

Digital Earth Africa - Development of a Sustainable Funding Strategy

Digital Earth Africa (DE Africa) will enable African nations to track changes across the continent in unprecedented detail through satellite data. This will provide valuable insights for better decision making across many areas, including flooding, droughts, soil and coastal erosion, agriculture, forest cover, land use and land cover change, water availability and quality, and changes to human settlements. The capability allows government and non-government organizations to improve their work, and creates opportunities for private enterprises to develop new products and services from these up-to-date, free and open sources of satellite data.

Vision:

Digital Earth Africa will provide a routine, reliable and operational service, using Earth observations to deliver decision-ready products enabling policy makers, scientists, the private sector and civil society to address social, environmental and economic changes on the continent and develop an ecosystem for innovation across sectors.

Mission:

Digital Earth Africa will process openly accessible and freely available data to produce decision-ready products. Working closely with the AfriGEO community, DE Africa will be responsive to the information needs, challenges and priorities of the African continent. DE Africa will leverage and build on existing capacity to enable the use of Earth observations to address key challenges across the continent.

Statement of Work

The intent of the DE Africa program is to be hosted within an existing institution based in Africa for the long-term offering products and services in support of national development priorities for future decades. Currently, funding beginning in March 2019 was provided by the Australian Government Department DFAT and the Helmsley Family Trust with a 3-year time window in mind to establish the program in Africa.

As the DE Africa program matures, additional funding will be needed for technological improvements, co-developing new products and services, creating new innovations including developing an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and ensuring capacity development and collaboration with African countries continually takes place. It is clear that, in the medium-term, additional funding will be required from international donor organizations to continue the program whilst it positions itself for long term sustainability through direct African country-level investment.

To gain additional international investment, we require the services of a consultant to develop and discover key information. The consultant will work with the DE Africa

establishment team, particularly where the work requires a detailed knowledge of the program itself.

This Expression of Interest calls for consultants and/or firms to formally submit their interest to discover and develop key information for the DE Africa funding strategy in the following areas:

- 1) Understanding of the broad funding landscape
 - a) Review the landscape to identify potential funders under various scenarios (e.g. programmatic funding, thematically oriented funding, etc.) and the level of potential funding from each organization
 - b) Prioritize funding organizations
 - c) Identify pros/cons and other requirements
- 2) Knowledge of the vision, mission and objectives of funders, as well as the selection process of recommended funders, enabling us to accurately target them.
- 3) A narrative that connects Digital Earth Africa work to outcomes/impacts that are important to the potential funder, articulating the value proposition of Digital Earth Africa in language that is attractive to different types of funders.
- 4) A point of introduction/means to open a discussion with the funder at a high level with ability to take forward a proposal, and more generally identification of the next steps for developing relationships with potential funders.
- 5) The identification of clear packages of work that could be funded, and the level of funding, that may be matched to funders. These may be over-arching or very specific.
- 6) Work with the DE Africa Establishment Team, in particular to guide the development of a package of materials that can be reused across funders, including a pitch deck and other promotional materials, the use and re-use of communications materials around case studies, user and organisational profiles, impact stories and so on. This would include the global context of sustainability and grand challenges and how DE Africa as a technology ready platform (TRL framework) with sound governance offers a pathway toward them.
- 7) Develop a concise strategic approach (including recommendations) to build a more robust and sustainable approach to funding Digital Earth Africa through more localized mechanisms. This should include approaches to and associated timelines for developing more in-country funding, and funding from institutions based in Africa to position DE Africa to no longer be dependent on international aid funding sources. The approach should be designed around or take advantage of the inclusive, distributed implementation model for Digital Earth Africa.

Expected Deliverables

1. Report summarising the findings and recommendations, addressing points 1 to 7 above.
2. Contact details of potential funders / organisations

Proposed Timelines

This task is expected to be completed in 4 to 6 weeks, starting from mid-May 2021.

Qualifications

The Funding Strategy can be developed by an individual consultant or firm with the following background:

- Have proven experience working with philanthropic, aid and international donor organizations.
- Have an extensive network of connections with relevant organizations at senior levels.
- Have proven experience working on international development initiatives with relevant experience working in Africa.
- Have a good understanding of the political, donor and business dynamic in Africa and strong relationships with the continental organizations including the UN Economic Commission for Africa, African Union Commission and Africa Development Bank.
- Have a good understanding of the Regional Economic Communities and other models for developing an approach for country-level investment.
- Have a good understanding of the data for development and the Earth observation ecosystem including related donors.
- Be flexible and adaptive in your approach given the current global pandemic and any potential pivots in the program.

Applications

Please send your application to secretariat@geosec.org. Deadline for applications is 16th of May 2021.