



EARSC Statement for the Global Digital Compact Consultation

The United Nations is demonstrating unprecedented leadership to tackle climate change and will require an abundance of resources including **viable data and information** which will allow governments to identify risks, tailor policy response and resource allocation, monitor progress and identify trends.

The **UN 2030 agenda** must be complemented by the continued use and improvement of new datasets. By combining satellite data with measurements from ground-based instruments and other technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, it is possible to have a wide range of services that support the reporting of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and indicators and the provision of relevant information to effectively monitor progress towards the SDG targets, as well as the degree of compliance with the International Agreements.

[EARSC](#), the European Association of Remote Sensing Companies with more than 135 [members](#) from all over Europe represents the Earth observation services industry offering a wide range of products and services in various business sectors and applications. EARSC welcomes the **UN consultation on the Digital compact** which will help to anticipate and prepare for future challenges and opportunities. In the context of the current digital paradigm and the twin transition, we consider satellite-based Earth Observation (EO), as being a reliable and valuable technology providing data driven support for policy and decision makers. The Earth Observation information not only helps to inform policies but also fosters the economic development and enhances decisions on a broad range of societal and business challenges.

Guaranteeing a “Just Transition”¹ is becoming an existential issue for many countries and market sectors. Skills gaps and labour shortages may be a blocking stone of the UN 2030 agenda, and this must be anticipated and managed to ensure smooth transitions for policies and market sectors. These agenda’s ambitions need support from different tools which convey a crucial link between the green transition and digitalisation, as the latter is a main driver for the greening of the economy. Thanks to reliable, accurate, transparent and readily available, satellite-derived data and services can be a true ally providing insights to implement the UN global agenda. Satellite data has the potential to both accelerate the digital transition and support the transition to a net-zero economy by providing valuable information, analytics, modeling, simulations for various sectors.

In connection with the UN consultation on the Global Digital Compact, EARSC is following closely the monitoring and reporting of certain targets and indicators. As the overarching purpose of EARSC is to advocate for an increased use of EO for the UN2030 agenda and we will be very happy to provide statements, position papers and showcases, ensuring awareness of the EO industry contribution in responding to the monitoring needs for these crucial agendas. Our section on [EO Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals](#), could illustrate some of the cases where EO can be used to monitor progress on the 2030 Agenda. The area is populated with EO services and products contributing to different targets presenting the contribution of the private sector to the SDGs. It enhances the understanding of the relationship between the SDGs and the EO services industry and increases the awareness of the challenges towards enhancing the contribution of the oil and gas sector to the achievement of the SDGs. Among the extensive list of services, the EO4SDGs include:

- (SDG1) characterizing droughts and their impact on poverty
- (SDG2) crop monitoring, classification and mapping of agricultural land while assessing compliance with land use regulations
- (SDG3) detection of health risk areas providing early warnings of vector-borne diseases and natural disasters

¹ means greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind ([link](#))

- (SDG6) water quality and user efficiency, change in the extent and dynamics mapping and monitoring of water-related ecosystems
- (SDG7) assesses rooftop solar energy potential and solar PV site selection, mapping, and monitoring
- (SDG8) monitoring, reporting and verification for commodities and managing ethical supply chains
- (SDG9) urban dynamics and informal settlements, mapping infrastructures and displacements monitoring
- (SDG11) population density, modelling and forecasting, spatial impacts of forces displacement for evidence-based decision making, mapping and monitoring urban settlements and housing
- (SDG12) environmental monitoring on production sites
- (SDG13) monitoring climate change for disaster response, industrial methane monitoring, climate change impact analysis
- (SDG14) monitoring aquatic plastic litter and maritime pollution, sargassum detection for operational and seasonal planning
- (SDG15) mapping and monitoring forests, by identifying degradation, rehabilitation, and recovery
- (SDG16) increasing peace through transparency, post-conflict assessments and democratised access to disaster intelligence
- (Cross SDGs) access point to geospatial data, multi-cloud/hybrid cloud processing platform, integrated AI capabilities, a professional marketplace for self -Service provision, API for platform automation and interoperability.

The ambitious goals for the environment and a low carbon economy call for advanced and innovative capacities and services to monitor, analyse, predict and mitigate the impact of the human activity on natural resources. Earth observation data has become an essential operational instrument to monitor the evolutions of the environment and measure progress towards the goals set by the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. Within the context of the [SDGs-EYES project](#) (**Enhancing monitoring of the SDGs through the family of copErnicus Services (SDGsEYES)**), EARSC will help to bring awareness on the European capacity for

monitoring the SDGs based on [Copernicus](#), building a portfolio of tools supporting decision-making to monitor those SDG indicators related to the environment from an inter-sectoral perspective, aligning with the EU Green Deal priorities and challenges.

As the Digital Compact Consultation is an important tool for policymakers, businesses, and citizens to understand the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and to prepare for a rapidly changing future, EARSC believes that the **Global Digital Compact** should highlight the operational solutions based on Earth Observation data as key technology to achieve the goals set by the SDGs monitoring and reporting and enable successful twinning. Incorporating Earth observation data into policy-making processes can be a powerful tool for improving the quality and effectiveness of decisions. EARSC remains at your disposal to work together on this objective and be a facilitator to bring a better understanding on how Earth Observation is supporting the SDGs and to make the most to achieve Global Digital Compact progress.