A QA4EO Workshop on Providing Harmonised Quality Information in Earth Observation Data by 2015, chaired by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and hosted by RAL Space, was held from 18 – 20 October 2011 in the UK.

The Quality Assurance Framework for Earth Observation (QA4EO)

Current Objectives:

• Establish a dedicated committee / working group within the GEO structure to be the mechanism to take QA4EO forwards and seek implementation throughout GEOSS. Provide input into GEO-VIII.

• Prepare an implementation plan for GEO Plenary 2012 to officially seek GEO adoption and implementation of QA4EO throughout GEOSS.

• Embed QA4EO into the workings of the SBAs by establishing, and working on, links from QA4EO into specific GEO SBA tasks.

• Elevate cross-cutting activities of QA4EO developed within CEOS to the GEO level; e.g., CEOS is developing key QA4EO examples using Forest Carbon Tracking, Atmospheric Composition, and Global Digital Elevation Models.

• Promote QA4EO at GEO-level workshops (capacity building, etc.) to stakeholders and as a way to assess progress made in targeted areas.

Essential Principle:

Data and derived products shall have associated with them an indicator of their quality to enable users to assess its suitability for their application - “fitness for purpose”

Quality Indicators (QIs) should be ascribed to data and products. A QI should provide sufficient information to allow all users to readily evaluate its “fitness for purpose”.

QIs need to be based on a documented and quantifiable assessment of evidence demonstrating the level of traceability to internationally agreed (where possible SI) reference standards.