EEA starts GIO land monitoring service implementation

May 2012

Having a period of execution from 25 May 2011 to 31 December 2014, the tasks delegated to EEA under the agreement relate to the coordination of the technical implementation of the pan-European continental component and the local component with a focus on so called hotspots (e.g. urban areas, riparian zones). Tasks also include dissemination, archiving and cataloguing of the information and products generated by GIO land components.

The land monitoring service builds on the successful experience of EEA and Eionet with the GMES land precursor services 2006, especially Image 2006, the Corine Land Cover Change layer CLCC2000-2006, and the first thematic high resolution layer on imperviousness, which provides an indicator for the level of anthropogenic sealing of soils.

The pan-European component consists of two major actions: the production of five high resolution thematic layers (HRLs) on land cover characteristics (imperviousness, forest areas, agricultural areas: grasslands, wetlands and small water bodies); and an update of Corine land cover products to the reference year 2012. The local component consists of supporting the EC with the definition of a local component with a focus on biodiversity. For the GIO land time frame (2011-2013) the riparian zones have been chosen as hotspots (i.e. where green -vegetation- and blue –water- infrastructures meet).

The first major milestone reached for the implementation of the pan-European component is the signature of framework contracts with six consortia that will produce the HRLs. Cooperation with the EEA member and cooperating countries is planned for the verification, enhancement and dissemination of HRLs through grant agreements. After some months of further fine-tuning terms and conditions with the EC, the EEA is now about to sign the first series of grant agreements. The consortia from their side have started activities in a so-called streamlining phase, which is essential in order to ensure homogeneous results throughout the EEA39 coverage.