

Happy New Year!

I start by wishing everyone reading this a Happy New Year! have been rather inactive on this blog, so a first new years' resolution is to try to write more! In part it is caused by the volume of work which, as we start another new year, it is good to reflect on the successes from last year and the challenges which we face over the next 12 months – which largely stem from the aforementioned success!

In 2018 we have grown from 5 persons to 8 and are now looking for 2 more to join us. I emphasise that this has not been our goal - it is absolutely not our goal to grow. Our goal is to do more for our members. To do this we pursue a mixed business model relying about 20% on membership fees and 80% on projects. All the projects are aimed at supporting companies in the sector – our membership - and we shall not take on work which does not reflect this aim.

The volume of project work is increasing but so is our membership and for the moment we maintain this 20:80 ratio business model. It is very important that we maintain our membership-based model and this is a fundamental philosophy of EARSC now and in the future. It also means that we shall not compete with our members for work. The activity of an Association is quite distinct from those of the companies active in the sector. We aim to provide excellence to those companies providing geospatial services which form the Association and so far I consider that we have been successful in that goal.

In the last 3 weeks of 2018, we have had news of 2 highly important wins of EC H2020 grants. One we are leading and in the second one, we are a leading partner in the team. Both are now subject to grant negotiation so I shall not say more about them for now. One comes under the umbrella of Innovation Support where the EC are encouraging cross-sectorial innovation. We believe that we have a very exciting and innovative concept that should help over 100 companies directly to make better use of EO and especially Copernicus data.

The second will increase our market outreach activity where we look to promote the sector and its capabilities. Both are quite large and should enable us to make a strong impact.

Overall, I refer to these 2 activities as fulfilling a theme of “from research to business” with the goal to help as many of the pilots as possible to become business ventures. The two projects are very complementary and should re-enforce each other as well as our major initiative called eoMALL (which will go live very shortly). Both projects should start in the 2nd quarter and more about them in due course.