



Global Development Assistance

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ESA Global Development Assistance

What does it take to connect two very different communities?



- **The mission** - A global partnership to mainstream Earth observation into development operations, as a catalyst for long-term action
- **Supply side** - European EO service providers, building tailored products through thematic consortia. Supported by shared functions such as communications, and monitoring and evaluation, and shared infrastructure such as fast-financing facility, application platform and knowledge hub.
- **User/demand side** – Impact finance actors including International Financial Institutions and Global Climate Funds, as well as the partner country governments they serve seek decision-support tools that leverage EO data.
- **The challenge** - capacity has to grow on both sides, and beyond the individuals directly involved, into organisations and the wider system.

Defining capacity development within GDA

Who needs capacity, and of what sort?



The established UN definition, adapted for Earth observation

*“The process through which **individuals, organisations, and societies** obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities that are required to leverage Earth observation (satellite-derived data and insights) for social and environmental impact. This involves building a **shared awareness and understanding** of how impact can be delivered through EO data and a **commitment to ensure the adoption and sustained use of EO by key decision makers** over time ”*

UNDP (2009) Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer. United Nations Development Programme, New York.



Capacity is needed on both sides, at every layer

What does each side need and to what depth?

DEMAND SIDE NEEDS		Increasing capacity depth →			
SUPPLY SIDE NEEDS		Awareness	Understanding	Adoption	Sustaining
Individuals Personal		Know EO exists and what it can answer	See where EO fits their sector, and its limits	Commission and interpret EO in a project	Use EO routinely, without outside help
		Know how and by whom impact finance is deployed	Understand project cycles, instruments, decision makers	Engage task teams; shape offers to development priorities	Work routinely across the supplier - user divide
Organisations Institutional		Leadership sees EO as relevant to the portfolio	EO appears in strategies and project design	EO in standard workflows and procurements	EO mainstreamed with dedicated funding
		Leadership sees impact finance as an addressable market	Bids account for IFI cycles and procurement	Built for IFI systems and results frameworks	Repeating, long-term EO product sales
Societies & industry Systemic		EO referenced in policy dialogue	Cross-institution EO initiatives emerging	Shared data standards and tools adopted	EO embedded in the impact finance architecture
		Impact finance seen as a distinct domain	Shared vocabulary across the two sectors	Industry EO Capabilities evolve to solve development needs	EO industry is a routine supplier to impact finance organisations

Every need here has a plausible owner. No single actor has more than a few — which is why, in a multiplayer system, the binding constraint is coordination rather than capability.

GDA has built across almost all of this, without designing to it

Where did GDA's effort land? Illustrative examples only, one per cell.



Increasing capacity depth →					
DEMAND SIDE FOCUS	SUPPLY SIDE FOCUS	Awareness	Understanding	Adoption	Sustaining
Individuals Personal		"Space for IDA" MOOC	GDA Knowledge Hub Library	GDA AID Consortium to IFI Training (product level)	GDA Knowledge Hub Trainers Area
		GDA Knowledge Sharing Webinars	Consortium Engagement Toolkit	Ground Truth Co-Design Workshops with World Bank	GDA Procurement Tracker
Organisations Institutional		GDA Impact Sphere	GDA Knowledge Event 2025	GDA AID Consortium EO Products for IFIs	ESA-IFI Institutional Partnerships
		EARSC EOcafe: "Access to development finance for the EO sector"	Navigating IFI Development Financing Webinars	GDA Analytics and Processing Platform (APP)	GDA Fast EO Co-Financing Facility (FFF)
Societies & industry Systemic		Nothing specific	Immersive environments	UNOSSC Expression of Interest process	Open global datasets and methodologies (WSF, Sen4Stat)
		ESA Upcoming Activity Information Days/ Webinars	Nothing specific	GDA Industry Day 2024 (industry only)	GDA Industry Day 2026 (industry & impact finance)

None of this was designed against a capacity framework. The coverage emerged anyway and could be reached faster by design.

Four examples of how GDA built capacity

What does each one reach that the others cannot?



GDA Impact Sphere



Interactive virtual globe that brings ESA's GDA work to life with real stories of in-country use cases

[See sample tour on YouTube](#)

[Visit the GDA Impact Sphere](#)

Online GDA Knowledge Hub



A searchable catalogue, a training course builder and an AI assistant with ability to book expert consultations, available any time.

[Introduction to the knowledge hub](#)

[Visit the GDA Knowledge Hub](#)

Interactive impact communication & dashboards



Findings you can interact with and interrogate, according to your specific interests.

[Take a tour of Cosmopolis - our virtual city](#)

[Visit the GDA Impact Dashboard](#)



- 1 Where does a space agency add most: delivering capacity development, or brokering between those who can?
- 2 Awareness of EO among individuals is relatively easy to measure. Sustaining its use across organisations and industry is harder. How does that shape what we do?
- 3 Are we measuring capacity the same way? If two agencies wanted to compare what their programmes achieved, could they?

Annex: Links to examples

Publicly available GDA resources



GDA Knowledge Hub

Library of EO capabilities, use cases, case studies and training resources; ChatGDA assistant; Consultation Rooms; Trainers Area.

knowledge-hub-gda.esa.int

GDA Knowledge Event 2025

Write-up of the three-day event at ESRIN, October 2025.

gda.esa.int/2025/11/sharing-insights-building...

“Space for IDA” MOOC

Open online course on satellite EO for international development assistance.

gda.esa.int/2023/03/mooc-on-satellite-earth-ob...

GDA Interactive Mid-Term Evaluation

Scrollytelling, interactive data visualisation and a voice assistant.

gda.esa.int/2025/03/beyond-the-pdf-the-gda-int...

EARSC EO CAFÉ

Briefing for European EO industry on accessing development finance.

gda.esa.int/2022/10/gda-at-eo-cafe-opportuniti...

GDA goes Earth Action

Successor event, ESRIN, 22–23 September 2026.

gda.esa.int/2026/08/gda-goes-earth-action