

Our Common Space Principles — Version 2

Preamble

Common Space exists to make Earth observation data, analysis, and derived products available to those who need them most — humanitarian actors, affected communities, civil society, and researchers worldwide — so that no person or community is left without the evidence, protection, or opportunity that comes from equitable access to space-based knowledge of our planet.

These Principles are grounded in, and should be read alongside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹, international human rights & humanitarian law, the Outer Space Treaty and related instruments of international space law, and established humanitarian and data-responsibility frameworks such as the Signal Code, the Locus Charter, and the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.

1. Human Dignity and Human Rights at the Core

Common Space commits to ensuring that all satellite operations, data practices, and partnerships uphold the inherent dignity, rights, freedom, and good of all people by advancing the humanitarian imperative of doing no harm². Our imagery, data, and derived products must never be used in ways that violate human rights or contribute to profiteering, corruption, discrimination, repression, violence in any form, or armed conflict.

2. Radical Openness

Common Space aims to practice “radical openness” and inclusion, making our data as accessible as possible to communities and individuals in harm’s way or at risk, in order to realise the greatest benefit to humanity and the planet. We commit to removing or reducing, to the greatest extent possible, the legal, financial, and technical barriers so that anyone, anywhere, can access and use our imagery.

3. Community-Informed Governance and Shared Authority

The mission is governed through inclusive, global, multi-stakeholder structures that equitably distribute and decentralise decision-making processes. Humanitarian practitioners, civil society, environmentalists, academia, technical

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

² This principle draws from the UDHR and the Signal Code

experts, affected communities, and any citizen can participate in shaping policies, tasking priorities, and oversight³.

4. Do No Harm Through Responsible Use and Safeguards

Common Space takes an ethics-by-design approach and embeds a duty of care, safety, and transparency across all its operations. Ethical use policies, tiered access, user vetting, and rapid-response mechanisms will be positioned to ensure that imagery is not used to cause harm — whether through deliberate misuse or through unintended harm caused by well-intentioned but insufficiently informed users⁴. Consistent with Principle 2, these safeguards apply to access pathways, attribution requirements, and release timing; they do not restrict the openness of the underlying data license.

5. Independence From National or Geopolitical Influence

The organisation maintains operational and governance independence from national or geopolitical interests to the maximum extent possible under applicable law, ensuring that tasking, access, and data policies remain aligned with humanitarian needs and principles — humanity, independence, impartiality, and neutrality — rather than state or corporate interests. Common Space will continue to comply with the legal and regulatory obligations of its national licensing authority, while maintaining transparent governance safeguards against undue political pressure.

6. Equity, Access, Collective Benefit and Capacity Strengthening

Common Space prioritises broad, equitable, and transparent access to high-resolution imagery to support its humanitarian mission, especially for impacted individuals/or communities, and societies that have historically not benefited from Earth observation capabilities. Open access models will balance openness with safeguards, ensuring that benefits flow to those who need them most — particularly at the community and local level — supporting capacity strengthening and the equal and fair sharing of positive impacts. It is our endeavour to ensure that no citizen of this Earth is left deprived or denied access to the science, intelligence, evidence, and records that emanate from our EO imagery and data; our aim is to empower all such individuals and communities across Earth.

³UNOOSA principle of benefiting all countries.

⁴Signal Code, Locus Charter, and CARE

7. Stewardship of Space, Data, and the Environment

Common Space acts as a responsible steward of orbital space, Earth's environment, and all the species that inhabit it, and of the data it generates. This includes responsible satellite operations, minimising space debris, supporting environmental protection, and ensuring long-term sustainability — of the orbital environment, of the mission itself, and of continued data availability.

8. Transparency as Foundational to Governance

Common Space treats transparency as a foundational requirement, not a communications tactic. Policies, tasking criteria, access decisions, and governance processes are openly documented and publicly accessible. Transparency also includes traceability of data provenance and analytical methods, and the decision pathways behind them, so that evidence can be independently verified — a safeguard that matters increasingly given the risk of manipulated satellite data and misleading analytics.

9. Technical Excellence Through Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable Data (FAIR)

Common Space ensures that its data products meet high standards of findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability⁵. Metadata, identifiers, documentation, and open standards will be adopted to support open scientific, humanitarian, and civic use, including clear attribution of data sources to support reproducibility and transparency. Common Space commits to work and engage with the broader international EO technical community to ensure transparency, interoperability, and data access for public good.

10. Partnership-Driven Impact and Shared Responsibility

This mission is built collaboratively with humanitarians, researchers, journalists, civil society, academia, Indigenous organisations, volunteer mapping and citizen-science communities, open geospatial data infrastructure organisations, and private-sector partners. These organisations work in partnership with Common Space and contribute to system design, case studies, policy studies, and governance implementation. Common Space is committed to developing and co-developing EO missions guided by our Goals to share the positive impact

⁵See the FAIR Principles: <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

of the data for individuals, communities, and users globally, to promote human rights, dignity, and freedom for all.