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Date: 29 augustus 2011
Re: Support to MAPS4SCIENCE

Contact
Ger Nieuwpoort

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Dear professor Van Oosterom,

Our ref.
2011-0908

It is with great interest that we learned about your initiative to develop a large scale research facility, Maps4Science, in the fundamental and interdisciplinary field of geo-information sciences. The Netherlands Space Office (NSO) declares that it supports your Map4Science application for the NWO 'National Roadmap for Large-Scale Research Facilities' funding program.

Your ref.

Encl.
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Data and information collected by and/or with space sensors on satellites constitute a particular type of spatial information beneficial to many different fields of scientific, economic and societal use, through applications and services. With the growing availability of high-quality space data and information, these are becoming more and more an indispensable part of geo-information. Embedding into a large-scale geo-information research facility will strongly enhance the added value of space assets for science and society.

NSO is the national space organisation of the Dutch government. One of the main activities aims to increase the use of space assets, through applications of space data, to the benefit of science and society. The Netherlands participates in the development and deployment of these space assets both in national (national space programs) and international (e.g. ESA) context. NSO aims at a focused exploitation of Dutch technological space capabilities as part of the development of a sophisticated (European) space infrastructure. Clearly identified user needs are fundamental for the services based on information from satellites, which are becoming more and more available via geo-information facilities. It is from this role that NSO underlines the importance of a large-scale geo-information research facility like Maps4Science.

Space technological capabilities, as available at many high-tech institutes and industries in the Netherlands, have been explicitly identified as one of the essential technologies in the Topsector High-tech Systems and Materials. At the same time, it has been acknowledged that the use of these space technologies, through applications of space data, enables innovations in many other Topsectors. The use of space data, as the use of geo-information, geo-ICT and ICT-technologies, is to be regarded as a horizontal Topsector theme. Examples of the enabling role of space related to the Topsectors are precision farming (Topsector Agro-food), Tracking & Tracing (Topsector Logistiek) and several business cases related to the Water & Klimaat Convenant as included in the Topsector Water.

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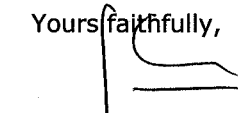
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Currently NSO, on request of the Dutch government, is investigating the possibility for the development, on short term, of a National Satellite Data Base in preparation for the availability from 2014 onwards of huge amounts of space data from the European GMES program. This National Satellite Data Base perfectly relates to the intentions of the Maps4Science proposal and both facilities could strongly benefit from each other.

We therefore regard Maps4Science as an important initiative that will be a crucial enabler for many users in science and society to benefit from geo-information, space data included.

Yours faithfully,


Dr. G. Nieuwpoort
Director NSO