



Double Take!

COSMO-SkyMed radar imagery of London from Telespazio (left) and DMC3/TripleSat 1-metre optical image of Athens from Earth-i (right)

Two UK-based businesses have joined forces to offer customers a wider choice of satellite-acquired Earth Observation products and services. GeoConnexion met with Peter Young, CEO of Telespazio-VEGA UK, and Richard Blain, CEO of Earth-i, to explore the bigger picture

GeoConnexion (GEO): You have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding under which your specialised products and services will be offered to each other's customers as and when needed. So what does this reciprocal arrangement cover in practice?

Peter Young (PY): It offers the best of both worlds in giving customers, particularly those in the UK, single-point access to Telespazio's COSMO-SkyMed SAR data, Earth-i's DMC3/TripleSat optical data, and associated services. Collectively, and through international partners, that data is acquired by seven highly advanced and complementary EO satellites, adding-up to multiple imaging and revisit opportunities each day.

I might also mention that the UK Space Agency negotiated a deal two years ago with the Italian Space Agency to site a COSMO ground station at the Satellite Applications Catapult in Harwell. While the Catapult has the operational and R&D rights to the download facility through its CORSAIR programme¹, Telespazio-VEGA UK is able to exploit its commercial potential and make SAR data available to its own and to Earth-i's British customers in near real-time.

Richard Blain (RB): From Earth-i's perspective, the partnership with Telespazio-VEGA is the first in which we aim to leverage all the skills, assets and innovations that exist in the UK in order to provide better services and information to our customers. Our access to data from the three satellites of the DMC3/TripleSat constellation with its 1m panchromatic and 4m multispectral sensors gives us global coverage and a daily revisit capability, even at the Equator. Combining this with radar data from Telespazio-VEGA allows us to provide a more complex and comprehensive range of products to customers and, of course, vice versa.

I would add that the terms of the agreement are not tied to any one product or service, thereby give future scope for broad and complementary collaboration between the two companies

GEO: Isn't the deal somewhat one-sided in that Telespazio-VEGA UK



Richard Blain (left) and Peter Young exchange the MoU (Photo: GeoConnexion)

has been around for a good number of years and is part of a big global player, while Earth-i is a relatively new and smaller start-up business that is not part of a larger corporate entity?

PY: Despite the fact that we are part of Leonardo-Finmeccanica and, ultimately, Thales, we are quite a specialist player in the UK, so the agreement with Earth-i is a good 'fit' in that respect.

RB: Admittedly, we are a relatively new business, but thanks to our broad range of customers and particular expertise in the defence and energy sectors, this new ability to acquire and process COSMO-SkyMed radar data adds a powerful new string to our bow. It also gives both companies the opportunity to collaborate in certain sectors where each company has respective strengths.

GEO: Sample imagery from the DMC3/TripleSat constellation was made available by Earth-i at the end of last year, with the intention of ramping-up commercial delivery thereafter. What has happened since then?

