Mediterranean Regional Information Network (MedRIN)

Newsletter #2

GOFC-GOLD Global Observation of Forest and Land Cover Dynamics

NASA LCLUC Land-Cover / Land-Use Change Program

The benefits for joining forces in the Mediterranean region in earth observation: The Mediterranean Regional Information Network (MedRIN)

MedRIN (Mediterranean Regional Information Network) was established after discussions with European, African and American colleagues .It is a new network for the Mediterranean Region which is coupled with the framework of the Global Observations of Forests Cover and Land Dynamics (GOFC-GOLD).It serves as a liaison between land-cover/land use change remote sensing scientists and stakeholders in the Mediterranean Region. MedRIN keeps its members well-informed with the latest advancements in Earth Observation applications based on NASA and ESA satellite data and data products. Furthermore MedRIN aims to support tackling regional and local challenges, as described by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) .

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Overview – Objectives

The objectives of this newly formed network are based on the priority topics which interest the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean and the neighboring countries as well. In accordance with the GOFC-GOLD family of networks the following objectives have been agreed:

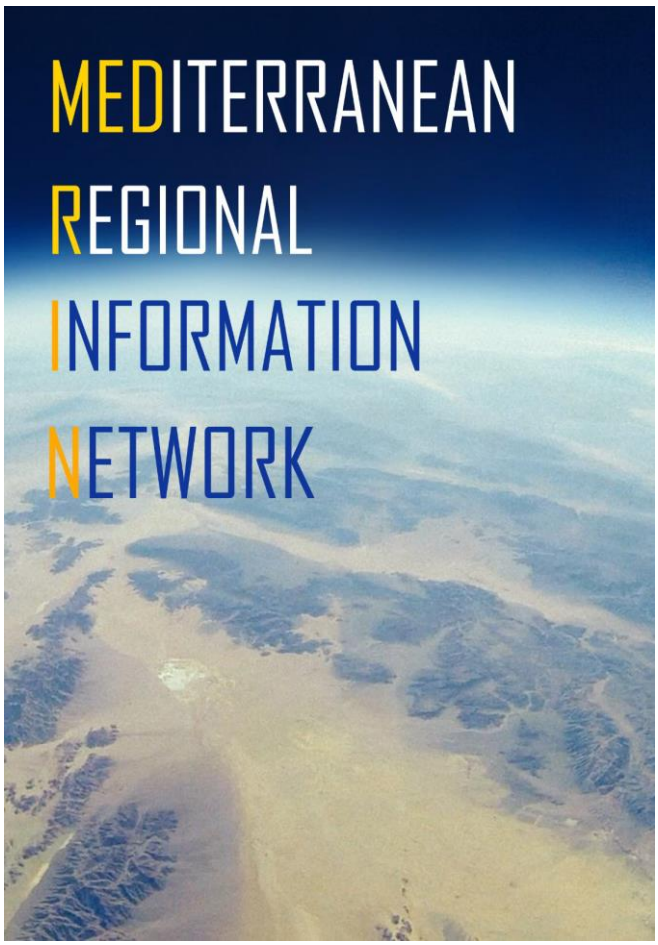
•Better coordination and linkage of monitoring systems and databases across Mediterranean

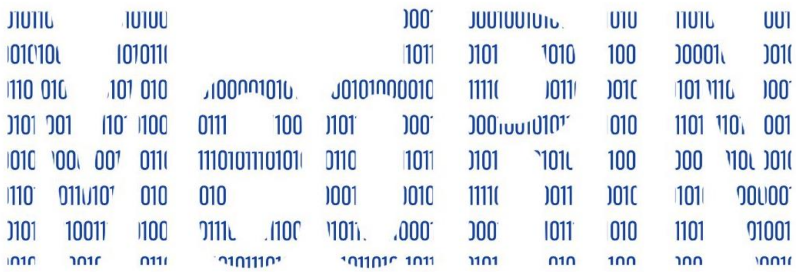
•Strengthening and upgrading regional/national EO networks

•Alignment of multi-modal and multi-source data compliant to international norms

•Utilization of Copernicus and relevant freely distributed services in the region by end users

•Contribution to free publicly-available data through interoperable databases and services





The priorities of the MedRIN include:

•Urban and built-up areas

•Rural areas/Agriculture, Forestry and wildlands

•Hazards (fires including agricultural fires, earthquakes, floods, etc.)

•Soil and water resource management (Irrigation/Hydrology, Soil degradation, Desertification)

Training will be a major component of all proposed priorities !

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Benefits

- The additional benefit for the Mediterranean will be the synergies coming out of the collaborative efforts
- The network will be accessible to any entity and individual in the region for peaceful purposes and is expected to produce results and services for the well-being of the citizens and the sustainability of the use of resources
- Existing networks and collaborations will be leveraged, while cooperation across disciplines and levels of decision and implementation throughout the stakeholder's spectrum will be supported
- Common participation in projects /proposals
- Come across with existing databases of earth observation activities (e.g. GEOCRADLE, EXCELSIOR)

Current Priorities – Action to be taken:

TASK 1

Creation of an inventory of capacities and achievements from the members of the network, in order to seek synergistic collaborations

TASK 2

Establish Focus Groups in order to achieve international scientific collaboration and cooperation in existing and future projects

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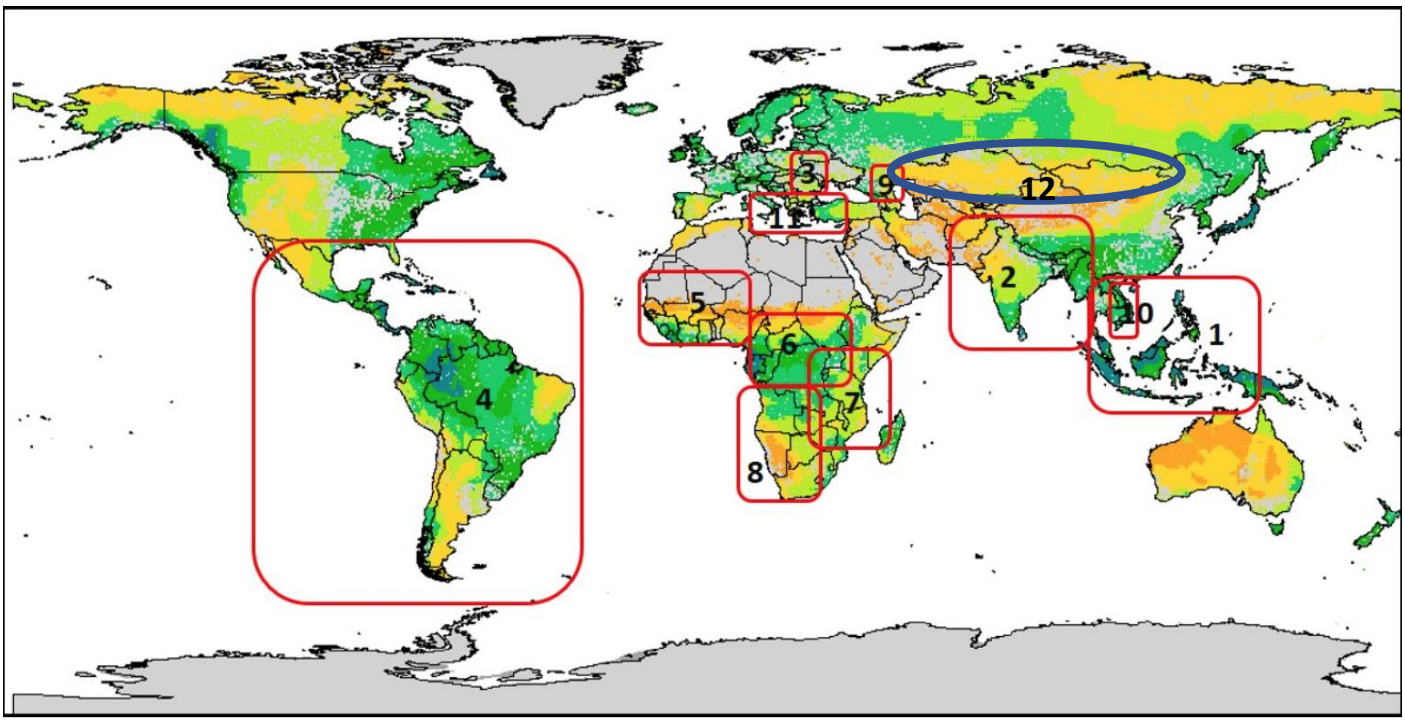
LCLUC Capacity Building: GOFC-GOLD Regional Networks

A revised strategy of the GOFC-GOLD initiative highlighted the importance of Capacity Building as the Regional Networks "form an important venue through which capacity-building can be achieved. Inter- and intra-regional capacity building activities should be continued and strengthened" (Editors: J. Townshend and M. Brady, 2006). Indeed, "to ensure that capacity building is maintained, the regional networks should form or strengthen their linkages and partnerships to international development agencies and organizations." GOFC-GOLD manages to do that through Implementation Teams (IT), Working Groups (WG) and Regional Networks .

The new GOFC-GOLD Network in the Mediterranean will:

- enhance regional science
- contribute to the global change science
- incorporate socio-economic components,
- hold regular meetings and promote the continuous interactions between members (SCERIN model)
- develop a website with an inventory of projects, publications etc.
- incorporate the Educational Component (TAT NASA-ESA model).



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Overview- Accomplishments

Kick off meeting in Chania, July 2018

The MedRIN Kick-off Meeting took place in the premises of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, in Chania / Greece during 13-14 July 2018. During the kick-off meeting, representatives from the members/partners had the opportunity to discuss, organise and set the strategy for the effective progress of the MedRIN, highlighting the need to expand on current collaborations and existing links between the interested parties. The MedRIN aims to capitalize on existing relationships and capacities, support the communication and collaboration of the parties of the current network, have a specific governing mandate and be sustainable.

Promotion of MedRIN in Schools, March 2019

Presentation to Schools by Dr. Vincent Ambrosia and Dr. Garik Gutman during RSy2019. The purpose of the presentation was to promote the benefits of the MedRIN as well as to familiarize the students with the main idea and purpose of the network.

RSCy 2019 meeting in Pafos, March 2019

A total number of 62 attendants participated in the 1st MedRIN meeting (Pafos, Cyprus), while there was an enthusiastic expression of interest by observer countries to participate as well. The meetings final remarks highlighted the importance of a development of a plan for funding resources as well as for the communications plan to be put in place, in order to keep the communication between members of the network vivid, as well as disseminate the results in the most effective way.

Overview- Accomplishments

RSCy 2019 meeting in Pafos (Cyprus), March 2019: MedRIN Highlights


RSCy2019
Seventh International Conference on Remote Sensing and Geo-information of Environment


RSCy2019
Mediterranean Regional Information Network (MedRIN)


What MedRIN is abou
RSCy2019
Mediterranean Regional Information Network (MedRIN)


RSCy2019
Seventh International Conference on Remote Sensing and Geo-information of Environment
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RSCy2019
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RSCy2019

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39th Annual EARSeL Symposium in Austria, July 2019

A presentation was made at the EARSeL 2019 Conference at Austria regarding the benefits for joining forces in the Mediterranean Region in Earth Observation: The Mediterranean Regional Information Network (MedRIN).

The following are the authors of the conference abstract:

Vincent Ambrosia, Diofantos Hadjimitsis, Giannis Gitas, Ioannis Manakos, George Zalides, Chariton Kalaitzides, Mora Brice, Jana Albrechtova, Tapete Deodato, Nektarios Chrysoulakis, Eyal Ben Dor, Arnon Karnielli, Harris Kontoes, Levent Genç, Aziz Koru, Kyriacos Themistocleous, George Papadavid, Andreas Christofe, Christiana Papoutsa, Stavros Stagakis, Silas Michaelides, Garik Gutman, Christodoulos Mettas, Georgia Kouta.

EARSeL

EARSeL

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

DIGITAL | EARTH | OBSERVATION

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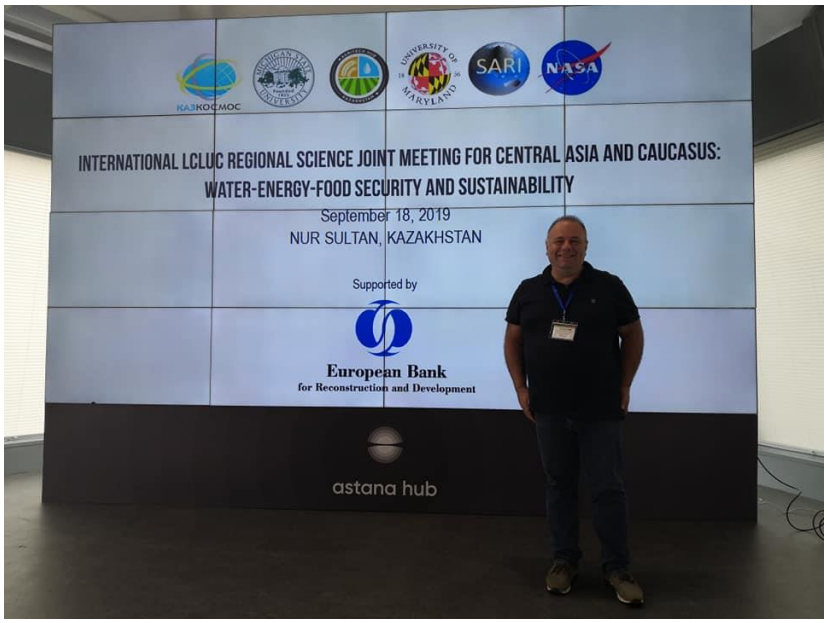
LCLUC Regional Science Joint meeting in Kazakhstan, September 2019



On September 2019, a presentation regarding MedRIN was made by Prof. Ioannis Gitas at the International LCLUC Regional Science Joint Meeting for Central Asia and Caucasus: Water-Energy-Food Security and Sustainability at Kazakhstan.

MedRIN was presented during the official public inauguration of the EXCELSIOR H2020, November 2019

The public inauguration event of the strategic research project 'EXCELSIOR': 'ERATOSTHENES: Excellence Research Centre for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring of the Environment' (www.excelsior2020.eu)was successfully held on the 22nd of November 2019. The event took place at the Cyprus University of Technology under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, in the presence of officials and elected personalities from the diplomatic, political and academic community of Cyprus and abroad. Prof. Diofantos Hadjimitsis, coordinator of Excelsior and Chair of the MedRIN, during the presentation of the EXCELSIOR H2020 Teaming project stated the importance of the MedRIN Network. Vincent Ambrosia and Prof. Gitas as well other MedRIN members joined also the inauguration ceremony.

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Presentation of MedRIN to Schools, November -December 2019

During numerous presentations of the EXCELSIOR H2020 Teaming project which were made to several schools in Cyprus, Prof. Diofantos Hadjimitsis, Coordinator of Excelsior and Chair of the MedRIN, presented the MeDRIN network as well.

MedRIN was presented to Copernicus Academy Network during the 'EXCELSIOR' presentation, May 2020

Prof. Diofantos Hadjimitsis, Coordinator of Excelsior and Chair of the MedRIN, during the presentation of the EXCELSIOR H2020 Teaming project, presented also the MeDRIN network.

Interview for START International, May 2020

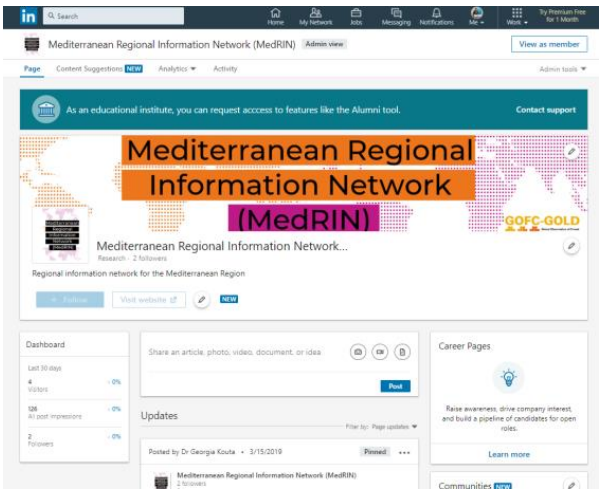
Interview on 4th of May 2020 for START International by Dr. Vincent Ambrosia, Prof. Diofantos Hadjimitsis and Prof. Ioannis Gitas

Overview – Accomplishments - Communication

Webpage updated on Gofc-Gold website

https://gofcgoldvh1.umd.edu/regional-networks/mediterranean-regional-network-medrin

Social Media active and going!



Interviews

An interview with Dr. Haris Kontoes, Prof. George Zalides and Dr. Ioannis Manakos

1.How existing networks such as GEOCRADLE & Excelsior can help the MedRIN community and the MED region?

KONTOES: GEO-CRADLE Initiative is a continuation and extension of the work of the GEO CRADLE Community Activity (former 3-year H2020 GEO-CRADLE project), which provided EO capacity building in Mediterranean, North Africa, Middle East, and Balkans (NAMEBA) regions, now with potential to expand to the Black Sea. GEO-CRADLE promotes the uptake and exploitation of Earth Observation (EO) activities in the Region of Interest (RoI) by bringing together regional stakeholders through the Regional Networking Platform (RNP) and enabling the exchange and exploitation of EO data through the innovative solution of the Regional Data Hub (RDH). Until today, more than 250 stakeholders from 29 countries from the entire Europe and the RoI are actively involved in the RNP, communicating information on existing capacities and complementary skills, and exploring collaboration opportunities. The stakeholders engaged offer capacities mainly in the following thematic areas: Raw Materials, Renewable Energy, Climate Change, Agriculture & Food Security, and Disasters Management, which are identified and have been prioritized as the most critical issues for the RoI. The Mediterranean region is a complex ecosystem, characterized by its own unique nature and continuous interaction between environmental, climate, geodynamic and socio-economic conditions. GEO-CRADLE promotes

Dr. Charalampos (Haris) Kontoes
Research Director - Institute for Astronomy, Astrophysics, Space Applications and Remote Sensing - National Observatory of Athens (NOA/IAASARS)
Scientific director of BEYOND Center

multi-actor, cross-border and interdisciplinary collaboration among EO stakeholders in the RoI in order to address common challenges.

To give you an example, the south-eastern Mediterranean region is receiving a significant amount of solar radiation. Its effective exploitation benefits solar park and distribution network managers and investors, though most importantly brings the RoI a step closer towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7 for affordable and clean energy, resulting in prosperity and well-being for the RoI inhabitants. The National Observatory of Athens (NOA) has joined forces with the World Radiation Center (WRC) at Davos, and together they have developed SENSE, a state-of-the-art Solar Energy Nowcasting SystEm, with applications in Greece and Egypt. Thus, cross-collaboration creates huge potential for synergies and added-value services that may would not have been achieved or even realized if it weren't for the regional networking and EO data sharing platforms. Nowadays, the specific activity runs a new development phase towards advancing further its features. This takes place in the e-shape EU project as part of the EUROGEO flagship initiative that is bringing onboard many more stakeholders and new scientific skills from European and regional actors.

Again the role of the GEO-CRADLE initiative in the engagement of stakeholders and the advancement of the relevant networking actions in Mediterranean region has been recognized as important. To that end, a partnership between GEO-CRADLE and MedRIN will create mutual benefits and growth opportunities both for the organisations involved and the Mediterranean region itself. GEO-CRADLE's RNP, as an established, well-known and well-reputed stakeholders' network can attract new stakeholders' interest to join and exploit possible partnerships. Hence, the MedRIN community could take advantage of the existing Networking Platform and allocate its resources to networking and capacity building activities. Moreover, GEO-CRADLE has already identified the RoI needs and has created a Roadmap in the form of a strategic action plan for increasing EO uptake and collaborations. MedRIN could benefit from exploiting that knowledge and combining with NASA's and ESA's TAT expertise, while developing new Capacity Building activities customized for the Mediterranean region. Therefore, the larger the range of partnership and synergy accomplished between GEO-CRADLE and MedRIN the greater the added-value services and actions for the Mediterranean region would be, towards economic growth and a sustainable future.

ZALIDES: i-BEC, in the frame of the H2020 GEOCRADLE project performed a series of strategic actions with political priorities at national/regional level (Balkans, Med and Middle East) and with the capacities of the EO community, in support of GEO's vision.

In this line:

(a) Established a multi-regional coordination network that supported the effective integration of existing EO capacities (space/air-borne/in-situ monitoring networks, modelling and data exploitation skills, and past project experience) in order to address challenges across the agricultural Sector.

(b) Developed a regional Soil Spectral Library (9 countries) following standardization protocols and facilitate in the transfer know how w.r.t soil spectroscopy and machine learning.

(c) A high-level political engagement was achieved due to policy makers (ministries etc.) from the region were engaged both in regional surveys as well as in regional meetings.

(d) A critical mass of stakeholders participated in the actions cover different areas of expertise, providing a better insight into the different thematic areas of GEO-CRADLE.

(e) The workshops, meeting and stakeholder engagement tools were evaluated positively by the large majority of participants while, public authorities gained a better perspective of Earth Observation capabilities.

Prof. George Zalides
Director of the Laboratory of Remote Sensing, Spectroscopy and G.I.S., AUTh, Faculty of Agriculture
Scientific Coordinator of Interbalkan Environment Center (i-BEC)

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

i-BEC INTERBALKAN ENVIRONMENT CENTER

2.How BEYOND Center of Excellence from NOA can assist the MedRIN network?

KONTOES: Let's recall that BEYOND Center of Earth Observation Research and Satellite Remote Sensing is established at the premises of the National Observatory of Athens (NOA) and has a self-sustained research agenda and roadmap for years.

Its goal is to maintain and expand the existing state-of-the-art research and service capacity, monitoring infrastructures, and interdisciplinary research potential, for the EO-based monitoring in sectors as Disaster Risk Reduction, Environmental Protection, Sustainable Development, Business and Society Resilience, Energy, Climate, Food Security, and Big Data Management and Analytics. It addresses priorities at global level emphasizing however on the regions of South-eastern Europe, North Africa, Middle East, Balkans, and Black Sea. Since its establishment, BEYOND is growing rapidly, building scientific expertise, producing innovative research and implementing projects supported by EU, ESA and International Funding Organisations (FP7, H2020, ESA EOEP, WB, EIB, etc.).

BEYOND
Centre of EO Research & Satellite Remote Sensing

One of these projects is the GEO-CRADLE Initiative analyzed above. BEYOND as the Coordinator continues and extends the provision of EO capacity building and further promotes the cooperation in the region, setting up consortia for new projects enriching at the same time the Networking Platform of EO stakeholders and the Regional Data Hub and organizing more training sessions, workshops, conferences. Moreover, BEYOND operates the Copernicus HELLENIC Mirror Site, and many more Copernicus Hubs, thus being part of the official Copernicus data access point worldwide, publicly serving satellite data from the Sentinel missions over the globe including the regions of Mediterranean, South & Southeastern Europe, Middle East & North Africa, in a timely manner.

Copernicus

It is a main component of the Copernicus GS architecture setting a reliable source for the mass distribution of Copernicus Sentinel products to international users and organizations that need to have fast access to these data.

Therefore, BEYOND is a key-player in the Mediterranean region that develops infrastructure and scientific research, and organizes capacity building and training workshops, also as part of the Copernicus FPA initiative, for promoting the EO uptake and the use of Copernicus data. MedRIN on the other hand has as a major objective to exploit NASA's training expertise on Remote Sensing basic concepts and more advanced classes on employment of EO data into modeling and predictive analysis and share them with stakeholders in the RoI. Thus, BEYOND and MedRIN can partner together to create a plan for capacity building activities that will integrate the scientific expertise and know-how of both.

3. What differentiates the Mediterranean Region from other Regions and what are you hoping to achieve with the MedRIN network?

KONTOES: The Mediterranean region is the region of lands around the Mediterranean Sea defined by a complex ecosystem. Countries in the region have both similar and diverse intra- and cross-regional characteristics in regard to natural, geographical, environmental, climate, geo-dynamic, education, religious, and socio-economic conditions. The Mediterranean Region is unique across the world not only due to its natural characteristics but also because of its history. Today, the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea are partnering in order to address common environmental challenges and towards ensuring prosperity and civil security. BEYOND with its various projects and through GEO-CRADLE Initiative are of the biggest contributors towards that goal, offering a significant capability for (near) real time provision of accurate information to policy makers, scientists, businesses and the public for decision making.

MANAKOS: I believe that MedRIN has the privilege to be able to gain momentum due to a) existing acting numerous networks in the region, b) the wealth of ongoing research and development projects, c) existing and developing infrastructures (e.g. Copernicus hub in Athens, Excelsior in Cyprus, etc.), d) enhanced in the area actors' and entrepreneurs' capacity in Earth Observation. I am hoping to achieve the following: As an active member of the Earth Observation society Europe- and World-wide, EOS team, envisages enhancing interaction (know-how and information exchange) with the local and international actors, who contribute to the environmental monitoring of the area. At the same time, EOS team wishes to get engaged into international working groups, already active or new-to-be-formed in the area and seeks for synergy and complementarity in the domains of research and innovation. Target remains (at equally weighted basis) to provide service to science/ research, and the society and its needs. To this end EOS team follows the Data-Information-Knowledge-Wisdom paradigm to facilitate evidence-based decision-making processes. The contribution of GOFC-GOLD to EOS team's work is important, because it provides a global forum of active contributors supporting sustainable management of terrestrial resources at different scales.

This network is of crucial importance for EOS team, as it is supported by the European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA brings EOS in interaction with international and global teams and developments. Moreover, the collaboration of MedRIN members with the vast potential of and legacy in Earth Observation, which NASA brings along, may only bring benefit to both the MedRIN members for the knowledge and experience exchange, and NASA for gaining insight to regional to local conditions on the ground and preferred ways of NASA's and ESA's products and services implementation by the local actors.

4.The priorities of the MedRIN include: Urban and built-up areas, Rural areas / Agriculture, Forestry and wildlands , Hazards (fires including agricultural fires, earthquakes, floods, etc.) ,Soil and water resource management (Irrigation/Hydrology, Soil degradation, Desertification) Training as a major component of the above priorities. Please comment about your contribution in these priorities.

MANAKOS: The CERTH-ITI EOS team may contribute with:
(a) remote sensing production workflows that may be embedded to an online platform as online services that deal with the extraction of features related to surface objects and their changes. Examples are derivation of inundation maps, hydroperiods, phenology metrics, landscape fragmentation metrics, land cover/ land cover change from spaceborne data.
(b) training material in the form of e-learning modules, as derived results from SEOS project that was completed about 10 years ago but may be upgraded.
(c) access to and implementation of technologies as Open Data Cubes, and
(d) training online or in face to face events. Topics may be related to the following priorities: rural areas/ agriculture, forestry and wildlands, floods,desertification.

Dr. Ioannis Manakos
Associate Researcher-Information Technologies Institute of the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH/ITI)

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We are proud for having 75 registered MedRIN members! Let's present some of them!

Prof. Diofantos G. Hadjimitsis: Leader of MedRIN in EU

Prof. Diofantos G. Hadjimitsis is the chair of the Mediterranean Regional Information Network (MedRIN).He is a Professor at the Department of Civil Engineering and Geomatics of the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT). He was the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs of the Cyprus University of Technology from 2016-2019 .He was the Chair of the Department of Civil Eng. and Geomatics from 2011 to 2015. He is a board member of 'The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education' which has been established by law on November 2015. Prof. Hadjimitsis is also the Coordinator of the HORZION 2020 Teaming Project 'EXCELSIOR' - ERATOSTHENES: Excellence Research Centre for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring of the Environment' (www.excelsior2020.eu). He is the Managing Director of the ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence (ECoE). He has more than 450 publications in journals, conference proceedings, and chapters in books and monographs in the field of remote sensing and GIS. He has supervised 13 PhD researchers in the area of remote sensing and 140 bachelor and master final year projects and dissertations. He is the co-coordinator of MSc in Geoinformatics and Geospatial Technologies at CUT.

"It is time to join forces for the benefit of the Med region, for the benefit of the citizens for improving the quality of life, for the benefit of the research, science and innovation. Let's all work together!"

Prof. Ioannis Gitas: Co-leader of MedRIN in EU

"The MedRIN network aims at the collaboration of stakeholders on environmental issues that are of utmost priority for the Mediterranean Region including wildland fires, agriculture, urban, desertification and water resources management.

Dr.Ioannis Gitas is the Co-Leader of the MedRIN. He is a Professor and Director of the Laboratory of Forest Management and Remote Sensing at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece and the Chairman of the Aristotle University Forest Administration and Management Fund. Ioannis, an elected fellow of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, received his PhD and MPhil degrees in GIS and Remote Sensing from the Department of Geography, Cambridge University U.K., and the *BSc Hons* degree in Forestry and Natural Environment from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. His research has focused on remote sensing and GIS applications in environmental monitoring, with emphasis on forest fire management, land cover/land use mapping and change detection. He has been involved in various national and international projects and has long experience working as a consultant in GIS/RS issues for national and international organisations, as well as for the industry. He is the author or co-author of more than 200 papers in peer-reviewed journals and international conferences. Also, he has served as project proposal reviewer for several national and international research organisations.

Dr.Vincent Ambrosia, Leader of MEDRIN in USA

Nasa's support to the MedRin is evident due to the contribution of External Advisory Members such as **Dr. Vincent Ambrosia**. Vince Ambrosia is a Senior Research Scientist / Adjunct Faculty Member in the Department of Applied Environmental Sciences, School of Natural Sciences (SNS) at California State University – Monterey Bay, and the NASA Applied Science Program, Associate Program Manager for Wildfire at NASA HQ, responsible for management of a portfolio of projects related to Earth Observations in support of wildland fire applications developments. He currently supports the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), Global Wildfire Information System (GWIS) initiative as the NASA representative, and since 2003, co-chairs the NASA / USFS Tactical Fire Remote Sensing Advisory Committee (TFRSAC). He has received the 2009 NASA Outstanding Public Service Medal for supporting emergency wildfire observations with UAS / sensors; the 2009 Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer, Interagency Partnership Award for improving the U.S. wildfire observations; and the 1999 ASPRS Best Remote Sensing Paper Award in the journal Photogrammetric Engineering & Remote Sensing (PE&RS) for his article entitled: ""An Integration of Remote Sensing, GIS, and Information Distribution for Wildfire Detection and Management.

Dr. Haris Kontoes

"Partnership with MedRIN will open up new opportunities for collaboration with NASA and US institutions and organisations, will attract new stakeholders in the Networking Platform, will establish a new cycle of enhanced capacity building activities and will contribute to scientific progress."

Dr. Kontoes Charalampos (Haris) holds the position of Research Director in the Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics Space Applications and Remote Sensing of the National Observatory of Athens (NOA/IAASARS). He received his Doctorate in Remote Sensing of the Environment (NTUA, 1992). He completed his doctoral studies holding a grant from the European Commission in the Institute for Space Applications of the Joint Research Centre at ISPRA (Environmental Mapping Group, JRC). Since 1992 he has been assuming responsibilities in managing Earth Observation operational & research projects, focusing on risk assessment and mitigation, risk monitoring and management, environmental resource management, and mapping in various contexts and scales. He leads BEYOND Center of Excellence (www.beyond-eocenter.eu) and a highly skilled research team with active participation in Space related projects funded by ESA, EC Framework Programs, H2020, COPERNICUS, and GEO . The Center's activity focuses on Emergency Response (during crisis) and Emergency Support (preparedness and recovery) (according to the Copernicus EMS standards), the protection of Sea and Atmospheric environment, as well as advanced topics relating to Agriculture and Food Security, improved Access to Renewable Energy Resources, and Climate Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change.

Dr. Charalampos (Haris) Kontoes in his capacity as National Delegate in Space fora, he is responsible for leading and coordinating interdisciplinary high-level representations in several Decision-Making Boards and Program Committees (e.g. ESA PBEO, EC Space Program Committees (FP7, H2020), COPERNICUS Committee, Space Advisory Committee). As a scientific director of BEYOND Center he also has the responsibility to coordinate the development and sustained operation of the Copernicus Data Hubs in Greece for Sentinel data dissemination globally, as well as the operation of the so-called Hellenic Sentinel Data Hub.

Prof. George Zalides

Prof. George Zalidis is the Director of the Laboratory of ''Remote Sensing, Spectroscopy and Geographic Information Systems'', a member of the Laboratory of "Applied Soil Science", and a Professor of Pollution and Soil Degradation in the Department of Agriculture at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He is also the Director of the Interbalkan Environment Center (i-BEC) since 2007. In the respective administrative positions held to date, he has applied certified quality management standards with quantified administrative results. His research interests focus on issues such as the use of Earth Observation (EO) Data to produce corresponding EO services in the GEO Social Benefits Areas and Sustainable Development Goals, implemented with the standardized GEO compatible methodologies globally, regionally and locally. His EO research activity includes the use of spectral data in monitoring Agricultural and Natural ecosystems, using NEXUS approach for their management and restoration. In addition, his research interest covers the sector of circular economy, through the development of carbon footprint protocols in primary production, composting, micro and macro algal cultivation. His engagement with quality assurance protocols in Academia, Research, know-how transfer Organizations in all administrative positions served, nationally and internationally, including higher education Quality Assurance Accreditation, provided him with total quality managerial skills and experience to direct and manage related Institutions and Organizations. He has been expert and national representative, and member of international committees and councils, and also affiliated Professor in U.S. Universities. His vision is to bring together researchers, policy makers and public institutions with SMEs, exchanging know-how and experience, regionally and globally, thus strengthening economies and competitiveness, to provide solutions to administration and institutions and through quality management to ensure sustainability and after project support.

Dr. Ioannis Manakos

"This network is of crucial importance for EOS team, as it is supported by the European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA and brings EOS in interaction with international and global teams and developments. Moreover, the collaboration of MedRIN members with the vast potential of and legacy in Earth Observation, which NASA brings along, may only bring benefit to both the MedRIN members for the knowledge and experience exchange, and NASA for gaining insight to regional to local conditions on the ground and preferred ways of NASA's and ESA's products and services implementation by the local actors."

Dr. Ioannis Manakos is an Associate Researcher at the Information Technologies Institute of the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH/ITI) since 2012. He has worked for 7 years as the Head of the Department of Geoinformation in Environmental Management at the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (still an Adjunct Professor there). He carried out his PhD in Forestry at the Technical University of Munich. He has coordinated or participated in more than 36 European and National research and development projects under various funding frameworks (incl. FP6, FP7, H2020). His publication record comprises of numerous articles in renowned Journals, Conferences, and Books (e.g. within the Remote Sensing and Digital Image Processing Springer Verlag Book Series), and editorial work (e.g. the recent editing of the Special Issues 'Remote Sensing in Ecosystem Modelling' and 'Sentinel Analysis Ready Data' of the MDPI Remote Sensing Journal and the 'Monitoring Land Cover Change: Towards Sustainability' of the MDPI Land Journal). Within the recently completed BIO_SOS FP7 Space, H2020 ECOPOTENTIAL, and ongoing H2020 E-SHAPE and SnapEarth projects, he developed and applies Earth Observation online data services' modules and open data cubes for the calculation of Essential Variables related to Protected Areas across Europe and beyond. He chaired the European Association of Remote Sensing Laboratories (EARSeL) from 2012 till 2014. He is the active Chairman of the Special Interest Group 'RS in Land Use & Land Cover' of the EARSeL. In this framework, he is the co-coordinator of various international Symposiums and Workshops, with the last one being the 3rd EARSeL Land Use Land Cover (LULC) & NASA Land Cover Land Use Cover (LCLUC) Workshop at Chania on July 2018 with the title 'Land-Use/Cover Change Drivers, Impacts and Sustainability within the Water-Energy-Food Nexus'.

Prof. Eyal Ben-Dor

Eyal Ben-Dor is a full professor at the Tel Aviv University (TAU) and was the chair of the Geography and Human Environment Department at Tel-Aviv University from 2005-2009 and again from 2012-2015. Currently he is serving as the head of the remote sensing laboratory (RSL) within this department and a GEO principle of Israel under the Israel Space Agency appointment and mandate. He has more than 28 years experience in remote sensing of the Earth, with special emphasis on the Hyperspectral Remote Sensing technology (HRS) and soil spectroscopy. He developed many application using the HSR technology for civil engineering, medicine, veterinary, environmental science, water, vegetation, atmosphere and soil sciences. His studies focus on both quantitative and qualitative analyses of field and laboratory reflectance data and on processing of airborne and orbital hyper spectroscopy data for precise and advanced surface and atmosphere mapping. He has a strong background in soil science, spectroscopy and remote sensing and is an author of more than 200 papers, book chapters and technical reports. He is the founder of the soil spectroscopy discipline began 30 years ago and now is very active in implement the soil spectroscopy into precision agriculture, food and soil securities. He is appointed as a MAG member in the CHIME mission of ESA to mount a hyperspectral sensor in orbit and participate in the NASA project, EMIT to mount a hyperspectral sensor onboard the International Space Station (ISS). He was just appointed (2020) by the IEEE SA as a chair of P4005 WG to establish a standard and protocol for soil spectral measurements.

"Mediterranean region is a laboratory in nature composed of climate, geology, vegetation, culture, and landscape that enable us to carry out high level research."

Dr. Nektarios Chrysoulakis

Dr. Nektarios Chrysoulakis is a Director of Research at FORTH and Head of the Remote Sensing Lab (http://rslab.gr). He is the corresponding PI of the European Research Council (ERC) Synergy project urbisphere, focusing on coupling dynamic cities and climate. He is the coordinator of the H2020-Space project CURE, focusing on Copernicus services exploitation in the domain of urban resilience. He has coordinated the projects URBANFLUXES (H2020), SEN4RUS (ERA.Net), BRIDGE (FP7) and GEOURBAN (FP7) and participated in several ESA, H2020, FP7 and LIFE projects. He is a Visiting Professor at University of Crete and at MAICh, with more than 250 publications.

Dr. Florent Renard

Florent Renard is an Associate Professor in Geography and Spatial Planning at the University of Lyon. He is a researcher at the UMR CNRS Environment City Society, a member of the Labex Intelligence des Mondes Urbains (IMU) and of the Field Observatory for Water Management (OTHU). His main research activities focus on the problems of heat islands, microclimates and thermal comfort in urban areas, the local impacts of climate change, particularly in terms of temperature and rainfall, territorial vulnerabilities and natural risk management. In a complementary way, he is also involved in some aspects of the geography of health, such as the emergency management of stroke and the subsequent territorial organization or the spatial socio-economic determinants of this pathology. The research work carried out combines mixed techniques, both quantitative and qualitative, with the use of spatial analysis and modelling by GIS, satellite imagery or weather radar by remote sensing, semi-directed interviews and participatory science. He is also in charge of the Environmental Management mention and the Master's degree in Environmental Geosystems at the University of Lyon (France).

"The Mediterranean region is dominated by a particular climate that requires a sharing of information and knowledge in order to be able to understand and analyse the territory as accurately and precisely as possible. The MedRIN network could enhance the strategies engaged on this type of territory by comparing the different techniques used"

Dr. Rosa Lasaponara

Dr. Rosa Lasaponara is a Researcher of IMAA-CNR (Italian Research Council, Institute for Environmental Monitoring) since 2001. She is responsible for the ARGON laboratory (Earth Observation for ARchaeoloGy and EnvirONment). Since 2007 she has been responsible for the following CNR Research Commitments: (i) “Integrated Earth Observation technologies for archaeology and landscape archaeology since 2007 (PC.P01.001.003)” and (ii) "Palaeoenvironmental transformations induced by human activities by using remote and in situ data analysis (RSTL.055.010)”. She has been a Professor of microwave at the University of Basilicata since 2010 and a Permanent Member of the PhD committee (2006-present) of "Ingegneria dell'Ambiente" at the DIFA University of Basilicata.She set up and currently chairs the special interest group " Remote Sensing for natural and cultural heritage" of the European Association of Remote Sensing Laboratories (EARSeL) in cooperation with and supported by UNESCO. She has authored about 200 publications among papers in international journals, books, book chapters, papers in proceedings of international conferences on: Remote Sensing for environmental monitoring, risk assessment, mitigation and modelling, time series analysis, Remote sensing for archaeology and environmental studies. Her dominant scientific interest focuses on: the operative use of EO techniques mainly in the fields of archaeology and environment in order to concentrate on: i) fire risk monitoring ii) interactions between humans and environment systems; iii) Anthropology: mainly land use practices and their effects on ecosystems; iv) innovative active and passive remote-sensed technology (LIDAR, multi-and hyper-spectral high resolution) for archaeological prospection and landscape archaeology.

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Dr. Chariton Kalaitzidis

Dr. Chariton Kalaitzidis is an Agricultural Engineer, with an MSc and PhD on the use of remote sensing for environmental applications and particularly the monitoring of vegetation. He has been employed at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania since 2007 which is a constituent of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), where he has been the research and studies coordinator of the Department of Geoinformation in Environmental Management since 2012. The Centre is an international organisation, focused on sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries, food and nutrition security in rural and coastal areas of the Mediterranean. It has a long tradition of providing postgraduate education to students around the Mediterranean, promoting international collaboration on agronomic and environmental matters.His research experience includes the use of remotely sensed data for the monitoring of land cover and vegetation, as well as agricultural crops using Precision Agriculture and field spectroscopy.

"MedRIN could act as a bridge between European, African and American colleagues and will leverage additional networking capacity in support of a peaceful utilization of Earth Observation in Mediterranean citizen's everyday life"

Dr. Polychronis Kolokoussis

Dr. Polychronis Kolokoussis, holds a Diploma in Rural and Surveying Engineering from NTUA (1993) and a PhD Degree from NTUA (2008). His research interests include acquisition and processing of multispectral, hyperspectral, thermal, SAR, LiDAR etc data (acquired by satellite, aerial, ground and underwater platforms/ systems) for various applications like change detection, modeling of phenomena, risk assessment for natural hazards and the protection of the natural environment. He has significant experience on acquisition and processing of hyperspectral and thermal remote sensing imagery as well as object-based image analysis (OBIA).

Dr. Vasiliki (Betty) Charalampopoulou

Vasiliki (Betty) Charalampopoulou is a geologist, with a specialization on remote sensing, photogrammetry and GIS applications. In 1992, she graduated from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and since then, she has been working on research projects in the area of photogrammetry, Earth observation and geoinformatics. She is actively enrolled in projects by ESA, EARSC and the GEO. She is the CEO of Geosystems Hellas S.A. (GSH) and is the Director of Geomatics (Cyprus) Ltd (GMCY), providing consulting, solutions and services on GIS and WebGIS, photogrammetry and Earth observation applications. As CEO and President in GSH she has established methodologies and formulated strategies, gaining many distributions and collaborations. She has also established several international collaborations with CNR, ESA, NASA, ISA, UNESCO, FIG, OGC, etc. and several international universities, local governments and industries, under the framework of collaborative H2020, ESA and Interreg calls participation.

Dr. Silas Michaelides

Dr. Silas Michaelides is currently a Senior Researcher A' at the CUT & ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence. He was appointed in July 1974 as a Scientific Officer in the Cyprus' Department of Meteorology and later promoted to various higher level scientific and administrative positions. He is a Member of the American Meteorological Society, the Hellenic Meteorological Society and the Cyprus Meteorological Association; also a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society, and an Emeritus Member of European Geosciences Union. In 1988, he was awarded the International Research Award for Young Scientist by the World Meteorological Organization; in 1983 he was awarded the Meteorology Prize by the University of Reading, U.K. Also, two Prizes for Excellence were awarded by the Greek Foundation for Scholarships in 1971 and 1972. He has more than 43-years of research, as Principal Investigator and Work Package leader in six (6) Scientific Projects funded by the European Union Framework Programmes (FP4, FP5, FP6 and FP7), Project Manager of three (3) INTERREG Projects funded by the European Union, Coordinator or participant as Principal Investigator of nine (9) locally funded scientific projects (RPF) and Member of the Management Committees and Researcher in four (4) COST Projects.

Prof. Karathanassi Vassilia

Karathanassi Vassilia since 2000 is employed as a Professor at the School of Rural and Surveying Engineering (NTUA). She has been a member of MedRIN since March 2019. Her research interests include the processing of multispectral, hyperspectral and SAR data. In recent years, her main research area is SAR and hyperspectral remote sensing and more specifically the development of new algorithms for the utilization of these data in a wide range of applications. Her published research work includes more than 35 papers in peer reviewed scientific journals, more than 60 papers in international conference proceedings, 33 research project reports and one book chapter. Her international recognition is acknowledged in multiple aspects. For example, she is a reviewer in multiple high impact journals like IEEE Transactions on Geoscience and Remote Sensing, Journal of Remote Sensing, Computers in Industry, IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing letters, International journal of Geosciences and International Journal of Remote Sensing. Additionally, she is an evaluation for Research Grant of the Chilean country, and she has been a member of 7 scientific committees.

"The backbone of GOFC-GOLD is shaped by its Regional Information Networks and MedRIN is already part of this network family. In this way MedRIN serves as a liaison between NASA Land-Cover/Land-Use Change program, remote sensing scientists and stakeholders in the Mediterranean region."

Ms. Lucille Alonso

Ms. Lucille Alonso is currently in the last year of her PhD in Geography and Spatial Planning, Her work focuses on the characterization of urban heat and cool islands in the Lyon (France) and Tokyo (Japan) agglomerations, associated with an analysis of vulnerability to heat waves. This study of climatic hazards is combined with an analysis of physiological and socio-economic vulnerabilities in these two areas. Within the framework of her thesis,she was able to model on a very fine scale (10m) the temperature in the streets of these cities, using different regressions and machine learning, to evaluate the thermal comfort in the streets and particularly within the framework of the 2020 Olympics, and to spatialize the vulnerabilities to heat waves.

"The priorities of the MedRIN are to improve the use of Earth observation data to address key issues of global concern and to enhance land use planning and resilience."

Dr. Tatjana Zivkovic Hansen

Dr. Tatjana Zivkovic Hansen is a physicist currently working as senior data scientist at DNV GL. She is mostly involved in projects related to satellite image analysis and machine learning applications. Fields of her research until now have been complex systems, climate model uncertainties, plasma and space physics, renewable energy, big data/ distributed systems and satellite remote sensing. Her goal is to understand the problem, solve it and share her knowledge about it with others.

"We work in Digital Solutions in DNVGL, an International company that has customers in Maritime, Energy, Oil and Gas, Businness Assurance and Health Care. We work in Satellite Earth Observation and we help our business units to provide safer, smarter and cheaper solutions. Our company has offices in Mediterranean countries like Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey. Due to this have we found MedRIN network valuable for us. We are working in industry and strongly appreciate contacts with academia that MedRIN network offers."

Dr.Sc. Barbara Scarnato

Dr.Sc. Barbara Scarnato has been working in the remote sensing field for more 15 years. Dr.Scarnato currently is a Principal consultant at DNV GL based in Høvik, Norway. She studied Physics at the University of Milano, Italy and earned her doctorate in Science at the ETH Zurich, Switzerland She has been awarded of a Postdoctoral fellowship at NASA Ames, and trainings from JPL and National Science Foundation in USA. She joined the Naval Post Graduate School, as tenure track, teaching remote sensing of Ocean and Atmosphere and doing research to support target identification and characterization to support defence operations.She joined DNV GL in 2016 and since then worked on projects involving data science and EO observations to support assets management and operations, environmental risk and due diligence. Dr. Scarnato's expertise lies in remote sensing, aerosols and gas, machine learning, target detection and data validation and analytics.

Dr. Brice Mora

Dr. Brice Mora has been participating in the MedRIN since its inception. He holds a PhD in remote sensing. His research focuses on forest monitoring. He has developed image processing chains based on a variety of machine learning algorithms. He has recently started investigating the potential of deep learning techniques for the analysis of time series of optical and SAR datasets. He is the former GOFC-GOLD Land Cover Project Officer (2012-2016) and GFOI R&D Coordinator (2015-2016). He has coordinated the GEO Global Land Cover & Change Task (2012-2016). He has been working for CS Group, Toulouse, France, since 2017 as a Project Manager. He is the Deputy Service Manager of the Copernicus Research & User Support Service and the Service Manager of the EUMETSAT WEkEO User Support Service. He promotes the open source culture that the company he works for contributes to through different software developed notably for the French CNES or ESA (e.g., SNAP, OTB, EODAG, LacoWiki/ Crowdval mobile app.).

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Limassol Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) from Cyprus New Member at 'MedRIN'

Nikolas Iordanous is the Vice-President of the BoD of the Cyprus University of Technology appointed by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus and member of the BoD since 2014. He is chairing and participating in various committees. Mr. Iordanou is also the Head of the Department of Research Innovation and EU Programs of the Limassol Chamber of Commerce & Industry and under this role he is running European funded Projects with focus on developing new and digital services for enterprises and public in the fields of training, capacity skills building, transfer of Knowledge, mentoring and support for start-ups, encouraging business collaboration and networking. He holds an MSc in Maritime Policy and a BSc in Maritime Studies. He has joined the LCCI in 2010 and he has been working on the sectors of Entrepreneurship, Industry, Tourism, Economic Policy and to other various activities concerning the economic development of Limassol and the promotion of entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem. He is cooperating with local and foreign Chambers of Commerce, Universities, Technology Parks, Research Institutions, R&D companies and other organisations, taking on initiatives for creating synergies and projects and common actions.

"LCCI is interested in developing partnerships for bidding in grant opportunities in the framework of EU programs and initiatives in line with the Chamber main sectors of expertise and activities as well as possible future development fields for the benefit of the organisation, its members and the regional business community. The Chamber has established experience in participating in National and European projects. LCCI has developed a wide and global network of collaborators including Chambers of Commerce, Universities, Technology Parks, Research Institutions, Public authorities, R&D companies, etc.

Nikolas Iordanous:
Why LCCI joined MedRIN: MedRIN is a great challenge for the LCCI members since this is a great initiative from NASA to the Med-Region. MedRIN will help our members at the LCCI to come across with Earth Observation and to contribute to the MedRIN priorities. Let's join forces!"

The Limassol Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), has for a number of years developed vigorous action and mobility in the field of research and innovation. Going through the era that is often referred to as the 4th Industrial Revolution, namely the rapid technological and digital development and ever-changing evolution, the prospects of the business innovation sector become very promising in the foreseeable and near future. As LCCI and guided by the trends and dynamics of the time combined with the harmonization of priorities and policies of the Republic of Cyprus and the European Union (EU) to encourage the development of start-up entrepreneurship and enhance competitiveness in the business environment, by taking at the same time into consideration the needs of our members, contemporary business, social and economic challenges, we set and operate based on the following strategic goals:

- ✓ Promoting business innovation, research and improving the ecosystem in the city and Limassol district.
- ✓ Upgrading and modernizing the services offered by the Chamber to its members and adding new ones.
- ✓ Promoting the construction of a Science & Technology Park.
- ✓ Strengthening the knowledge and use of Digital Technology.
- ✓ Supporting start-ups.
- ✓ Utilizing the opportunities for LCCI participation in programs, by exploiting the various available European and national financial tools.
- ✓ Supporting and empowering in the role of the intermediary body to improve the interconnection between the academic / research community and the productive fabric.
- ✓ Strengthening international and domestic networking and collaboration.
- ✓ Exchanging and transferring of know-how.
- ✓ Creating of high-quality jobs and further utilization of the scientific human resources of our country.
- ✓ Developing specialized know-how in LCCI staff.

LIMASSOL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

Observers of MedRIN

Dr. Maria Zoran

Dr. Maria Zoran is a Professor, a research scientist 1st Rank as well as the Head of the Satellite Remote Sensing Department at the National Institute of R&D For Optoelectronics- Bucharest Magurele, Romania. Some of her main activities and responsibilities are research and teaching in physics-geophysics, atmospheric physics, environmental physics and remote sensing. Her research interests focus on Applied satellite remote sensing and in-situ monitoring for:
air pollution, air quality and health assessment ,spatio-temporal environmental radon concentrations surveillance, natural hazards (earthquakes, landslides, climate extreme events) monitoring and management, environmental hazards at nuclear power plants, urban environment and climate changes, geologic applications, Black Sea and Danube River, climate changes impact on forest ecosystems and their feedbacks, spatial analysis for land use/land cover analysis and land use/land cover changes modelling.

"National Institute of R&D For Optoelectronics- Bucharest Magurele, Romania is a current user of NASA and COPERNICUS satellite data in synergy with field data for different environmental applications research projects"

Dr. Dan Savastru

Dr. Dan Savastru is a Professor, a Senior Scientist 1st Rank and the Head of the ITC department at the National Institute of R&D For Optoelectronics- Bucharest Magurele, Romania. Some of his main activities and responsibilities are coordination of design and realization activities for: ultra high vacuum systems, lasers and fiber optics devices for industrial applications , applications for medicine and environmental diagnosis ,technologies development specific to laser technique through resonators adjustment systems improvement, satellite remote sensing applications, UAVs field monitoring applications Dates. His research interests focus on spatial analysis for land use/land cover analysis, land use/land cover changes modelling, natural hazards (earthquakes, landslides, climate extreme events) monitoring and management, UAV environmental monitoring as well as surface water changes quality monitoring.

Dr. Miro Govedarica

Miro Govedarica, Ph.D., is a Full Professor at Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. His practical and theoretical results belong to the area of geoinformatics. He published several papers in journals and scientific conference proceedings related to geoinformatics, and he was a project leader in many research international and national projects. The domain of interest include object-oriented software engineering, Geospatial software engineering, Geospatial Databases, development of service-oriented Geoinformation Systems, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), Photogrammetry, Laser Scanning, Remote Sensing, Global Navigation Satellite Systems, Geoservices, Spatial Data Infrastructure, Spatial Big Data and implementation of new geoinformatics trends in education.

Let's introduce the big initiative in the Region: 'EXCELSIOR' project and ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence (ECoE)

One of the biggest upcoming projects in the region is the 'EXCELSIOR' H2020 Widespread Teaming Project that aims to establish a sustainable, viable and autonomous Centre of Excellence, the Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence (ECoE) in Cyprus with funding from the European Union, the Government of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT).

The Excelsior Project: The EXCELSIOR (ERATOSTHENES: Excellence Research Centre for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring of the Environment) is a newly granted project from the Horizon 2020 Framework for Research and Innovation of the European Union (Grant Agreement number: 857510). Through the EXCELSIOR Horizon 2020 Widespread Teaming Phase 2 project, a new, autonomous and self-sustained Centre of Excellence, the ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence (ECoE) will become the sole established laboratory in Cyprus for Earth observations. The total funding of the EXCELSIOR H2020 Teaming project is: 15 million Euros from EC, 15 million Euros from the Republic of Cyprus and 8 million Euros from the Cyprus University of Technology.

What is the vision?: Within the next 7 years, the ECoE will become a world-class Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) for EO and Geospatial Information becoming the reference Centre in the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa (EMMENA).

Consortium: The Consortium of the EXCELSIOR project consists of the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) (Coordinator), the German Aerospace Centre (DLR), the National Observatory of Athens (NOA), the German Leibniz Institute for Tropospheric Research (TROPOS) and the Department of Electronic Communications (DEC) from the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy of the Cyprus Government.

Prof. Diofantos Hadjimitsis, CUT

Dr. Haris Kontoes, NOA

Mr. Gunter Schreier, DLR

Dr. Albert Ansmann, TROPOS

Mr. Georgios Komodromos, DEC

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 857510.

This project has received funding from the Government of the Republic of Cyprus through the Directorate General for the European Programmes, Coordination and Development.

www.excelsior2020.eu

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Let's introduce the big initiative in the Region :'EXCELSIOR' project and ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence (ECoE)

Supporters: The project is actively supported by more than 95 organizations, including Ministries, Municipalities, National-level organizations and Networks (e.g., the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber, 6 Ministries from the Cyprus Government and 19 Govermental Department from Cyprus, International organizations (e.g. GEO, ESA, NASA, MedRIN (NASA) ISPRS, NEREUS, ACTRIS, EARLINET, EARSel, COPERNICUS Support Office etc.), Universities (Tel-Aviv University, Aristotle University, National Technical University of Athens, Ben-Gurion University, CNR-Italy etc.) and Research Centres, research and innovation institutions and companies (e.g. CYTA, CYRIC, Geofem, i-BEC etc.).

Advisory Board: The External Advisory Board of the 'EXCELSIOR' and the 'ECoE' consists the following: Mr. Vincent Ambrosia from NASA, Mrs. Simonetta Cheli from ESA, Mr. Marcello Maranesi- independent consultant (worked in the past as Chief Executive Officer at e-GEOS-Italy) , Prof. Lena Halounova-ISPRS Secretary General & Czech Technical University, Dr. Peter Zeil from Spatial Services & University of Salzburg and Mr. Daniel Barok-senior space consultant (former Adviser for International Collaboration at Israel Space Agency).

ECoE Board of Directors: The Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence (ECoE) board of directors consists among others Barbara Ryan-former-secretariat Director of GEO, Prof. Rosa Lasaponara from the Italian National Research Council (CNR) (member of MedRIN), Dr. Nektarios Chrysoulakis from FORTH (member of MedRIN), Mrs Vasiliki Anastasiadou Former Minister of Communications and Works, Mr. Marios Demetriades-Former Minister of Communications and Works, Prof. Evangelos Akylas-Cyprus University of Technology, Mr. Christos Stylianides former EU commissioner.

Prof. Diofantos G. Hadjimitsis on Digital Innovation Hub:

"ECoE will act as a Digital Innovation Hub and a Research Excellence Centre for EO in the region, creating an ecosystem where the state-of-the-art sensing equipment, cutting-edge research, targeted education services and entrepreneurship come together and will embrace three cutting-edge Thematic Clusters for sustained excellence in research: Environment and Climate Resilient Society Big Earth Data Analytics"

EXCELSIOR

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 857510.

This project has received funding from the Government of the Republic of Cyprus through the Directorate General for the European Programmes, Coordination and Development.

www.excelsior2020.eu

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Let's introduce the big initiative in the Region :'EXCELSIOR' project and ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence (ECoE)

The public inauguration event of the strategic research project 'EXCELSIOR': ERATOSTHENES: Excellence Research Centre for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring of the Environment was successfully held on the 22nd of November 2019. The event took place at the Cyprus University of Technology under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, in the presence of officials and elected personalities from the diplomatic, political and academic community of Cyprus and abroad.

EXCELSIOR

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 857510.

This project has received funding from the Government of the Republic of Cyprus through the Directorate General for the European Programmes, Coordination and Development.

www.excelsior2020.eu

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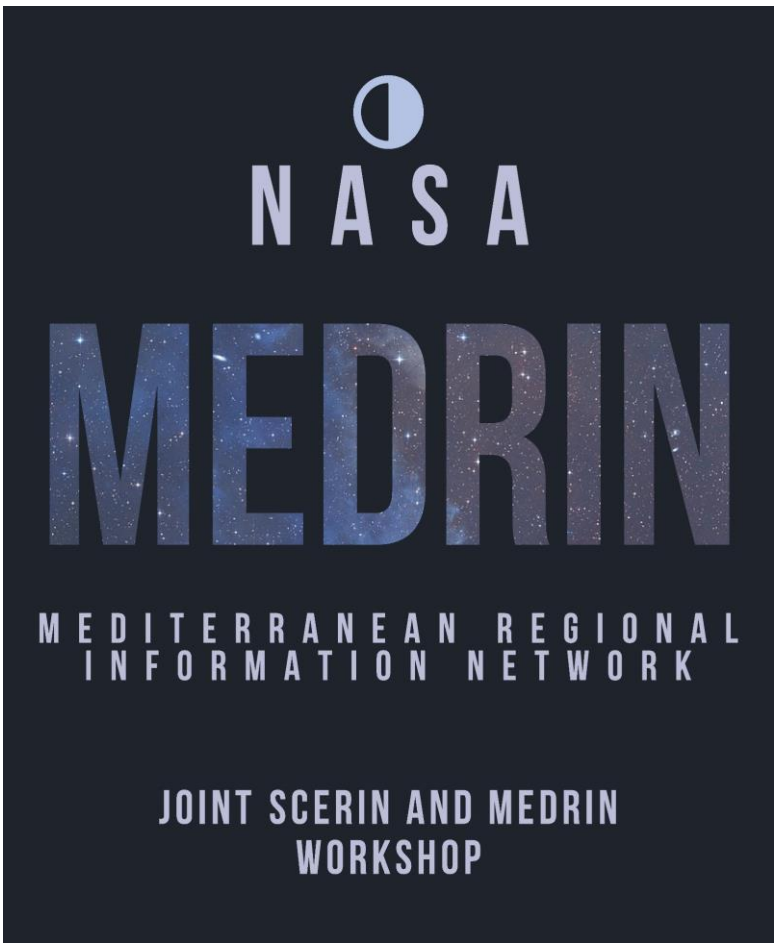
Joint SCERIN and MedRIN Workshop-June 2021

The 1st International MedRIN and SCERIN Capacity Building Workshop (CBW) entitled 'Common drivers and effects of land cover/use, natural hazards and climate change in the region' will be postponed and will take place at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh) in the next year June 2021 due to the COVID19 situation. The workshop is organized by the Laboratory of Forest Management and Remote Sensing (FMRS) and the Center for Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation (CIRI) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in collaboration with the Interbalkan Environment Centre (i-BEC), NASA (NASA Land-Cover/Land-Use Change Program) and the ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence (EXCELSIOR Programme) of the Cyprus University of Technology. Leading scientists as well as members of national and international organizations, such as NASA, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission and the European Space Agency (ESA) are expected to participate and deliver keynote speeches on subjects related to the focus areas of the event. Apart from the presentation of recent scientific advances, a key priority of the workshop will be the development of new initiatives that could lead to future joint actions between the participants. More specifically, members of the scientific community, business executives, public sector executives, and members of international organizations are expected to explore potential synergies and initiatives with respect to land observation and its role in sustainable natural resource and disaster management in the Mediterranean region and Eastern Europe.



We are looking forward to seeing you in Thessaloniki!

Mediterranean Regional Information Network (MedRIN)

GOFC-GOLD Global Observation of Forest and Land Cover Dynamics

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