

Newsletter

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Editorial : AEGOS ON TRACKS



AEGOS is now on track ! After a couple of years preparing and adjusting the technical programme with the European Commission, the team members travelled from Africa and Europe to meet for the first time altogether in South Africa for the "Cape Town Week" (3-9 February, 2009).

It is always a pleasure to start a new collaboration with such a wide panel of African and European partners: geological surveys, regional organisations, international institutes and training centres. 45 delegates from 20 countries met with great enthusiasm for team building (*see the group photo, below*) and initiating the first steps of the work programme (2008-2011).



Presentation by Cindy Petersen and François Pinard, Work Package 9 co-leader) during the Kick off meeting

Further to the technical sessions Further to the technical sessions and the Kick-off Meeting, the project was successfully launched during a Conference opened to the geo-scientific community as well as decision-makers and stakeholders involved in the development of geology-related natural resources.

This was a new opportunity to disseminate information and awareness about the setting-up of a new EU-funded Support Action focused on the sustainable development of geo-resources in Africa. In 2008, AEGOS has been welcomed by the African Union as a promising initiative of geo-mineral information system. It also contributes to the GEO work plan 2009-2011 in the capacity building activities.

The participation to AEGOS activities is opened to partners and end-users through technical meetings, workshops and conferences.

Let's further extend and strengthen the partnership network over the next 30 months in view to design the most appropriate pan-African Geo-resources Observation System.

**Marc Urvois (BRGM),
Project Coordinator.**



AEGOS participants, Launching conference in Cap Town, South Africa, February 2009.

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AEGOS and GEOSS

AEGOS, is a direct contribution by European and African geological surveys to the development of a Global Earth Observation System of Systems by GEO, the Group on Earth Observations. During the launch conference in Cape Town, the project team started to put some detail behind this statement. AEGOS is designed to scope out an observing system and so this activity will result in deliverables that include recommendations to GEO. The formal linking of the AEGOS project to GEO is established through GEO Sub-Task CB-09-05d. So, our GEO discussions in Cape Town looked at specific activities, which can help the project to cement these links.

There are several natural links to GEO through project partners. We have representation on all GEO Committees; British Geological Survey (BGS) and Euro Geo Surveys (EGS) on Science and Technology, Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR) on Capacity Building and Joint Research Centre (JRC) on both Architecture and Data and User Interface. Project partners will be attending the Spring 2009 round of committee meetings, representing AEGOS in these GEO bodies. Given that Geo-resources do not appear explicitly in any one Societal Benefit Area (SBA) but are implicit in several, this cross-cutting representation is important. We also have a link through the European commission (EC), who are a GEO Member and fund AEGOS. So, we will be represented at the Spring 2009 meeting of all the EC's GEO Projects.

There is existing potential for links to Tasks in SBAs through AEGOS's case study activities. These case study activities are not yet selected but at least one of the candidates discussed in Cape Town, on groundwater, would be directly linked to a GEO Sub-Task. Other candidates include geothermal energy. These potential links will be firmed up as the project unfolds.



Cape Point, South Africa

It is also likely that we will recommend new activities in GEO related to mineral resources. At present this topic is missing from the Work Plan. It is not yet clear whether this will best be done via links to an existing activity, a new Sub-Task, a new Task or through another mechanism.

Finally, there are several links in the Tasks under the various committees. Candidates include architecture and metadata, where the AEGOS project will follow existing GEO/INSPIRE interoperability principles, GEONetCast, for which we plan a trial to deliver geologic data to African countries, and capacity building, where we can foresee cooperation in extending our activities to the surveys in Africa not currently funded within the AEGOS Consortium. In fact, the project is intimately bound within the GEO structure and we can have confidence that the statement set out at the start of this article will be turned into reality over the coming months.

**Stuart Marsh (BGS),
Work Package 7 Co-leader**

Interoperability and interdisciplinarity in support of GEOSS

Interview

"Access to African geodata has become an increasingly important and ubiquitous issue in the various communities where I work: for example, the international scientific community engaged with the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is concerned with the dearth of data available for the African continent as compared with global coverage while young scientists in Africa cite the need for local data to form the basis of regionally relevant applied graduate studies.

The February 2009 AEGOS meeting in Cape Town provided a welcome convening of relevant problem-solvers providing solutions to answer this demand. Cape Town provided a lovely and geologically impressive backdrop. I look forward to the future work of this powerful set of partners, especially as it relates to earth science education in Africa.

Sarah Gaines - UNESCO Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences



Work Package in charge of Interoperability and interdisciplinarity in support of GEOSS, highlights the need to combine the geological information, to be provided by AEGOS, with other information on soils, surface water, agriculture, forest, natural habitats, and others needed to address important problems facing the African Continent. GEOSS has defined a set of priority "Societal Benefit Areas", and in this work package a portfolio of applications illustrating these should be developed.

An example of such an application is the link between Biodiversity and Geo-resources. Protected areas are commonly threatened by economic activities, of which the exploration and exploitation of geo-resources are examples - unregulated mining even on a small scale can jeopardise unique habitats by destruction/fragmentation, and soil/water/air pollution. Better availability of information on mineral resources improves the assessment of risk and the definition of mitigation measures (planning, regulation, pollution control, enforcement etc.

Specific regions of Africa will be selected for these demonstrations, depending on the availability of data and the relevance of the selected applications to those areas. The "World Soil Survey Archive and Catalogue" (WOSSAC), managed by Cranfield University, is an example information resource with strong emphasis on Africa.

Katleen Miserez (JRC), Work Package 5.

Work Package in charge of Interoperability and interdisciplinarity in support of GEOSS will host a workshop from Tuesday 30th June until Thursday 2nd July in Ispra (Italy), where the scenario demonstrators and case study areas will be discussed.



AGENDA

Upcoming Workshops

► "Identification of data themes, user-oriented products and services"

The purpose of the workshop is to analyse preliminary results of the questionnaire on existing data and end-user needs and requirements. The tasks will be identifying and describing the data themes relevant for AEGOS, and identifying new user-oriented products and services.

This Workshop will be organised by RBINS-RMCA and GTK, in the Royal Museum of Central Africa (RMCA).

May 18th - 20th, 2009 - Brussels, Belgium

► "Definition of common strategies for capacity building and training"

The workshop will focus on discussing the results of the questionnaire on man power and on defining gaps in skills and knowledge of personnel. Another questionnaire on the inventory of available curricula of training centers and practices will be prepared. This Workshop will be organised in Royal Museum of Central Africa.

June 8th - 9th, 2009 - Brussels, Belgium

► "Joint Workshops"

- 30th June workshop on "Existing initiatives, standards and methodology for metadata and data specification"
- 1st July workshop on "Existing initiatives, infrastructure, technical standards"
- 2nd July: cross-meeting.

This workshop gather Work Packages in charge of spatial infrastructure reference model, architecture specifications and interoperability and interdisciplinary in support to GEOSS. It will be organised by BRGM, CzechGS and JRC.

June 30th - July 2nd, 2009 - Ispra, Italy.

► "Generic approach for the generation of user-oriented products and services dedicated to georesources"

August 24th - 26th, 2009 - Lusaka, Zambia

Future Events

► GISAfrica 2009 "Geospatial information and sustainable development in Africa; facing challenges of global change"

International Conference
October 26th - 30th, 2009

Kampala, Uganda.

www.africagis2009.org

► 2009 IEEE International Geoscience & Remote Sensing Symposium

July 12 - 17, 2009

Cape Town, South Africa

www.igarss09.org/default.asp

Presentation of AEGOS in external Events

► "Reinforcing Europe's contribution to GEO"

33rd International Symposium on Remote Sensing for Environment
European Commission Side event

May 4th - 8th, 2009

Stresa, Italy

<http://isrse-33.jrc.ec.europa.eu/welcome.html>

Past Events

► "Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on Information and Communication Technologies Research"

March 25th - 26th, 2009

Brussels, Belgium.

<http://euroafrica-ict.org/events/forum.php>

► IST Africa 2009 Conference

May 06th - 08th, 2009

Kampala, Uganda

www.ist-africa.org/Conference2009

News from Work-Package

A questionnaire designed to gather the required background information to Analysis of the function and infrastructure of existing systems has been compiled by the AEGOS Work package in charge of Architecture specification and this, together with the questionnaires relating to Work package in charge of Spatial Infrastructure reference model, Identification of data themes and definition of common strategies for capacity building, will be distributed to as many as possible of the organizations concerned, at national, regional and multi-national levels. By this means it is anticipated that the technical information relating to the systems already in operation will be assembled for analysis by the various working groups of AEGOS.

The analysis will then be used to guide the design of the most effective and adaptable system that can be introduced for management and access to data in the future.

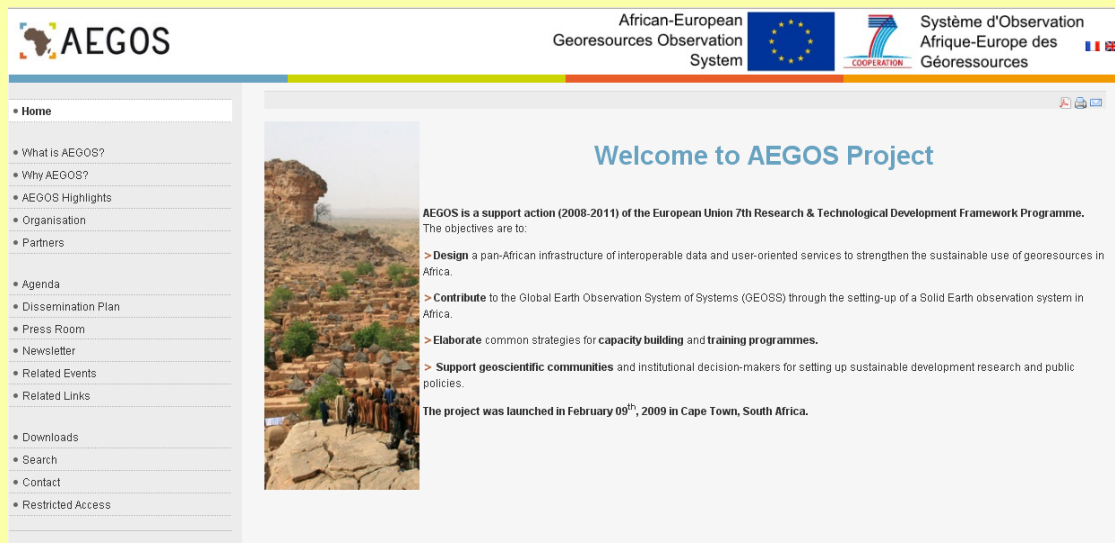
The Informatics Technology part of the questionnaire requires precise technical input. This will be supplied by the persons responsible for the information technology and infrastructure of each Geological Survey or other participating organization. It will include information on hardware, software and other Information Technology facilities and the infrastructure currently used for management and storage of data in the individual organizations.

**Dana Capova (CzechGS),
Work package 2 Co-Leader**

Website

AEGOS-project web site was launched in early March—<http://www.aegos-project.org>. The website is the main information portal to inform and disseminate the results of the project. It will contain project's

deliverables in free access. A personal account must be created to register or to post documents. Feel free to contact Webmaster (cpetersen@geoscience.org.za) if you meet any problems.



The screenshot shows the home page of the AEGOS Project website. At the top, there is a header with the AEGOS logo on the left and logos for the African-European Georesources Observation System, the European Union, and the Système d'Observation Afrique-Europe des Géoréssources on the right. Below the header, the page is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a navigation menu with links such as Home, What is AEGOS?, Why AEGOS?, AEGOS Highlights, Organisation, Partners, Agenda, Dissemination Plan, Press Room, Newsletter, Related Events, Related Links, Downloads, Search, Contact, and Restricted Access. In the center, there is a large image of a rocky landscape with a person standing in the foreground. To the right of the image, there is a section titled 'Welcome to AEGOS Project' which contains a brief description of the project as a support action of the European Union 7th Research & Technological Development Framework Programme. It lists three main objectives: Design a pan-African infrastructure of interoperable data and user-oriented services; Contribute to the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) through the setting-up of a Solid Earth observation system in Africa; and Elaborate common strategies for capacity building and training programmes. It also mentions support for geoscientific communities and institutional decision-makers. The project launch date is given as February 09th, 2009 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Home page of Aegos-Project Web site

Please send your article / comments to Work Package 9 - Marjolaine Puddu – CIFEG : m.puddu@cifeg.org and Cindy Petersen – CGS: cpetersen@geoscience.org.za
For more information see : www.aegos-project.org
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AEGOS project in picture

Kick off meeting



Presentation of M. Lawson-Hechelli (CEDEAO/ECOWAS)



Group picture

Technical working sessions



Participants to the technical session



Network in progress

Launching Conference



Official dinner after the Launching