



Updated ESA Earth Observation Data Policy

(Simplified version)

1 OBJECTIVES OF THE ESA EARTH OBSERVATION DATA POLICY

The updated ESA Earth Observation Data Policy (hereinafter the “EO Data Policy”) is applicable per default to the data provided by past, current and future ESA Earth Observation missions, i.e. to ESA Heritage missions, to all ESA research missions funded under the FutureEO Programme (including Earth Explorer missions, Scout missions and ESA EO campaigns) and to the ESA missions whose operations are funded under the Elements of the European Earth Watch Programme (referred to hereinafter as “the sources of ESA EO data”). The EO Data Policy is applicable, in accordance with ESA rules and procedure and unless otherwise specified in the relevant Programme Declarations or Implementing Rules.

The EO Data Policy pursues the established objective of maximising the beneficial use of the Earth Observation data provided by ESA missions and of maintaining a balanced use of these data for a variety of applications, be it scientific, for public good or commercial. It applies to all primary and processed data (including Level 2 and higher levels) as defined according to the UN terminology (United Nations Resolution A/RES/41/65 dated 3 December 1986 on Principles relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Space).

Furthermore, the EO Data Policy shall:

- Allow for the continued and enlarged support to Earth science activities, in line with individual mission objectives;
- Encourage the evaluation of innovative technologies and instruments for observing the Earth;
- Allow for the continued support to already established and new operational applications and services;
- Create the conditions for the private sector to invest in derived products and services;
- Support the development of a globally competitive Earth Observation industry in ESA Member States.

2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The sources of ESA EO data originate from programmes and activities that are funded by the ESA Member States for the mandatory activities, and by the Participating States for the optional programmes. ESA, on behalf of the Member States, retains ownership of all primary data originating from these missions and campaigns together with any derived products generated under ESA contracts.

Data from these programmes and activities shall be:

- Available in an open and non-discriminatory way, and their distribution shall be consistent with UN resolution A/RES/41/65;



- Preserved and kept accessible during and beyond missions lifetime, pending approval of the related funding, in the frame of the relevant ESA mandatory or optional programmes.

3 EO DATA ACCESS CONDITIONS

The available ESA EO data, for which the EO Data Policy is applicable, can be split into two major groups:

1. The free dataset representing the majority of data, includes data directly accessible on-line;
2. The restrained dataset whose access is subject to ESA prior approval due to technical or financial constraints.

3.1 Free dataset

There is full and open access to the free dataset, free of charge, assuming that the access is provided on-line. Access to data is granted upon electronic on-line registration and the user accepting the Terms & Conditions for the Utilisation of ESA's Earth Observation Data between the European Space Agency and the Principal Investigator (hereinafter, "ESA Terms & Conditions" or "T&C") in force at the time, with immediate on-line access to the data thereafter. The ESA Terms & Conditions cover all types of use. No specific proposal or request describing the use of the data needs to be submitted.

Onward distribution of data from the free dataset is permitted, if the data user accepts the ESA Terms and Conditions.

Specific data requests not supported on-line such as delivery of large volumes of data shall be handled via a Data Service Request (see section 3.2).

3.2 Restrained dataset

The restrained dataset represents a small fraction of the ESA EO data and is managed differently due to technical or financial constraints. It includes:

- Requests for very large volumes of data which are not suitable for transfer via Internet (some (A)SAR high-rate product types not systematically processed might, in addition, require bulk processing);
- Data reserved to cal/val users or made available upon specific Principal Investigator request (mainly the (A)SAR Level-0 data originating from the ERS and Envisat missions);

Access to the restrained dataset is initiated by the submission of a Data Service Request (DSR) to ESA. After review of the request based on its relevance and feasibility, ESA notifies the user of the acceptance of the request, possibly assigning a maximum quota for data delivery. Access to data is granted upon acceptance of the ESA Terms & Conditions.

Additional information is available through
the ESA Earth Observation Help Desk (eohelp@esa.int)
or at <http://earth.esa.int>