

# In Tshwane @ ISRSE37

This week I am in Pretoria or Tshwane, as it is now called, for the ISRSE 2017 conference. This is the 37<sup>th</sup> ISRSE which is an impressively long record. In addition to some really interesting papers concerning African space policy, space agencies activities and on climate change impact, two particular points stand out.

Firstly is the ambition coming from the whole continent and being led/orchestrated by the African Union Commission. An African Space Policy has been published in which EO features prominently and where GMES and Africa is a main element. Secondly was the B2B meeting which we organised to enable networking between European and African companies. I'll start with the latter.

This was the second such event we have organised with the first one being during the AARSE conference last October in Kampala. In each case we are grateful for local support without which such an initiative would not be possible. We had 5 companies from Europe and 5 from Africa which participated. Very short introductory presentations from the European companies was followed by a "speed-dating" session providing each company to introduce itself to the others. Given the difficulty I had separating some of the company pairs the exchanges were quite productive. Participants agreed at the end that the formula was a good one and we shall seek to recreate similar opportunities in the future. There is strong support for further exchanges with African companies and we'll seek opportunities to do so.

At the end we managed to get Tidiane Ouattara to talk about GMES and Africa. The call is to be launched next week and Tidiane explained how the private sector will be involved with 20% of the funding needing to be spent with service providers. Partnerships between African and European companies are almost mandatory with no set conditions excepting that there must be a partnership agreement in place showing how the African business will benefit from the arrangement.

We'll publish more information for members as it becomes available. I shall be presenting on Thursday and part of the plenary panel on Friday looking at how big data and other trends affecting commercial EO services. I'll be talking about MAEOS and eoMALL. The meeting concludes with a session on the GEO WorkProgramme taking place on Friday and Saturday.