

POSTEL, an initiative to develop global and regional biogeophysical geocoded products

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The French policy regarding Earth observation satellite data recommends to set up thematic units aiming at federating scientific expertise and pooling the means to be implemented in order to generate advanced products. Regarding the “Continental surfaces” theme, POSTEL is the French initiative to be integrated in the future European GMES services (GSE) developed by the European Commission jointly with the European Space Agency for an operational service planned in 2008-2010. To reach that goal, the POSTEL initiative has been enlarged to the European scale and is now clustering national and European projects under the EC 5th and 6th Research Framework Programmes.

POSTEL aims at providing scientists with highly repetitive global and regional coverage of moderate resolution bio-geophysical parameters such as albedo, LAI, FAPAR, etc... that could be used for such goals as the accurate study of the carbon cycle, the monitoring of changes in land cover and vegetation seasonal cycle, the early warning of food shortages, the control of implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, etc.

The thematic unit revolves around three types of bodies:

- A Core Service for bio-geophysical parameters fulfilling both a developing and an operating function,
- Upstream from the Core Service, a network of scientific expertise Centres that contribute to defining space missions and to designing and validating derived products,
- Downstream from the Core Service, the worldwide users’ community.

This community is expected to take advantage of POSTEL products to avoid losing time and money in pre-processing raw data into bio-geophysical data and have a common background allowing an easier inter-comparison of results. Scientists from Northern Eurasia could and should take advantage of that initiative.