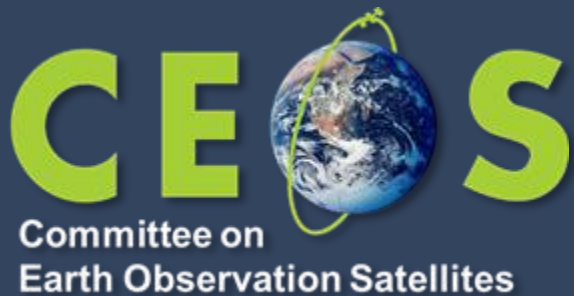


Agency Report - UKSA



Robert Fletcher, UKSA

Agenda Item 2.5

WGISS-60

13-17 October, 2025

Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany

- ❖ All presentations should be uploaded to the shared google drive:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1w7MdXIUU_pvLebfX0JP9uscXYtEsTXTK
 - Ask Libby for edit access as required (libby@symbioscomms.com)
- ❖ Files should be named **Item_Presentation Title_Name_version**
 - E.g. **1.3_WGISS Chair Report_Tom Sohre_v1**
- ❖ Presenters should join the webex line and present from their own screen using screen share features

UKSA DSIT Merger



- The UK Space Agency will merge with Department for Science, Innovation & Technology's 'Space Directorate' from 1 April 2026, forming a new unit within DSIT responsible for civil space strategy, policy and delivery
- This new unit will retain the UK Space Agency name and brand identity. The move will cut any duplication that exists between the two bodies, and ensure decisions are made with clear ministerial oversight
- The intention is to staff the new organisation with existing employees of both DSIT and the Agency, ensuring valuable knowledge and expertise is retained. DSIT and the Agency already work closely together
- We will continue to work closely together over the coming months to support the UK space sector and ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements. The government is committed to supporting the space sector, and this decision reflects the growing importance of space to the UK's economic growth and national security.



UKSA EO Team Priorities



CMIN:

Preparing for ESA's Council of Ministers in November, where the UK and other ESA member states will make their investments for the next phase of various Earth observation programmes

CEOS Plenary:

UK Space Agency is currently preparing to host the CEOS Principal community at CEOS Plenary in Bath, UK from 4-6th November. We are looking forward to celebrating the achievements through our year as Chair, including the development of the best practices for methane emissions detection from space, and the first CEOS in Schools programme. We will be inviting the UK school participants to the side meeting day on 4th November to showcase their posters, and have an exchange with CEOS principals

MicroCarb Launched



Launched: July 25th 2025

Dr Paul Bate, CEO of the UK Space Agency, said:

“Satellites like MicroCarb are our eyes in the sky. Over half of the critical data we use to understand climate change comes from space, and MicroCarb’s successful launch is a major leap forward in our ability to track carbon emissions and absorption with unprecedented accuracy, from the world’s cities to its forests and oceans.

Backed by UK and French investment and expertise, it’s a proud moment for both our space sectors and a powerful example of international collaboration in action.”



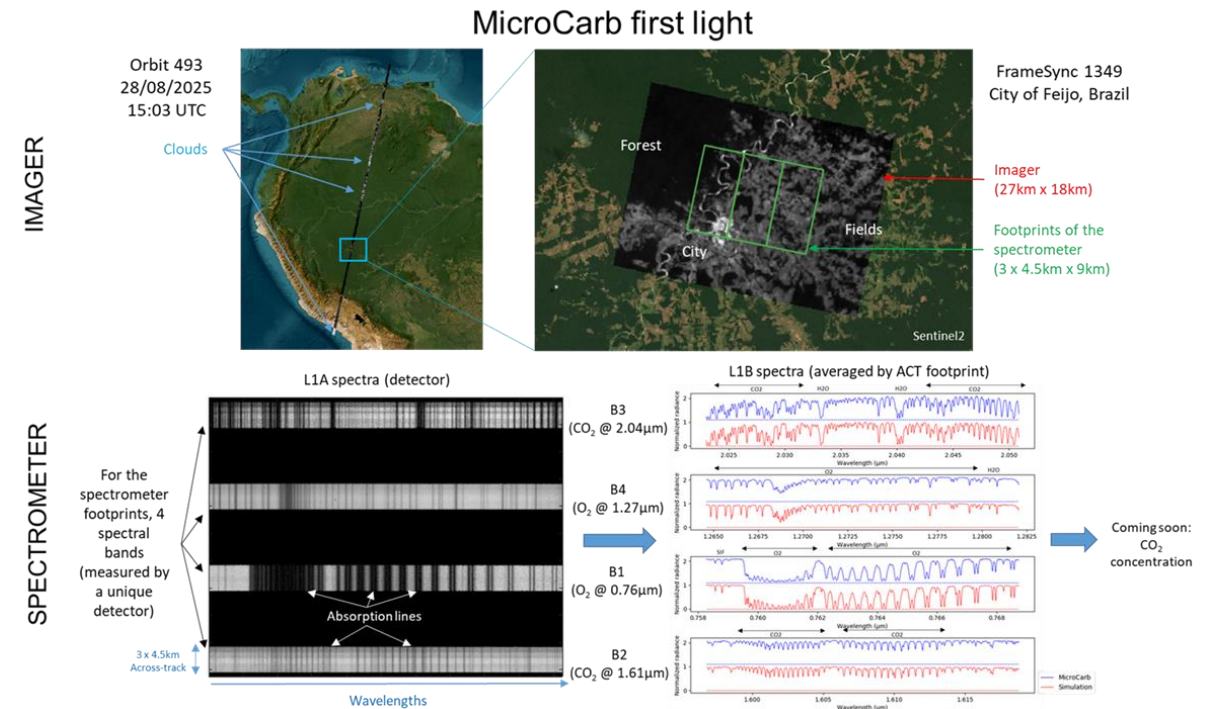
The MicroCarb satellite will map sources and sinks of carbon dioxide (CO₂)- the most important greenhouse gas – on a global scale.

MicroCarb Launched



Following the successful July 25th launch of MicroCarb, a first observation was acquired over the Amazon on August 28th. This region is of great interest for the mission due to its role in the carbon cycle and to the very low density of ground-based measurements. It is also a complex region to observe because of its dark landscapes, frequent cloud cover, and the South Atlantic Magnetic Anomaly (cosmic particle flux).

The imager made it possible to identify cloud-free areas in the equatorial forest. A city surrounded by forest and agricultural areas can be seen. The spectrometer disperses the reflected light in four spectral bands. Absorption lines due to carbon dioxide and oxygen can be distinguished, which will allow us to estimate the CO₂ concentration.



Biomass Launched



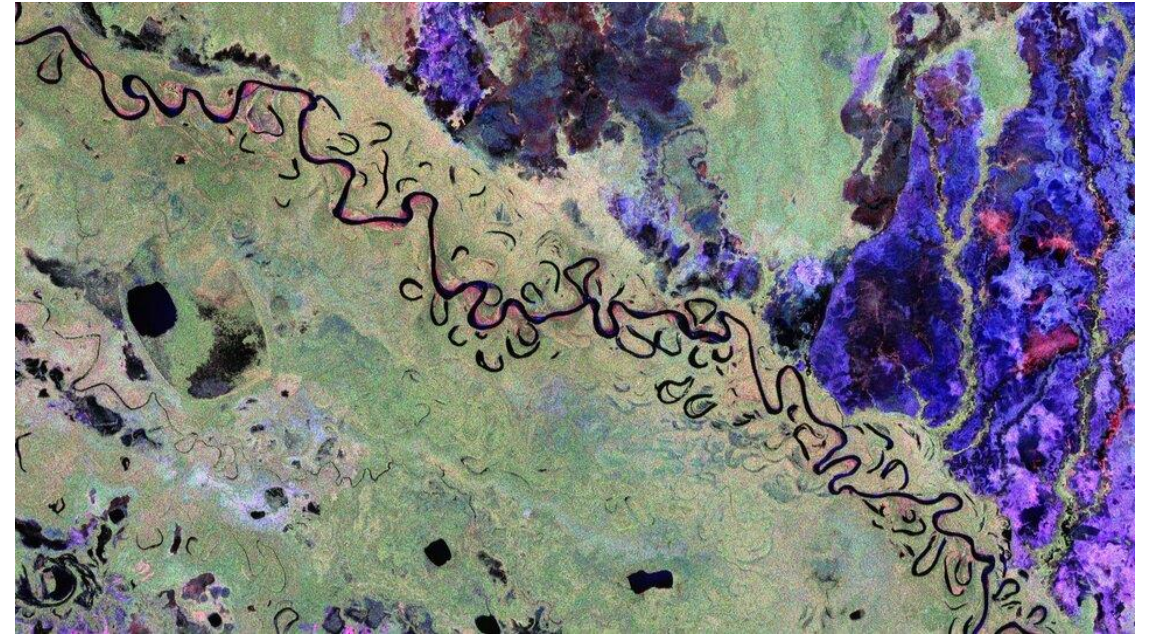
Launched: April 29th 2025

Dr Paul Bate, CEO of the UK Space Agency, said:

“The Biomass satellite represents a major leap forward in our ability to understand Earth’s carbon cycle. By mapping the world’s forests from space in unprecedented detail, it will provide critical insights into how our planet is responding to climate change — helping scientists, policymakers, and conservationists take informed action.

We’re proud of the leading role the UK has played in this important mission.”

As the MicroCarb and Biomass missions settle into life into orbit, their instruments and systems are still being calibrated, meaning the first data cannot yet be used, but the images do show that they are well on track to achieving their goals.



Bolivian forest and landscape from Biomass. Credit: ESA

WIVERN – 11th ESA Earth Explorer



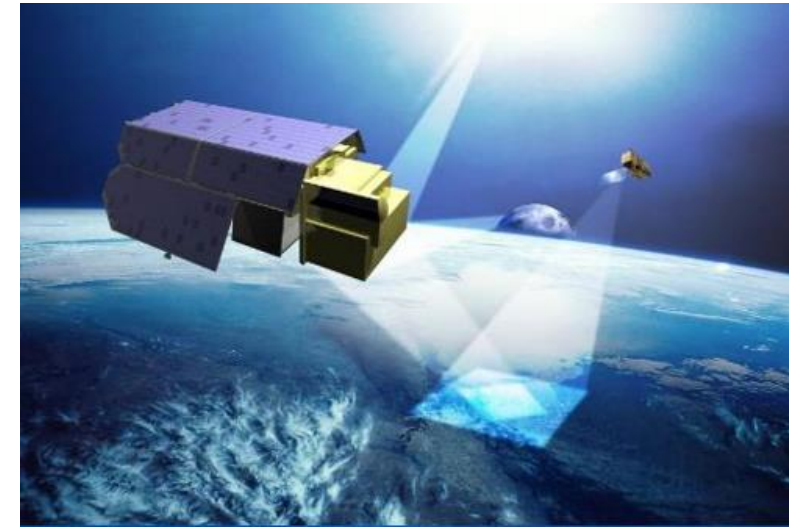
Fantastic news that the European Space Agency has officially chosen WIVERN – Wind Velocity Radar Nephoscope – as its next Earth Explorer mission!

Developed in the UK, WIVERN will be the first satellite to measure wind inside clouds, helping improve forecasts for storms and flooding worldwide.

Congratulations to Professor Anthony Illingworth at the University of Reading, who becomes the only scientist to lead two ESA Earth Explorer missions – a major achievement for UK science and Earth Observation.



- Due to affordability constraints within the current spending review, the UK has made the difficult decision to discontinue funding for TRUTHS. This is not a reflection on the value of the TRUTHS mission
- TRUTHS is recognised as an international mission; this is reflected by the progress made at the Preliminary Design Review which proves the mission is viable, and the positive feedback the mission received at the Living Planet Symposium
- The TRUTHS decision was not taken in isolation and reflects broader considerations as the UK prepares for CMin25; however, we are unable to comment on any further impacts across the wider UKSA portfolio at this time
- In the current context, against a challenging fiscal environment, the UK government is taking clear decisions to prioritise projects with the highest growth and national security. Space has become a bigger strategic priority. The UK increased funding by 8% in 2025/26 compared with 2024/25, enabling it to develop the capabilities needed to keep the country secure. The UK is choosing to prioritise security and commercially focussed programmes, which benefit all of its partners
- The UK remains a committed member of the European Space Agency, and recognises the support it has had from ESA and other member states to deliver TRUTHS so far.



DSIT EO Downstream strategy in development.

- Draft priorities:

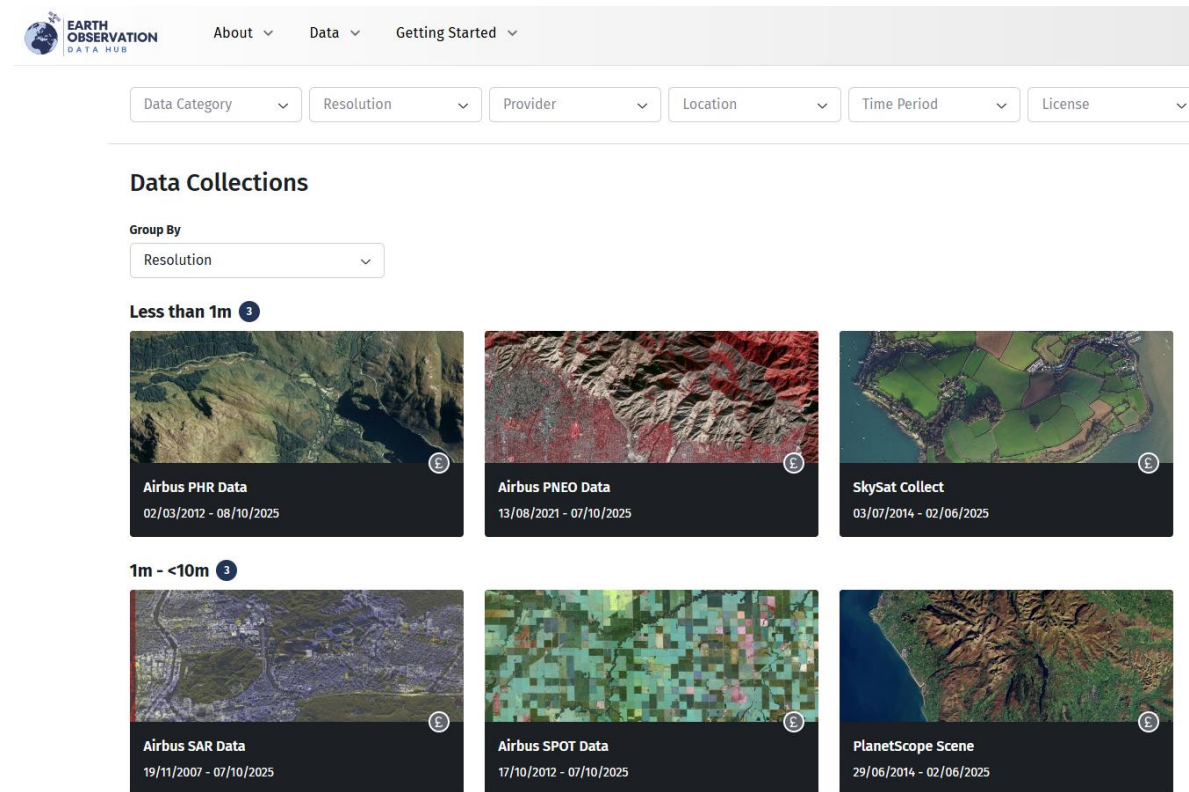
- Increased efficiency and strengthened policy and delivery decision making in the public sector through improved remote sensing data access for public sector
 - Greater innovation and growth through improved remote sensing data access for industry and academia
 - Increased uptake and utilisation of remote sensing data through access to reliable, good quality, trustworthy and reproducible and derived products
 - Support the UK's space-derived intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities
- Draft, including priority activities, will be discussed with new Ministers October 2025
 - Forthcoming EO Data Capability Study commissioned by UKSA (Q1 2026).



Department for
Science, Innovation,
& Technology

<https://eodatahub.org.uk/>

- Phase 2 development ongoing to March 2026 via NCEO/NERC. Will deliver public sector use-cases; initial business-facing service; onboard commercial providers; streamlined licensing
- Part of Architecture and Strategy aims: Supports HMG growth priorities, demonstrates wider value of EO data, and informs future Spending Review decisions
- Wider stakeholder engagement via Satellite Applications Catapult, targeting potential users, pilots, and understanding potential use-cases
- Onboarding of select new users by end of October.



Thank you



Department for
Science, Innovation,
& Technology



**National Centre for
Earth Observation**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL