



Establishing the European Geological Surveys Research Area to deliver a Geological Service for Europe (GeoERA)

WHAT

The GeoERA programme is put forward by 45 national and regional Geological Survey Organisations (GSO) in Europe. Its overall goal is to integrate the GSO's information and knowledge on subsurface energy, water and raw material resources, to support sustainable use of the subsurface in addressing Europe's grand challenges. The GeoERA consortium will organise and co-fund, together with the European Commission, a joint call for transnational research projects that address the development of 1) interoperable, pan-European data and information services on the distribution of geo-energy, groundwater and raw material resources; 2) common assessment frameworks and methodologies supporting better understanding and management of the water-energy-raw materials nexus and potential impacts and risks of subsurface use; 3) knowledge and services aimed at European, national and regional policy makers, industry and other stakeholders to support a more integrated and efficient management and more responsible and publicly accepted exploitation and use of the subsurface.

GeoERA will also include forward looking activities, including the creation of opportunities for future collaborative research and the feasibility assessment of an Article 185 initiative in Applied Geoscience as a follow-up to the GeoERA ERA-NET, building towards the ultimate goal of delivering a sustainable Geological Service for Europe.

The GeoERA joint call for proposals will address the specific challenges of (1) Geo-energy, (2) Groundwater and (3) Raw Materials, as well as (4) the development of a common "Information Platform" as a cross-cutting activity. The latter will provide the means to host, maintain and disseminate harmonised and interoperable data and information services developed in the other three topics, thereby ensuring coherence, reliability and sustainability of the projects' results.

WHY

The European Union is facing a number of grand challenges. The need to stimulate economic growth and recovery while ensuring common welfare and a healthy environment to all its citizens increasingly puts pressure on the availability and exploitation of natural resources, including geo-energy, raw materials and groundwater. In this framework, there is an urgent need for harmonised and integrated subsurface information and knowledge that supports sustainable use and integrated management of subsurface resources and services. National and regional Geological Survey Organisations are mandated by their governments to provide unbiased information on the structure and properties of the subsurface, and to make this publicly available. But over many decades, each GSO has developed its own workflows, datasets and geological framework models that differ from country to country. These models and workflows are not always compatible, thereby hampering a harmonised pan-European assessment of resources.

Over recent years GSOs have made important steps towards a more coordinated approach, both through EC-funded projects, and through collaboration within EuroGeoSurveys (EGS)¹. GeoERA, initiated as part of the EGS Strategy "Towards a Geological Service for Europe", will address the above challenges by setting up a research programme under which the individual national and regional mandates are integrated with the objective to develop a common geological framework and methodology for assessing the distribution of geo-energy, groundwater and mineral resources as well as the potential consequences of their exploitation.

¹ EuroGeoSurveys (EGS), The Geological Surveys of Europe (www.eurogeosurveys.org), is a not-for-profit organisation representing 37 National Geological Surveys and some regional Surveys in Europe, an overall workforce of several thousand experts.



WHO

The consortium consists of 45 partner organisations, both national and regional GSOs, qualifying as programme managers and/or owners, from 31 countries. The consortium is coordinated by TNO, the Netherlands. (<http://geoera.eu/partners-page/>)

WHERE/WHEN

GeoERA will be launched on the 17th-18th January, 2017, at the Geological Survey of the Netherlands, TNO (Princetonlaan 6, Utrecht, The Netherlands).

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