

Space technology

A caucus on remote sensing capabilities

In a historic first-ever event, the CSIR Satellite Applications Centre proactively sought consultation and discourse with stakeholders and industry regarding requirements for its future satellite sensor portfolio. This two-day event took place on 14-15 March 2008 at the CSIR's Hartebeesthoek site.



Delegates at the sensor portfolio planning event held at Hartebeesthoek

With the SPOT 5 contract due for renewal in March 2009, the CSIR initiated this planning session with its broad funding consortium, industry and other interested parties. SPOT 5 direct reception is funded by Statistics SA, the national departments of Science and Technology; Agriculture; Water Affairs and Forestry; Environmental Affairs and Tourism; Provincial and Local Government; and Defence; and by the Demarcation Board, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Independent Electoral Commission and Eskom.

This contract ensures the availability of SPOT 5 data in the form of national 2,5 m resolution orthorectified (or topographically corrected) image mosaics (or tiles) for 2006, 2007 and 2008. To date, over 45 government departments and all local tertiary education institutions have utilised these data free of charge for planning and research purposes.

The event was attended by more than 60 individuals. A range of presentations aimed to give delegates pertinent information, such as the role of the South African Space Agency in coordinating earth observation data access, current activities relating to the implementation of the South African Earth Observation Strategy and details of offerings from different satellite data providers in Europe, the United States and India.

"The positive response by stakeholders and industry to this opportunity, and the valuable inputs received will inform our planning for the next sensor portfolio," confirms Dr Corné Eloff, manager of the CSIR's Earth Observation Service Centre, on behalf of the organisers. "Our aim is to ensure sustainable access to high resolution imagery beyond our existing capabilities." The CSIR is also particularly keen to upgrade service infrastructure.

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