

Information & communications

A tour de force for CSIR researchers at IGARSS09

Researchers from the CSIR stepped up to the mark at the annual IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (IGARSS) in Cape Town from 13-17 July 2009. Not only did they provide high-level planning input (Professor Mike Inggs of the Centre for High Performance Computing was one of the joint technical chairs and CSIR Fellow Dr Bob Scholes was part of the technical advisory committee), but collectively CSIR researchers delivered 30 papers, presentations, posters or panel sessions over the five days. CSIR staff are first authors on at least 15 papers, and chaired and hosted at least six special sessions.



Team CSIR at IGARSS09: Front row (from left): Wolfgang Lück, Dr Melanie Lück-Vogel, Dr Frans van den Berg, Nic Badenhorst and Paidá Mangara. Second row (from left): Brian Salmon, Waldo Kleynhans, Jolene Fisher, Karen Steenkamp, Professor Corne Olivier, Hadley Remas, Lufuno Vhengani, Dr Meena Lysko, Simeon Miteff and Dr Moses Cho. Back row (from left): Dr Renaud Mathieu, Dr Konrad Wessels, Dr Steward Bernard and Dr Pravesh Debba.

As promised, the event brought together a broad range of scientists and engineers, from students to senior decision makers, employed worldwide in leading academic institutions and government and industrial laboratories. It was opened by the Minister of Science and Technology, [Mrs Naledi Pandore](#).

The CSIR's strong presence and input into the event were the result of representation - in quantity and quality - from all its units and centres with an interest in remote sensing: the Meraka Institute; CSIR Natural Resources and the Environment; CSIR Built Environment; CSIR Defence, Peace, Safety and Security; the CSIR National Laser Centre and the CSIR Satellite Applications Centre.

In addition to the programme that took place at the University of Cape Town (UCT), CSIR researchers presented five-day IEEE courses with international partners on '*MODIS direct broadcast data for enhanced forecasting and real-time environmental decision making*', with the University of Wisconsin Madison on '*GEONETCAST and the monitoring of African marine ecosystems*' with the University of Southampton.

The CSIR also released a technology demonstrator web site for distribution of ocean colour and sea surface temperature for southern Africa.

The venue for IGARSS 09 was chosen as UCT on the slopes of Table Mountain. The choice of Cape Town, the first time that IGARSS was on the African continent, represents a milestone in the IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society's strategic objective to broaden international participation, particularly in the developing countries.

Dr Renaud Mathieu of CSIR Natural Resources and the Environment stated, "The IGARSS conference was great with a wonderful attendance and impact from the CSIR." Dr Konrad Wessels of the Meraka Institute, noted, "The level and scope of participation are the outcome of the CSIR's growing capacity for research

and development (R&D) in the field of remote sensing, which was developed over the past three years in long-term support of the earth observation (EO) programme of the Department of Science and Technology's imminent South African National Space Agency.

"These contributions demonstrate that the CSIR has reached critical mass in EO R&D and is a leader in this field in South Africa. This capacity will serve to derive societal benefits from all the earth observation data becoming available from large numbers of satellites as part of the Global Observation System of Systems."

- Biffy van Rooyen

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