



COMBINE, COORDINATE, COOPERATE

Be part of EuroGEO

A large circular graphic dominates the center of the page. It consists of two concentric circles. The outer circle is light green and filled with a pattern of fine, radiating lines and small dots, resembling a network or data flow. The inner circle is dark blue and contains a stylized image of the Earth, showing continents and oceans in a vibrant, almost ethereal blue and orange color scheme. A horizontal white band with a slight gradient passes behind the text, creating a clean backdrop for the title.

White Paper The New Era for EuroGEO

#OneEuroGEO

White paper: The new era for EuroGEO

EuroGEO's strategic vision

EuroGEO's post-2025 strategy envisions a world where **Earth intelligence** is universally accessible, driving systemic shifts needed to accelerate the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals and fostering a sustainable future for people and the planet.

In Europe, the **EU Space Programme**¹ seeks to harness the transformational potential of Earth Observation for our societies and citizens' lives in a fast-changing international environment, by empowering policy makers to design, implement, and monitor European and national policies; as well as empowering citizens in their daily lives.

The Space Programme Regulation established **Copernicus** as the **European contribution** to the **Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS)**², managed by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO). It seeks to establish national and European policies as drivers of the demand for commercial applications and services in Europe. In this endeavor, it invites the European Commission and Member States to establish closer links between Copernicus and policies. The private sector, in particular SMEs and start-ups, should be stimulated to develop applications based on Copernicus data and information, aiming to develop a competitive Earth Observation data ecosystem in Europe.

Europe aims to remain a global leader in sustainable prosperity and competitiveness^{3,4}. In this direction, building on the outcomes of the EU Space Programme⁵ EuroGEO should support the transformational global vision of GEO, and promote Europe as a lighthouse for global sustainability.

Already, multilateral frameworks are greatly benefiting from Copernicus and other European observing systems and infrastructures (like ICOS, EuroArgo, etc.). The European EO sector can strongly support EU commitments towards this global agenda⁶.

It is important to note the need to provide products and services in a consistent manner so that they can be used both in EU Policy directly as well as in the global provision of data for European commitments to international Conventions and Treaties⁷.

¹ European Parliament & Council of the European Union. (2021). *Regulation (EU) 2021/696 establishing the Union Space Programme and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme*. Official Journal of the European Union, L 170, 69–148.

² Ibid. (85)

³ Europe's choice. Political guidelines for the next European Commission. 2024-2029. Ursula von der Leyen. July 18th, 2024.

⁴ European Commission. (2025). *A Competitiveness Compass for the EU (COM (2025) 30 final)*. Brussels.

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2021/696, Art. 6. "Actions in support of an innovative and competitive Union space sector"

⁶ European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Rixen, M., Dowell, M., Immler, F., Dusart, J. and Kristopaitis, E., *Earth Observation Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/18985>, JRC136730.

⁷ European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Rixen, M., Dowell, M., Immler, F., Dusart, J. and Kristopaitis, E., *Earth Observation Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/18985>, JRC136730.

In this context, EuroGEO implements a user-driven research and innovation agenda and develops EO applications that support user communities addressing EU policies like the European Green Deal and GEO priorities. Supported by Horizon Europe, EuroGEO fosters demonstration, incubation, up-scaling, and replication. It also coordinates the European contribution to the GEO global initiatives and priorities and thus supports the valorization of Copernicus outputs by delivering user-tailored services in Europe as well as on an international scale, through the GEO initiatives.

Unity and synergies are key to realize the revised vision

In 2024, the EuroGEO Community⁸ was largely consulted to redefine the EuroGEO vision and objectives, in light of the advances in Earth Observation in Europe, and the transition in GEO towards Earth Intelligence.

The revised EuroGEO vision states the willingness to leverage and build synergies among the multiple contributions to Earth Intelligence in Europe—primarily through Copernicus, EU-funded projects and initiatives, national contributions, and a stronger involvement of the private sector—to deliver a coordinated contribution to GEO.

Over the past period, Europe successfully addressed the challenge of open data, open knowledge, open science, and interoperability. The new challenge for the downstream EO community is to bridge the “grand distance” between data and intelligence, i.e., from Research and Innovation to Operations and the Market.

Embedding the notion of Earth Intelligence implies managing change in daily practices of the downstream Earth Observation sector⁹. This calls for a proactive and operational initiative capable of conducting change management on a large scale, engaging the EO downstream value chain, and in particular, the industry. Building on the ongoing efforts of Copernicus and other initiatives and bringing its direct community engagement through Action Groups, EuroGEO can act as a catalyst for change.

Reflecting these elements, the **proposed revised vision** of the EuroGEO initiative is:

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To promote, showcase and stimulate Combination, Coordination and Cooperation to serve European and international policies and users through Earth Intelligence leveraging European excellence.

⁸ Defined as stakeholders of the downstream EO sector in Europe engaged in GEO: European Commission DGs and JRC-KCEO; High Level Working Group; Entrusted Entities; Horizon projects ; ERICs and EDICs ; EuroGEO Action Groups ; EuroGEO Workshop participants.

⁹ e-shape project. European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 820852. www.e-shape.eu

The proposed revised vision is supported by **EuroGEO objectives**:

- Actively stimulate and monitor the European contribution to GEO and increase GEO benefits for Europe, including through enhanced communication and engagement with regional GEOs and through national and European cooperation programmes.
- Act as a Coordination forum for European and national initiatives relevant to both the GEO work programme and European priorities. Building on an integrated and collaborative community to reduce the fragmentation of actions and of the European EO ecosystem; both supporting the implementation of the Green Deal and GEO engagement priorities as #OneEuroGEO.
- Address the significant gap between policy needs, end-user requirements, and technology providers through (i) the Combination or integration of activities to reach critical mass of use, and (ii) Cooperation beyond individual programmes and user communities in Europe.
- In this endeavor, ensure a broad participation of both demand (institutions, public entities, international conventions) and solution providers, leveraging the entire Copernicus value chain and user community, the private sector, and platforms/twins/infrastructures within its Action Groups. GEO instruments and Regional GEOs should be engaged.
- Support Action Groups mobilized as agents of change, embedding the notion of Earth Intelligence to produce and scale up sustainable and operational solutions in support of policies and end users.

A revised EuroGEO framework

The ambitious objectives of EuroGEO require a strong and functional governance framework that coordinates the different components of the initiative and ensures a strategic alignment of its outcomes. A draft proposal was put forward based on a large consultation of the EO downstream sector, organised as the EuroGEO Workshop 2024.

Most contributions to EuroGEO should be provided in-kind, leveraging existing resources that are already mobilized within GEO through EuroGEO. This approach ensures additionality by optimizing the use of available resources without requiring significant new financial commitments.

To facilitate this, a **Coordination Board** should oversee the EuroGEO initiative, ensuring efficient supervision, resource mobilization, and strategic commitment. It is expected that the Coordination Board will be the prime coordination mechanism engaging the European Caucus to GEO, Copernicus, European Commission DGs, the private sector, and EuroGEO Action Group Chairs¹⁰.

EuroGEO Action Groups structure the engagement in EuroGEO through thematic areas of European relevance¹¹. Under the supervision of the Coordination Board, it is essential for EuroGEO to ensure full alignment of Action Group themes with European priorities. GEO recently restructured its activities around Focus Areas, which are relevant to the global context and cross-sectoral. As the regional implementation of GEO to the European context, EuroGEO should maintain its European relevance, and federate efforts to provide the necessary interface

¹⁰ The proposal is not to create a new body redundant to the governance of the EU Space programme, rather to build on existing governance schemes.

¹¹ https://eurogeosec.eu/action_group.html

between European priorities and the GEO Focus Areas. To guarantee solid engagement of the European EO community to the next phase of EuroGEO, it is however essential to provide Action Groups with a clear mandate; targeted outcomes and resources. The mandate of Action Groups should be revised to operate both as practitioner forums and think tanks, as well as agents of change for improving R&I impact in Europe. With the support of a Secretariat, EuroGEO Action Groups should onboard a culture of an integrated 'conveyor belt' (or Research to Operation "R2O" in the GEO Work Programme), supported by comprehensive support services throughout all stages of the innovation process.

National engagement within EuroGEO through national GEOs and Copernicus national Collaboration Programme enhances the European representation in GEO initiatives by coordinating data flow across sectors and pooling resources for global projects. Coordination helps identify key national experts for GEO's working groups. EuroGEO supports national contexts by promoting open science, knowledge, data, and capacity building, adopting common standards, and ensuring data interoperability. Advanced tools are leveraged to connect local innovations with global GEO initiatives.

Building on ongoing European partnerships, EuroGEO should engage further with **regional GEOs** to support the uptake of EO solutions globally, particularly by promoting Copernicus services and fostering international collaboration. In partnership with the regional GEOs, EuroGEO should bridge the gap between technical EO capabilities and their application in developing regions. Together, they can advance sustainable development by scaling EO applications, supporting capacity building, and further integrating EO into international and national policies.

The **EuroGEO Secretariat** should adopt a lean structure, focusing only on core activities, thus maintaining limited fixed costs. Support activities should rely on external expertise, on a variable cost basis and through in-kind contributions. This principle is implemented through a distinction between "**EuroGEO Activities**" and "**EuroGEO Services**", ensuring a clear separation between operational tasks and strategic services.

The **EuroGEO Activities** fulfill the regular tasks of a Secretariat:

- **Planning and reporting** to the Coordination Board and mobilizing the EuroGEO community for the update and monitoring the EuroGEO Implementation Plan: the evidence-based roadmap for the European contribution to GEO, ensuring proper resourcing of activities through in-kind and direct funding;
- **Organizational support to the governance of EuroGEO** and the organization of the EuroGEO Workshop, a prime event for coordination and engagement fostering progress and strategic developments for the downstream EO sector in Europe;
- **Stakeholder engagement**, with the implementation and monitoring of the EuroGEO stakeholder engagement plan aligned with the ambitions of the Implementation Plan, ensuring diversity and the inclusion of youth. It ensures a strong liaison and operational engagement in the Action Groups with Copernicus, JRC-KCEO, DestinE, National Data Platforms, and large infrastructures;
- **Communication** and promotion of the outcomes of EuroGEO coordination efforts as #OneEuroGEO.

The **EuroGEO Services** should be specifically designed to bring value to the European Earth Observation sector. Their target audience includes **Action Groups**—acting as solution providers and agents of change—alongside **national coordination mechanisms** and **regional GEOs**. Draft service definitions are proposed, based on the collected feedback from the consultation of the EuroGEO Action Groups:

- **“3Cs” Cooperation, Coordination, Combination.** EuroGEO acts as a coordination forum by aligning European and national initiatives with the GEO work programme and European priorities. This coordinated approach supports key goals such as the Green Deal, ensuring alignment with GEO's global engagement priorities under the #OneEuroGEO framework.
- **Innovation Support and Market Development.** EuroGEO offers a portfolio of externalized services that help the EuroGEO community maximise the impact of Research & Innovation (R&I) on Operations and Market uptake. These services include commercialisation support, co-design, data/infrastructure guidance, and the development of operational pipelines with the support of the Research and Innovation Observatory (RIO)¹²;
- **Integration of in-situ data.** EuroGEO catalyzes ongoing European efforts, primarily under Copernicus, to strengthen the synergies between in-situ and EO, e.g., improving in-situ data usability, licensing, maximizing efficiency, reducing duplication of work, and providing guidance to in-situ data users.
- **Capacity Building and Best Practices.** EuroGEO gathers initiatives to empower Action Groups by organizing targeted training sessions, workshops, and knowledge exchange initiatives. EuroGEO promotes and shares open-source tools and frameworks and champions the adoption of interoperable standards and the GEO and FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) data sharing and management principles across Action Groups.
- **Communication and outreach.** EuroGEO ensures that each Action Group develops a distinct identity and effectively communicates its objectives and outcomes, while remaining aligned with the broader EuroGEO initiative. This approach strengthens the visibility and impact of each Action Group while reinforcing its connection to EuroGEO's overarching mission of leveraging EO data for tackling global challenges.
- **Support to Action Groups.** EuroGEO supports Action Groups by facilitating meetings, monitoring membership, drafting and monitoring their Activity Plans, organizing meetings, and providing consultancy services for surveys, reports, and interactions with relevant Action Groups.

¹² <https://www.eurogeosec.eu/research.html>

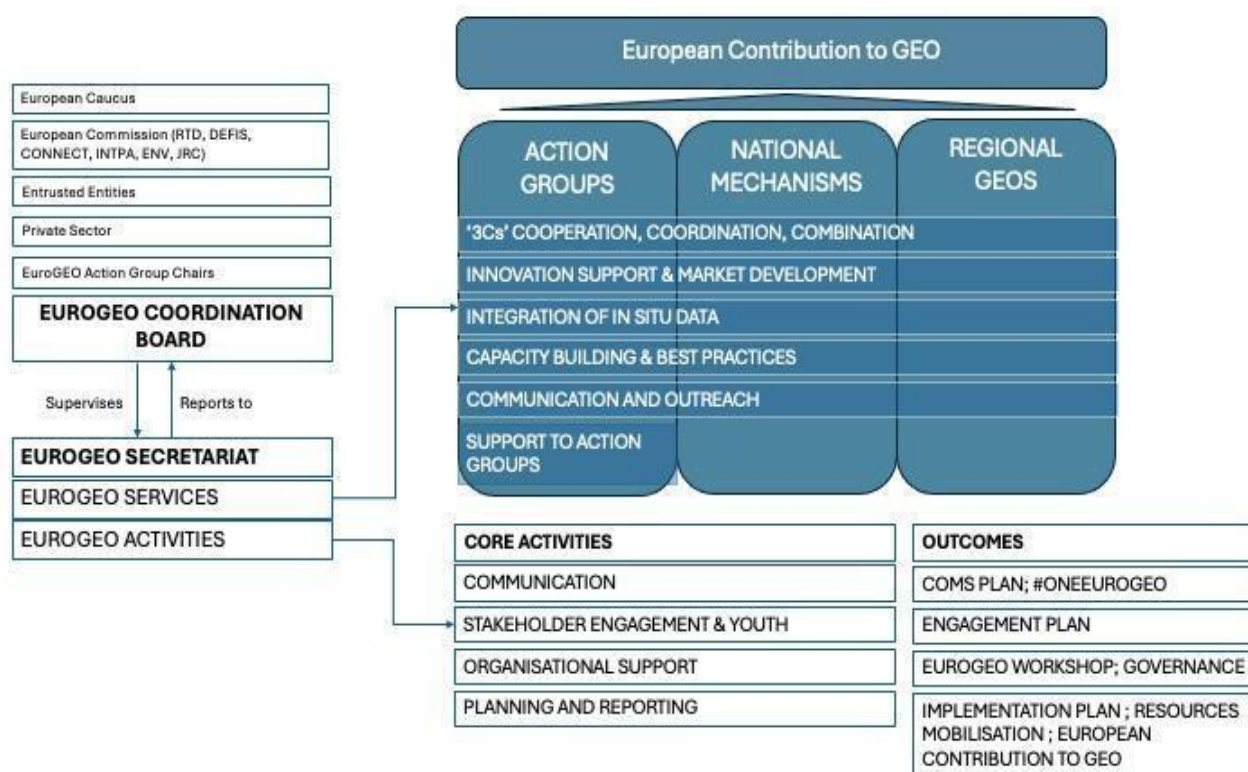


Figure 1: Concept of a EuroGEO Secretariat coordinating the European contribution to GEO and increasing benefits for the downstream EO sector in Europe.

Pathways towards a sustainable EuroGEO Secretariat

At the heart of EuroGEO is the notion of “Cooperation, Coordination, Combination”. In an Earth Observation ecosystem rich in initiatives, projects and programmes, and in an era of scarce public resources, this core value is central to making the most of European resources, creating synergies, and avoiding duplication of efforts.

The EuroGEO Secretariat should maintain a lean and nimble operational structure by strategically outsourcing service delivery to trusted and experienced partners. This approach should allow the Secretariat to focus on its core functions, such as coordination, governance, and strategic oversight, while leveraging the expertise and capacity of external partners for specialised services.

By collaborating with established and reliable partners, EuroGEO should ensure high-quality service delivery that aligns with its goals and values. This model enhances flexibility, enabling the Secretariat to scale services according to demand and available resources without incurring the overhead costs associated with an expanded internal structure. Moreover, the outsourcing framework should foster innovation and efficiency by drawing on the diverse capabilities of a broad network of contributors.

With this concept, the Secretariat Activities (core budget) are estimated to 3 FTEs and EUR 150,000, equivalent to EUR 500,000 to 600,000 annually. Contributions to Secretariat Services (on demand, outsourced, supported by in-kind and external financing) could be valued up to 4 FTEs and EUR 100,000, equivalent to EUR 550,000.

The legal structure supporting EuroGEO should prioritize flexibility and scalability to adapt to evolving demands and funding opportunities while maintaining a modular framework for distinguishing continuous "Core" activities from scalable "Service" activities. It should ensure

transparency and accountability through robust financial reporting, governance oversight, and regular audits, fostering trust among stakeholders.

Legal recognition is essential to establish the initiative's legitimacy, enabling it to engage in contracts, receive funding, and manage resources in compliance with EU regulations. The structure should also facilitate efficient resource management, allowing for the handling of diverse funding sources, including grants, in-kind contributions, and project-based funding.

An integrated governance framework is critical, with a Coordination Board empowered to oversee resource mobilisation and prioritise activities while ensuring inclusive representation from public, private, and academic stakeholders. An important element for the legal structure is also its capability to be instated over a short- to medium-term horizon, in order to maintain momentum for EuroGEO.

Three (3) sustainability pathways were explored for the organization and funding of a EuroGEO Secretariat:

- In the short term and for a limited timeframe, a call for International Project Office could be issued by DG RTD to mandate an offtaker¹³ entrusted to operate the EuroGEO Secretariat functions, based on its internal resources. A risk lies in the preliminary identification of potential offtakers with a suitable profile for the EuroGEO Secretariat, ensuring the relevance and quality of their proposals. Information sessions should be organized to stimulate expressions of interest in hosting the EuroGEO Secretariat.
- The growth of the initiative in the medium term could justify the creation of an independent AiSBL (International Non-Profit Association, based in Brussels), funded through a combination of national and European funds to operate a EuroGEO Secretariat. This option would involve the identification and commitment of seed Members willing to sustain EuroGEO in the long run.
- Longer- term options involving an EDIC or an ERIC were evaluated as not suitable for this stage.

Next steps

During the period 2024-2025, EuroGEO is supported by the EuroGEOsec project¹⁴ which was mandated to operate the EuroGEO initiative, demonstrate the value-added of a Secretariat, and propose sustainability pathways for the initiative. EuroGEOsec will end in November 2025.

The current perspectives under investigation involve staff recruitment by the GEO Secretariat to join the team of GEO Member Services, which is currently under constitution. In this configuration, the EuroGEO Secretariat Activities would essentially be performed by the GEO Secretariat, ensuring close engagement with the European Caucus. EuroGEO activities of various natures could be supported by European Commission services, to be determined.

The strategic value and scale of EuroGEO call for a stable, competent, and effectively staffed Secretariat to support the initiative. The next steps would entail the drafting of Terms of Reference for an Independent Project Office, to be issued by the European Commission.

¹³ e.g., international organization, Member States institution, Foundation.

¹⁴ www.eurogeosec.eu

Annex - Draft short term action plan for EuroGEO

Existing background

Initial implementation plan	Initial implementation plan should be based on the EuroGEOSec Implementation Plan, compiled from EGW24 and EGW25 and European contributions to GEO work programme. - European contributions to GEO work programme were submitted by European partners through the 2024 GEO call for proposals. - EGW24 provides the short-term activities for support services to the Action Groups; and a draft Stakeholder engagement plan. - EGW25 outcomes build on the Copernicus SRIA and the JRC-KCEO Policy engagement. It substantiates the future contributions to GEO and pathways for future R&I funding programmes.
Stakeholder engagement plan	Initial stakeholder engagement plan should be based on the corresponding Action Group sections included to the EuroGEOSec Implementation Plan, compiled from EGW24.

Short-term Action Plan (2026 and beyond)

Coordination Board	• Convene the first meeting of the coordination board. • Evaluate the in-kind contributions, programmes and key partners contributing to the initial implementation plan, identify initial commitments from existing programmes. • Initiate a discussion on the governance and membership of Action groups. • Review and discuss the initial stakeholder engagement plan. • Discuss the monitoring and reporting framework. • Set up the process for an annual update of the implementation plan. • Ensure update on ongoing European contributions to GEO. • Initiate the discussion for the next European contribution to GEO. • Prepare for EGW26 and EGW27.
Regional GEOs	• Participate to regional coordination meetings organised by GEOSec and engage bilaterally with regional GEOs.

	• Coordinate with DG INTPA and National donor agencies to reference ongoing European activities in downstream EO ensure their promotion through the EuroGEO implementation plan as part of the European contribution to GEO. • Promote these achievements and activities in GEO and Regional GEO events.
National mechanisms	• Engage with the Copernicus National Collaboration Programme; National GEOs; EuroGEO High Level Working Group to propose an initial series of Joint Action Plans (JAPs) to increase the use of Earth Intelligence in national contexts. These JAPs should be included to the EuroGEO implementation plan as part of the mobilization of resources and coordination of programmes. • Promote Earth Intelligence through National engagement in GEO.
“3Cs” Cooperation, Coordination, Combination within the thematic Action Groups	• Ensure the active participation of Copernicus; DestinE; European funded projects and initiatives and National programmes to the thematic Action Groups. • Monitor engagement and targeted onboarding. • Review, implement, monitor the “3C” section of the implementation plan (EGW24 inputs). • Build EuroGEO as the major federated European forum for downstream EO in Europe.
Innovation Support and Market Development	• Engage with EUSPA, DestinE, Initiatives (e.g. Space Climate Observatory) and incubators to support best practices. • Build cases studies with the Action Groups on efficient management of R2O, building on the experience demonstrated within e-shape and EuroGEOsec. • Promote Earth Intelligence achievements and case studies in GEO.
Integration of in-situ data.	• Engage with EEA. Build on the initial findings of EGW24 captured by the EuroGEOsec draft implementation plan. • Engage the Action Groups into activities regarding the integration of in situ data for Earth Intelligence. • Promote this contribution to GEO.

Capacity Building and Best Practices	• Engage with Copernicus. Build on the initial findings of EGW24 captured by the EuroGEOsec draft implementation plan. • Engage the Action Groups into the capacity building activities for improved Earth intelligence. • Develop toolkits and training webinars on the use of Copernicus and DestinE data to develop Earth Intelligence products along the R2O schema or the conveyor belt approach.
Communication and Outreach	• Develop a communication plan with each action group, including web presence, social media, event calendar ... • Ensure effective mobilization and contribution of Action Groups to major events (GEO; Copernicus; DestinE; ESA ...). • Promote the European contribution to GEO as #OneEuroGEO
Support to Action Groups	• Provide operational secretariat support to Action Groups. • Capture the need for R&I from Action Groups and review and update the implementation plan. • Review and update the stakeholder engagement plan. • Review proposals and progresses on the European contribution to GEO.