Project *brief*

Thünen Institute of Forest Ecosystems 2025/10a

Establishment of target group-specific communication structures in science

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- **The Copernicus Networking Office for Forests has established itself as a permanent contact point for information and activities related to remote sensing in forests**
- **Remote sensing experts and practical users find a platform for exchange**
- **Network structures must be maintained permanently in order to provide continuous benefits**

Background and key objectives

With the European earth observation program Copernicus, high temporal and spatial resolution remote sensing data are freely accessible. In the forest sector, the satellite data is used for tasks concerning forest monitoring, vitality analyses, damage detection and recognition of tree species. In recent years, a large number of specific applications and products have been developed that can be helpful in answering a wide range of questions.

The Copernicus Networking Office for Forests has the task of establishing network for forestry and remote sensing experts and to support, advise and connect stakeholders interested in remote sensing data. It is thus intended to form an interface between remote sensing experts, forestry stakeholders, forest owners, forestry administration, research institutions and companies. The expert network will be used to present and communicate the potential uses of Copernicus data and services.

Activities

In the first year of the project, the focus was on setting up the expert network and analyzing the current status quo. We conducted an initial survey on the status of the use of remote sensing data and services in the subject area of forests in order to help close any gaps. Active users of remote sensing data asked for more opportunities for exchange. Potential users expressed a need for more basic information on the possible uses and applications of remote sensing data for forest monitoring tasks.

The networking office then compiled overviews of projects, products and services. Since December 2021, we have also regularly presented projects, products, service providers and much more in our own newsletter (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Newsletter of the Copernicus Netzworking Office for Forests Wald (Source: Thünen Institute)

In order to promote professional exchange and meet training needs, the networking office organized a total of ten online seminars on a wide range of topics and made recordings and documents freely available on the website.

A highlight was our three-day user conference "Damage detection with applied remote sensing data" with 31 presentations and four workshops in March 2023. With a second user survey in autumn 2024, we wanted to capture the status of the use of remote sensing data once again, taking into account the latest developments, detect any changes in the focus of interest, needs and problems and to draw a summary of the network's activities.

Results

We found that there is an overall positive trend in the use of remote sensing data in general and specifically in the awareness and usage of Copernicus data and services (Figure 2). According to the results of our survey, the increase in the use of remote sensing data can primarily be explained by an increasing demand and is favored by the generally improved availability of (pre-processed) data and (ready to use) products.

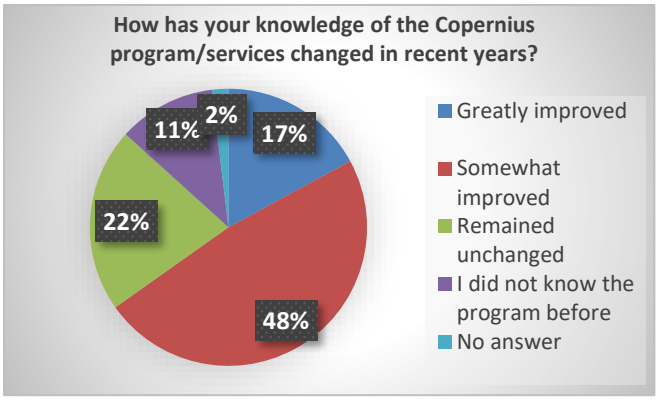

Figure 2: Extract from the 2nd user survey – changes (Source: Thünen-Institute/Own image)

However, with the ever-increasing variety of application options, data, products and their updates, the need for targeted information for users is also growing. A networking office as a neutral point of contact to which both project or product providers and users can turn with their respective needs to disseminate or obtain information thus plays a central role in this development. It is well accepted by the user community, as individual feedback after events or specific questions in our survey show (Figure 3).

Outlook

- Bundled information (e. g. newsletters) and event offers are well received and demanded by users - this applies both to events with a lecture character (e. g. project presentations) and to those with a training/seminar character (e. g. introductory course in remote sensing)
- The communication of scientific work and scientific results (science communication) needs a platform, but is often neglected in project planning in terms of personnel, time and finances

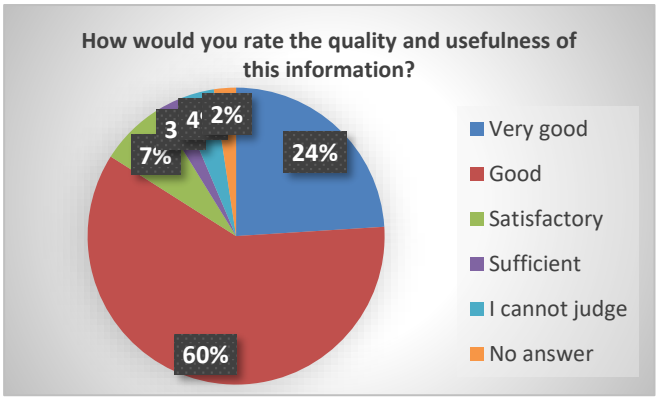

Figure 3: Extract from the 2nd user survey – work of the networking office (Source: Thünen-Institute/Own image)

- Established networking structures can provide a remedy and promote communication between stakeholders and support them in disseminating scientific findings to specific target groups
- Users themselves express their need for further training and more general information and ask for networking opportunities (Figure 4)
- Once successfully established, networking structures need a secure financial framework in order to serve as a long-term contact point

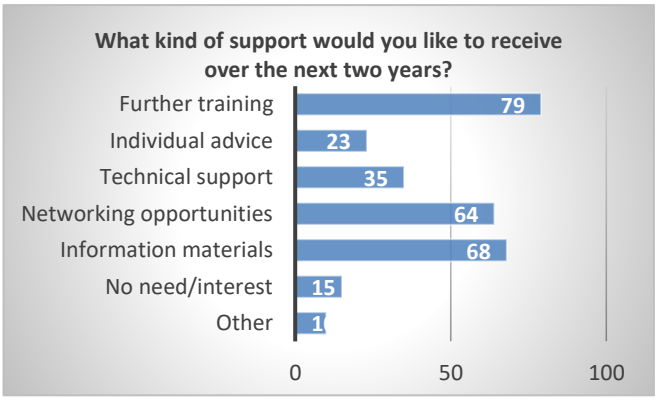

Figure 4: Extract from the 2nd user survey – Final questions (Source: Thünen-Institute/Own image)

Further Information

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