

Land cover CoP making good progress

The South African Group on Earth Observation's (SA-GEO) Land Cover Community of Practice (CoP) met on 8 February 2017 to report on the progress that has been made on the work plan of 2016/2017 and to also discuss the work plan for 2017/2018.

The two main activities identified for 2017/2018 are translating the updated national land cover classes and definitions to SANS 19144-2-2014, which is the Land Cover Meta Language (LCML), and identifying the national land cover change classes. Based on the user needs survey of 2014, one of the requirements is to produce a land cover change every two to three years.

A first voluntary team within the Land Cover CoP has been established to determine what type of change should be monitored and how are they going to be addressing these requirements of monitoring change. The team will start by analysing national legislation that requires land cover data, and follow up with further consultations with specific departments

A second voluntary team will focus on the translation of national land cover classes to LCML. The land cover CoP is open to all those who have an interest in land cover. The platform has been created by the Department of Science and Technology through SA-GEO which coordinates national earth observation activities in order to maximise current investments, promote data sharing and meet user needs. SA-GEO responds to South African Earth Observation Strategy (SAEOS) and the country activities involvement in Group Earth Observation (GEO) and Global Earth Observation Systems of Systems (GEOS).

The Land Cover CoP is one of the 11 communities of practice and is co-chaired by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, the Department of Environmental Affairs, the CSIR, and the South African National Space Agency. The SA-GEO CoPs are built around the following societal benefit areas: agriculture, air quality, coastal and marine, earth observation infrastructure, education and awareness, land cover, legal and policy, natural resources, radiometry, synthetic aperture radar, and water.

The National Land cover classes and definition 2016 standard has been approved by the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform in terms of section 11(2) of the Spatial Data Infrastructure Act, 2003. The National land covers classes and definition 2016 standard will be gazetted for 30 days before becoming operational. This achievement has been made possible by the land cover CoP. ©

