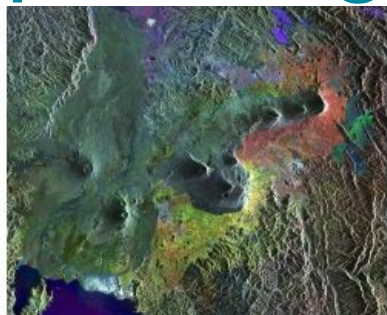


Ecometrica Wins GBP14.2m UK Space Agency Contract



Sustainability software and data company Ecometrica has won a contract worth more than GBP14 million from the UK Space Agency's recently launched International Partnership Programme (IPP). The 'Forests 2020' project is set to help countries to improve the management and protection across 300 million hectares of tropical forests – 12 times the size of the United Kingdom. It

will also see Ecometrica lead an international consortium that brings together many of the world's leading experts on forest monitoring.

The deal, which closely matches the IPP's technology and development goals, is the largest so far to come from the GBP150m UK Space Agency programme, and follows a highly competitive tender process. It is a significant win for Ecometrica, which reported sales of GBP2.77m in its last financial year.

Launched earlier in 2016, the IPP brings together British space knowledge, expertise and capability to provide a sustainable, economic or societal benefit to undeveloped nations and developing economies

Deforestation

As part of the project, Ecometrica will sub-contract experts from the University of Edinburgh, the University of Leicester, and fellow Edinburgh company Carbomap, a specialist in Lidar forest mapping. The project will also see Ecometrica bring together various partners in Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya and Mexico, where Earth Observation laboratories will be set up to assess threats to rainforests and help direct conservation resources. The project is due to complete in March 2020.

Ray Fielding, head of the International Partnership Programme at the UK Space Agency, said he is very pleased to be working with Ecometrica to address deforestation and sustainable forest management for developing nations. The programme will identify innovative ways that space technology can help in this important area, which has been identified by the UN as key for sustainable development, and the team intends to make a real difference to the people on the ground working to preserve the world's forests.

Monitoring systems

Dr Richard Tipper, executive chairman of Ecometrica, said this will help to establish Ecometrica as a leading international provider of digital infrastructure for earth observation services. Working with several organisations in each of the six countries, including research institutions, NGOs and conservationists on the ground, this project will help improve the capacity to implement effective forest and ecosystem monitoring services. It is estimated that improved monitoring systems, which enable a more targeted approach, could help prevent the loss of four to six million hectares of forest over the next decade: that's an area more than half the size of Scotland, or two to three times the size of Wales!

We all know how important tropical rainforests are to the survival of the global ecosystem, but most people are only just waking up to the fact that we need to use technology to make sure conservation efforts are effective and properly directed. The Earth Observation platforms will ensure threats such as fires and illegal logging are detected sooner, and make the response on the ground faster and more cost effective, Tipper added.

Earth Observation Labs

The Forests 2020 project follows Ecometrica's earlier success in leading the UK Space Agency's International Partnership Space Programme (IPSP) in 2015/16, which created a network of virtual regional Earth Observation Labs in Brazil and Mexico to develop suitable products for the forest sector.

Dr Tipper said Forests 2020 builds on the expertise of applying satellite data to situations on the ground, and will allow to tackle technological challenges relating to the detection of changes to forests, the measurement of risk, and the digital infrastructure needed to use Ecometrica's platforms in the field.

