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Exploiting Open Environmental Data using Linked Data and Cloud Computing: the MELODIES project

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The European Open Data Strategy establishes important new principles that ensure that European public sector data will be released at no cost (or marginal cost), in machine-readable, commonly-understood formats, and with liberal licences enabling wide reuse. These data encompass both scientific data about the environment (from Earth Observation and other fields) and other public sector information, including diverse topics such as demographics, health and crime. Many open geospatial datasets (e.g. land use) are already available through the INSPIRE directive and made available through infrastructures such as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). The intention of the Open Data Strategy is to stimulate the growth of research and value-adding services that build upon these data streams; however, the potential value inherent in open data, and the benefits that can be gained by combining previously-disparate sources of information are only just starting to become understood. The MELODIES project (Maximising the Exploitation of Linked Open Data In Enterprise and Science) is developing eight innovative and sustainable services, based upon Open Data, for users in research, government, industry and the general public in a broad range of societal and environmental benefit areas.

MELODIES (http://melodiesproject.eu) is a European FP7 project that is coordinated by the University of Reading and has sixteen partners (including nine SMEs) from eight European countries. It started in November 2013 and will run for three years. The project is therefore in its early stages and therefore we will value the opportunity that this workshop affords to present our plans and interact with the wider Linked Geospatial Data community.

The project is developing eight new services[1] covering a range of domains including agriculture, urban ecosystems, land use management, marine information, desertification, crisis management and hydrology. These services will combine Earth Observation data with other open data sources to produce new information for the benefit of scientists, industry, government decision-makers, public service providers and citizens. The long-term sustainability of the services will be assessed critically throughout the project from a number of angles (technical, political and economic), in order to ensure that the full benefits of the MELODIES project are realised in the long term. The priority of the project, therefore, is to demonstrate that releasing data openly leads to concrete commercial and scientific benefits, and can stimulate the production of new applications and viable services.

[1] http://www.melodiesproject.eu/services.html