



Workshop Conclusions

“When Space Meets Agriculture – Fostering interregional collaborations, investments and definition of user requirements”

14-15 November Matera (Italy)

NEREUS and Consorzio TeRN, with the patronage of Basilicata Region, and with the support of COPA COGECA and the ERIAFF Network, organized a two-day workshop focused on the importance and potential of Europe’s space systems, Copernicus and EGNOS/Galileo to overcome the current and future challenges in the agricultural sector. The workshop got a strong response and brought together almost 150 participants from different sectors and countries, amongst which numerous representatives of public administrations.

The workshop comprised panel debates that featured on the one hand the perspective and needs of the agricultural sector and on the other hand potential added value of space uses for the sector. Speakers which included professionals from space agencies, ESA and relevant European institutions as well as industry gave presentations on what is already possible with Europe’s space systems. Strong emphasis was put on the regional dimension and the impact of regional development programs that are implemented and administered in most Member States by the regions. Regional representatives presented case studies and best practices portraying the wide range of possible uses and the benefits for sustainable land use, food-production and rural development.

As a result of the discussions the following elements emerged as key takeaways:

- I. The broad range of presentations and best practices illustrated that the technologies, the knowledge and the innovation are available to respond in manifold ways to needs of the sector. The debate centred on the question why farmers and agricultural enterprises do not increasingly make use of space based data and products. Numerous factors were identified such as easy data/product access, awareness, qualification, digitalisation, skills, education and training, financial resources, lack of infrastructure (e.g. broad band) etc. To this aim it was proposed to continue the dialogue among Nereus, Copa - Cogeca, Eriaff and the other relevant stakeholders working together at European level in order to develop concrete proposals and /or actions to remove barriers and to facilitate the users uptake of space technologies for agriculture.
- II. Special emphasis was put on the needs of the sector and the single farmer. In this respect digitalisation, connectivity, interoperability, access to information but also risk reduction with respect to weather, climate and foremost civil/natural emergencies (early warning system) and making farming processes and land use more sustainable and innovative (precision farming) featured as very important factors.
- III. Participants recognized the importance of promoting the use of services based on Earth Observation/Copernicus Data among public administrations responsible for land management and agricultural matters and among farmers associations. In this respect, both

communities (space and agriculture) should engage in partnerships to work consistently on supporting the sector to better translate space based data into information and services useful for sustainable and innovative farming and land use.

- IV. The new EO/Copernicus systems (and particularly Sentinel 1 & 2) together with its FOF (Full Open and Free) data policy were recognized already suitable to dramatically improve the control mechanisms of the granting of EU-agricultural funding. To this aim an update of EU regulation frameworks formally recognizing the role that EO techniques can play in this field is strongly recommended.
- V. The importance of strong model projects and pilot initiatives was highlighted. Participants underlined that space and agricultural community should increasingly join forces to explore how regional development programs could be increasingly exploited for experimenting and implementing uses of services, products and applications based on space and EO technologies.
- VI. National / pan-European financial aid should be dedicated to facilitate the access to EO/Copernicus data & products and to promote the user uptake of Space Technologies in Agriculture particularly by public bodies and by farmers associations.
- VII. Connectivity and the potentials of ICT and Satnav-technologies were an important pillar of the debate. In this respect the participants highlighted the importance that
 - EU ensures appropriate framework conditions that its space Industry can continue to provide services for people living in rural areas of Europe (and beyond);
 - EU focus on the space and telecom whole value chain (including their fundamental role in improving professional and private life) considering and implementing a national / pan-European financial aid for farmers and people living in rural areas, dedicated to reliable rural internet access and wireless capabilities, harmonisation of European standards in order to promote interconnection and interoperability and facilitate exchanging information.
- VIII. The S3 AGROFOOD Platform, whose kick-off event is taking place in Florence on 6 and 7 December 2016, was considered as a promising tool to further explore interregional cooperation and to foster crossovers between different sectors and technologies.

Suggested Actions:



with the patronage of REGIONE BASILICATA

1. The involved parties, in particular NEREUS, Copa Cogeca and Eriafl envisage a joint position paper addressing concrete actions with respect to fully develop the potential of Space Technologies in Agriculture.
2. NEREUS and ERIAFF will further explore and develop joint activities in the frame of relevant EU initiatives, particularly the S3 Platform and projects under H2020 and INTERREG, in order to better involve and facilitate cooperation among their partner Regions.
3. To liaise and start a dialogue with Panta Rhei – the network of European Paying Agencies (as Agea) and with EC JRC, in order to develop concrete actions (proposals for regulation amendments, standardisation, validation of EU certified space technologies/methodologies, etc.) for enlarging the role of space-based technologies in the control mechanisms of the granting of the regional development programs.