European Earth monitoring programme (GMES) and its initial operations 2011–2013

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The Commission presents a report on the interim evaluation of the European Earth Monitoring Programme (GMES) and its initial operations (2011-2013). The report, being an intermediate one, has mainly adopted a qualitative approach to the evaluation and proposed a set of possible indicators for future evaluations.

The delay in dealing with this action was due to the overwhelming drain on resources due to the urgent drafting of the proposed Copernicus Regulation (the successor to the GMES Programme) for the operational phase of the Programme as well as due to the drafting of the delegated act to define the Copernicus data policy. This was considered a priority to ensure the maximum continuity and stability of the regulatory framework for users' to take-up.

The GIO Programme officially started on 1stJanuary 2011, and the first GMES operational services commenced in April 2012. The two services which have reached a fully operational status are: **(i) the Emergency Management Service (EMS) and (ii) the Land Monitoring service.**

The main outcomes of the Programme interim evaluation: the evaluation was commissioned by the Commission and undertaken by the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services, and confirmed the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme. The main conclusions are as follows:

- **The objective of establishing the first operational services has already been achieved**. With regard to coherence, there are barriers to maximising potential due to a lack of awareness among enterprises and there is also a demand for higher resolution data. Overall, the two main operational services are expected to deliver good value for money. Other impacts will need to be assessed at the ex-post evaluation, which will take place in 2015.

- **Stakeholders were satisfied with the overall management** and implementation arrangements within the Programme. Most users declared themselves to be interested both in already operational services and in the transversal products to come from the full set of operational services. Users were satisfied with the delegation of specific functions to the JRC, the European Environmental Agency and DG ECHO’s Monitoring and Information Centre relating to the development of two GMES services.

- **The work of the Commission Unit responsible** has been positively evaluated and the existence of continuity between research projects and pre-operational services has been recognised. Nonetheless, the need for better prioritisation was underlined. Overall, the Programme has been judged as an effective mechanism for developing fully operational services.

- **The European added value of the Programme** was clearly identified as addressing users’ cross-border Earth Observation monitoring needs in the emergency management and land sectors.

Over time, through a ‘phase in, phase out’ approach, European datasets could **incorporate contributions** from National Mapping, Land Registry and Cadastral Agencies. This is however, dependent on resolving outstanding problems related to insufficient data harmonisation.

Main recommendations and follow-up actions planned by the Commission: learning the lessons from the evaluation, the Commission endeavours to improve its implementation of the Programme and take into account the recommendations in the design and implementation of the fully operational phase.

Data policy: the evaluation has provided important practical guidance for the preparation of the proposal for the new Copernicus Regulation for data policy development and for data requirements identification (i. e. Data Warehouse).

To answer the need for a better data buy scheme, both for the Emergency Management and the Land Monitoring Services, **a new version of the Data Warehouse is currently under discussion** between the Commission and the European Space Agency.

Governance: questions arose in the evaluation regarding the future role of the User Forum which must be separated from that of the GMES Committee, so as not to undermine the User Forum's role in providing the link in governance arrangements between the Commission, Member States and 'real' end-users. The User Forum is not mentioned in the current proposal for the Copernicus Regulation. However, **regular stakeholders' involvement will be maintained,** in particular at the service level and with more specialised user groups.

Exploiting synergies and avoiding duplications: in the evaluator's view, up to now there has been a tendency to focus more on the space component to the detriment of the in-situ and services components. It is crucial that greater policy attention be given to **ensuring services are sufficiently well resourced**. At the Commission, there has recently been a re-organisation to ensure that both the infrastructure component and services get due attention. Moreover, the draft Copernicus Regulation responds to the recommendation by **providing for a considerable increase in the funding for services.**

Finalising data and information policy: Copernicus stakeholders and in particular the private sector, who are less well informed, need clarity on how the concept of 'full and open data access' will operate in practice. The Commission has recently adopted the Delegated Regulation on data policy which clarifies these issues.