional Authority, and the sharing of best practice between them, is key to their acceptance of the services proposed. LRAs and service providers need to identify needs and business cases that will structure the demand and offer. Additionally, it is essential that regions, Service Providers and National and European institutions, identify the most efficient mechanisms for the implementation of the services. The participants welcomed the Eurisy initiative proposing a framework for regions to do just this. They recommended that this programme be continued, in close coordination with all actors.

Further information on the programme and participation to this Conference can be found on www.eurisy.org

