

March 2021



Digital Earth
AFRICA

Digital Earth Africa Communication Strategy



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Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to provide the overarching direction of Digital Earth Africa's (DE Africa) stakeholder engagement activities and drive effective communication. This strategy:

- ◆ identifies desired outcomes and the activities required to achieve them
- ◆ identifies and prioritises the program's stakeholders and level of engagement
- ◆ outlines how prioritisation of communication efforts in reaching defined target audiences can:
- ◆ help to achieve the program's three-year plan
- ◆ facilitate effective engagement with stakeholders and key audiences
- ◆ improve the awareness, value and uptake of DE Africa data, products and services.
- ◆ outlines how communication will leverage partner networks as a distributed model
- ◆ provides the framework to transition the communication function from the establishment team to the DE Africa Program Management Office

Consultation

This strategy has been developed using feedback from a range of stakeholders involved in the DE Africa program, including:

- ◆ AGRHYMET – Bako Mamane and Aziz Mainassara
- ◆ OSS – Fatou Mar
- ◆ RCMRD –David Ongo and Dorah Nesoba,
- ◆ DE Africa Establishment Team – Adam Lewis, Lisa Hall, Aditya Agriwal, Ken Mubea, Edward Boamah
- ◆ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Stacey Green, Grant Morrison, Frank Thompson, Madeleine Pillans
- ◆ Helmsley Charitable Trust – Carey Meyers, Trista Kontz-Bar
- ◆ Amazon - Ana Privette
- ◆ Amazon Web Services - Joe Flasher
- ◆ GEO Secretariat – Steven Ramage
- ◆ Esri – Matthew Pennells

Document version history

Version	Description	Date of issue	Author
0.1	Draft for review	05/09/2019	Plume consultations
0.2	Final for endorsement	14/01/2020	Tessa Robinson
0.3	Updated for review	08/01/2021	Emma O'Connor
0.4	Final Version	09/03/2021	Emma O'Connor

Program overview

The DE Africa program has developed a free, open and reliable continental service for all Africans to track changes across their countries using Earth observation satellite imagery. This information will provide insights into a range of issues including flooding, droughts, soils, coastal erosion, agriculture, forests and land use, water availability and changes to human settlement.

The program will scale up the first operational data cube developed in Australia for the African continent in response to the needs and priorities of African stakeholders, overseen by an independent Governing Board and Technical Advisory Committee. A network of partnerships align DE Africa with other organizations and initiatives with similar mandates, allowing DE Africa to leverage capacity and expertise and to accelerate the uptake and use of products for decision-making and daily action.

DE Africa will become an operational and analytic capability of Africa, with in-country expertise in data analysis, use and management. This work is supported by funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and The Leona. M and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, and is being completed through a three-step plan:

- ◆ 1: Setting the foundation
- ◆ 2: Building capacity and uptake
- ◆ 3: A developing ecosystem

Vision

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

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.



Program objectives

The program is delivering the three-year plan through a multi-stakeholder approach. The Governance Framework sets out a broad and representative Governing Board to provide advice and oversight, and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to set priorities. A program logic sets out to achieve the above through the following:

Objective	Outcomes
Develop a data infrastructure that is operationally, technically and financially sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Governance Framework is operational, effective and African owned and its outcomes are achieved ◆ The program is operational within recognised African institutions and has a range of enabling partnerships ◆ The infrastructure is fully established and delivers credible and free EO data and products ◆ DE Africa is widely recognised, has an increasing demand for a growing range of data products and has attracted additional investment
Demonstrate environmental and development impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Intermediaries and users are identified, and their needs are understood ◆ There is an increasing capability to engage with and apply DE Africa data products ◆ DE Africa is used for government decision making processes and to support development of innovative applications ◆ DE Africa has a growing user base across public, private and civil society sectors
Promote the benefits of open and free Earth observation data internationally as a flagship initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Key audiences in Africa and internationally understand the program ◆ Development partners and bilateral engagement and exchange are supported ◆ DE Africa is leveraged to support positive benefits for international development ◆ DE Africa supports increased consistency in applications and analysis of EO data and is increasingly recognised as a preeminent EO data platform by the international community

These outcomes support the program's alignment strategy and institutional partners who play a key role in the success of the program.

As the program enters year 3, the emphasis is on **Transition** (of capabilities and functions to Africa) and **Sustainment**.

Objectives

The following communication objectives aim to ensure engagement and communication activities help achieve the program's overall desired outcomes and the focus on transition and sustainment.

Transition

- ◆ Generate broader reach of awareness through effective use of stakeholder communication channels
- ◆ Determine and develop capability for implementing partners to ensure communication is effective during and post transition
- ◆ Build awareness and uptake of DE Africa platform, tools and training

Sustainment

- ◆ Build awareness and drive engagement with key stakeholder groups to support ongoing investment, uptake and use of the DE Africa platform
- ◆ Key stakeholders champion the program and have the awareness and tools to influence and engage others to drive program outcomes
- ◆ Maximise promotion of the program at every point in the DE Africa value chain – from data to decisions to build confidence on the program now and into the future



Communication approach

The approach for communication and engagement works as a distributed model, leveraging the power of owned, earned and paid (where necessary) channels. This approach is key to not only maximising exposure for the program, but ensuring content is able to be tailored for a hugely diverse audience.

This approach will remain consistent as responsibility for communication transitions from the DE Africa Establishment Team to the DE Africa Project Management Office (PMO).

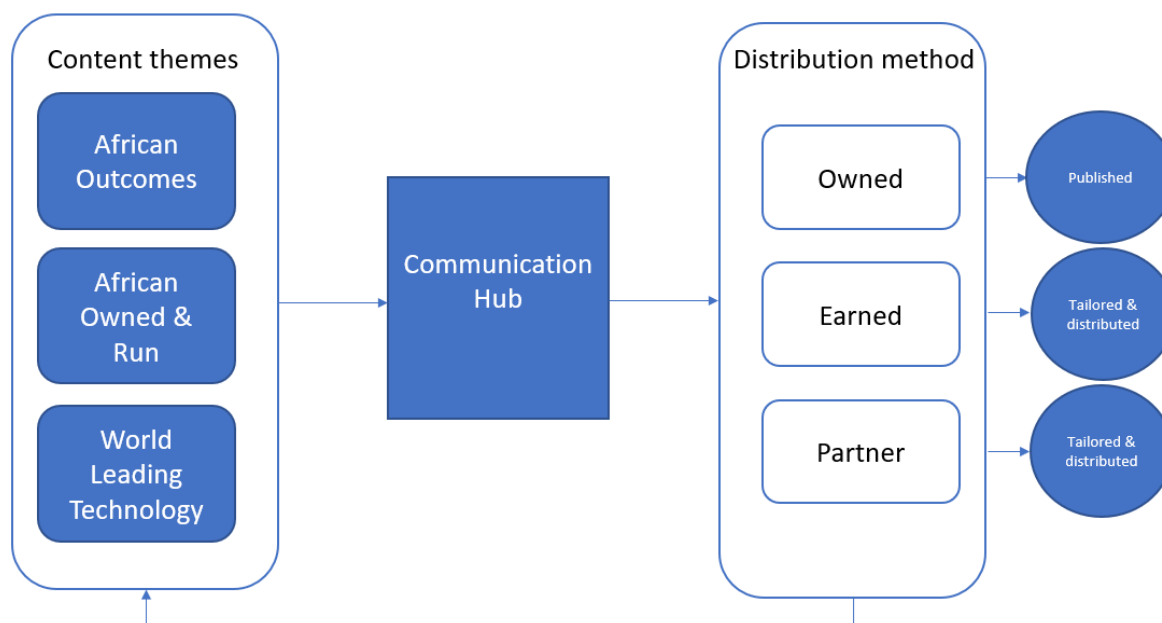


Figure 1. Distributed Communication Model

The model will be guided by communication principles that will ensure communication is strategic and effective:

- ◆ Coordinated and timely– communication is considered and coordinated to maximise efficiency and limit overwhelming stakeholders with information. A content plan will be developed each month based around a key theme. The calendar will be shared with partners who have a formal or informal agreement to share content.
- ◆ Collaborative – development of major communication activities or content will be done in collaboration with relevant partners to ensure a mutually beneficial outcome. This approach will ensure partner communication channels are used to reach a wider audience.
- ◆ Tailored – the programs audience is largely diverse in geographic location, understanding of the program and communication needs making the ability to tailor content a key component of success of the models. Partners must be supported to tailor and adapt communication to meet the needs of their networks. Support should come through:
 - Access to a maintained activities and event schedule
 - Advanced notice of key communication activities and supporting collateral (monthly content plan)
 - Content provided in a range of formats that are easily tailored and shared
 - Shared knowledge and capability to ensure partners have the technical ability to effectively amplify communication

Distributed communication model

The distributed communication model works as a network of actions coordinated through a central Communication Hub. The hub leverages content opportunities tied to content themes each aligned to the programs business and communication objectives. Content is refined and packaged within the hub to be distributed through a network of interconnected channels and key stakeholders each with a role to play in influencing, distributing or acting on communication.

1.1.1 Content themes

The alignment of content to the three content themes will provide a more focused and strategic approach to communication. Content themes guide content development to ensure it aligns to an overarching narrative that promotes:

- ◆ **African outcomes** – a key selling point of the program is the real outcomes that come from application of the technology. The ability to demonstrate real outcomes within African communities will be key to influencing decision makers to use the platform to inform policy changes that will contribute to reaching Sustainable Development Goals. The program to date has been effective in capturing stories of the potential of the platform. Going forward there needs to be a stronger balance in promoting both potential and realised outcomes.
- ◆ **African owned and run** – A key objective of the program is to transition the management and ownership of the program to African partners. This transition is well underway with formal and informal agreements in place with many African organisations. The transition of technology to be hosted within the continent is also underway. Key milestones in this transition should be celebrated to build awareness, authenticity and credibility of the program as a truly African program. Topics include the governance (governing board), promotion of partners and key achievements, announcement of the PMO, data move to Cape Town etc.
- ◆ **World leading tech** – DE Africa should be positioned as a leader in the provision of technology that supports the translation of Earth observations into decision ready information. Technical advancements and maturity should be promoted alongside participation at events for the global GEO community. Topics should also include capacity development, training and use of the platform.

1.1.2 Communication Hub

The model operates with the Communication Hub at the centre of the process. The hub, run initially by the Establishment Team and transitioning to the PMO, is responsible for meeting the communication objectives set out in this strategy. It leads the communication approach capturing, identifying, scheduling and packaging communication content and promotional material. The Communication Hub is also responsible for maintaining the integrity of the brand and ensuring partners are well equipped to share messages in a way that is meaningful for their audience.

1.1.3 Distribution method

The distribution method leverages communication channels that are owned by DE Africa, earned through media engagement and managed by partner organisations. The method will ensure communication is supplied to each channel to be published or tailored by the channel owner to meet their audience needs.

1.1.3.1 Owned channels

DE Africa manages a range of channels that can be used to promote the program. The following table is a summary of channels, their purpose and proposed frequency for updates. Note: frequency should be determined by ongoing evaluation and adjusted to meet the needs of the audience and channel

Channel	Purpose	Audience	Frequency
Website	<p>Central hub of content. Other channels funnel the audience back to the site for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Details of the program - Access to technology and training <p>Stories of success</p>	All	<p>Update with success stories regularly.</p> <p>News items from external outlets should be amplified.</p> <p><i>Future consideration:</i> Use of the site as an online community for users.</p>
Newsletter	<p>Update key stakeholders on program advancements (monthly)</p> <p>Alert key stakeholders of events and ad hoc announcements (as needed – to be coordinated as much as possible)</p>	Stakeholder Community Group subscribers	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>To promote events and other announcements</p>
Twitter	<p>Engage the audience through program updates. Include partners where possible to improve engagement</p>	Cross section of stakeholders and partners	3 times per week
LinkedIn	<p>Drive thought leadership and stakeholder engagement</p>	Cross section of stakeholders and partners	3 times per week
Facebook (TBC)	TBC	TBC	To be considered as a new channel based on its popularity and reach within Africa
Flickr	<p>Capture satellite images and images of stakeholder engagement opportunities</p>	Cross section of stakeholders and partners	As needed to support broader communication activity

1.1.3.2 Earned channels

Earned channels are channels that are used to promote a message but are not controlled by the organisation responsible for promotion. In most cases this includes unpaid media placement, amplification from partners and general word of mouth. For the purpose of this strategy, partner channels have been considered separately.

The major focus for earned channels is an effective approach to engaging with relevant media outlets. The Media Strategy includes the detailed approach to media engagement.

1.1.3.3 Partner channels

For the purpose of this strategy, partners are considered any individual or organisation who has an informal or formal agreement to share and amplify DE Africa content.

The distributed communication model leveraged partner communication channels and stakeholder networks to tailor and amplify DE Africa communication.

Principles of effective partner communication:

- ◆ Mutually beneficial – both parties benefit from the model in some way.
- ◆ Provide credibility – partners are able to provide credibility against at least one of the content themes.
- ◆ Maximise reach – partners have the information, tools and capability to tailor and share content to reach their audience in a meaningful way.
- ◆ Shared understanding and priorities – partners priorities are aligned with DE Africa objectives and goals and have a shared understanding communication objectives, messaging and timing.

Brand and creative concept

A revised brand and creative concept has been developed to clearly articulate the unique value proposition of the program.

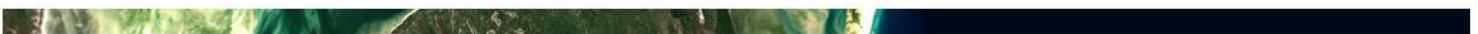
The brand and concept bring together the content themes in a visually appealing way that highlights the programs purpose and objectives.

Purpose: To unlock the promise of tomorrow using patterns of the past.

Messaging

Outcomes led: Improving the lives of all Africans by translating Earth observations into insights to inform decisions for more sustainable water, agriculture, food security and urbanisation. By Africans for Africa.

Technology led: Digital Earth Africa provides access to free, open satellite data that translates Earth observations into insights to inform decisions for more sustainable water, agriculture, food security and urbanisation. By Africans for Africa.



Logo

The logo has been refreshed to include a richer colour palette, drawing on the vibrant colours inspired by the African continent.



Images

Images should reflect the content themes and the diversity of the African continent

- ◆ Outcomes – particularly related to the themes: water, agriculture, deforestation, urbanisation, coastal erosion
- ◆ World leading tech – with a particular focus on gender, equality disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)
- ◆ African owned and run – images should be reflective of the diverse cultures, countries and landscapes of Africa. They should include a balance of rural and remote and also urban landscapes.



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Key stakeholders

Key stakeholders have been identified and grouped into broad categories based on their role in the program. In terms of communication, each stakeholder group has a dual role as both a receiver and distributor of information. Understanding how the network of stakeholders works is important to uncovering the ecosystem of influence present amongst the programs stakeholders.

- ◆ **International Leadership** – provide the program with purpose and the implicit mandate to pursue that purpose (or right to exist) and support the program at high levels in particular by connecting it with international agendas across sectors. These international mandates draw from the UN Sustainable Development Goals (GEO) and Agenda 2064: The Africa We Want (AUC, AfriGEO, UNECA).
- ◆ **Financial Enablers** – provide the finances required to keep the program running. This includes Government and charitable contributions (e.g. Department of Foreign Affairs and the Helmsley Trust) and in-kind contributions (e.g. Amazon)
- ◆ **Operational Enablers** – provide the resources, capability and input to ensure the program is operational. Operational Enablers can be divided into two sub-groups:
 - Program Delivery – responsible for delivery of the program (e.g. Establishment Team, Program Management Office)
 - Governance – Responsible for input into decision making and running of the program (e.g. TAC, Governance Board)
- ◆ **Technical Enablers** – ensure the program and related technology is stable. Contribute to technological advancements. Technical Enablers can be broken into five sub-groups:
 - Data – supply satellite data (e.g. USGS, NASA, ESA, Open Data Cube Community)
 - Analysis Ready Data – provide the standards, institutions and technology to translate raw data into analysis ready data, and to host the data (CEOS, data processors Sinergise, Element 84, Amazon)
 - Platform – support the DEA Africa platform (e.g. the ODC community, Amazon, Platform Host) and the tools to access it (e.g. CSIRO, ESRI)
 - Products – provide the skills tools needed to access the data
 - Validation – validate data to protect the integrity of the program (e.g. RCMRD, Afrigist)
- ◆ **Use Enablers** – ensure the platform is accessible for users. This group includes capacity development partners (e.g. GPSDD, ICT, CSIRO)
- ◆ **International Community** – work with the program to share insights into global trends. Partner where possible to promote the potential of Earth observations for global benefit
- ◆ **International Aid** – groups responsible for progress towards sustainability (e.g. African Government, Australian Government, WEF, UNECCA)
- ◆ Users -users can be considered as:
 - Platform Users or potential users of the actual program
 - Decision Makers who use data/insights from the program to change policy and outcomes
 - Policy Makers
 - Industry

- ◆ **Aligned programs** – programs that have similar vision and mission. May sit within one of the other stakeholder groups (e.g. technical programs once there is an agreement in place may become a Technical Enabler). Including, SERVIR, GMES, EO for Africa.

Evaluation

To ensure this strategy continues to meet the needs of stakeholders, a quarterly report in line with the program’s monitoring and evaluation will track communication metrics and identify recommendations.

Each communication activity will be measured by relevant metrics to the activity’s specific objectives. The following metrics form a benchmark:

Transition

- ◆ Generate broader reach of awareness through effective use of stakeholder communication channels
- ◆ Determine and develop capability for implementing partners to ensure communication is effective during and post transition
- ◆ Build awareness and uptake of DE Africa platform, tools and training

Sustainment

- ◆ Build awareness and drive engagement with key stakeholder groups to support ongoing investment, uptake and use of the DE Africa platform
- ◆ Key stakeholders champion the program and have the awareness and tools to influence and engage others to drive program outcomes
- ◆ Maximise promotion of the program at every point in the DE Africa value chain – from data to decisions to build confidence on the program now and into the future



Objective	Metrics	Methods of measure
Generate broader reach of awareness through effective use of stakeholder communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Number of audiences engaged ◆ Consumption of content ◆ Amplification of content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Website analytics (page views, time spent on page, resource downloads) ◆ Social media reach and engagement (likes, retweets) ◆ Media coverage (number of articles, conversations, impressions)
Determine and develop capability for implementing partners to ensure communication is effective during and post transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Amplification of content ◆ Engagement of communication partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Website analytics (page views, time spent on page, resource downloads) ◆ Social media reach and engagement (likes, retweets) ◆ Media coverage (number of articles, conversations, impressions) ◆ Participation/use of training/guides
Build awareness and uptake of DE Africa platform, tools, training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consumption of content ◆ User numbers ◆ User satisfaction ◆ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ DE Africa Map analytics ◆ Data usage analytics (e.g. registered on OGC Web Services, Explorer, Public Data, Jupyter Hub, GitHub, Slack) ◆ Africa GeoPortal analytics ◆ Content and training feedback (feedback forms, online surveys) ◆ New applications and use cases developed
Build awareness and drive engagement with key stakeholder groups to support ongoing investment, uptake and use of the DE Africa platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Number of audiences engaged ◆ Consumption of content ◆ Amplification of content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Social media reach and engagement (likes, retweets) ◆ Event attendance (audience numbers) ◆ Newsletter analytics (subscribers, open rates, click throughs) ◆ Website analytics (page views, time spent on page, resource downloads, traffic) ◆ Increasing membership in the stakeholder community group ◆ Active contributions and participation from the Governing Board and TAC members ◆ Anecdotal feedback from key stakeholders

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increase in investors and investment
<p>Key stakeholders champion the program and have the awareness and tools to influence and engage others to drive program outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Number of audiences reached ◆ Consumption of content ◆ Increased brand awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Website analytics (page views, time spent on page, resource downloads) ◆ Event attendance (audience numbers) ◆ Newsletter analytics (subscribers, open rates, click throughs) ◆ Media coverage (number of articles, conversations, impressions) ◆ Invitations to participate, speak or sponsor at events ◆ Anecdotal feedback from key stakeholders ◆ Increased stakeholder network
<p>Maximise promotion of the program at every point in the DE Africa value chain – from data to decisions to build confidence on the program now and into the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Number of audiences engaged ◆ Consumption of content ◆ Amplification of content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Website analytics (page views, time spent on page, resource downloads) ◆ Event attendance (audience numbers) ◆ Newsletter analytics (subscribers, open rates, click throughs) ◆ Media coverage (number of articles, conversations, impressions) ◆ Invitations to participate, speak or sponsor at events ◆ Anecdotal feedback from key stakeholders ◆ Increased stakeholder network ◆ Platform analytics ◆ Anecdotal feedback from key stakeholders ◆ New applications and use cases developed ◆ Increased stakeholder network

