

SPA

Support to Precursor SSA Services

TOWARDS SAFER NAVIGATION IN SPACE

Thousands of objects orbit Earth; above us operational and old satellites mingle. The SPA project takes on a study of orbit tracking, preparing the way for a future European system for enhanced space situational awareness (SSA).

Independent access to space is an integral part of Europe's space policy. SSA is an important element in securing such access. This concept refers to the knowledge of the space environment and the location and function of space objects, including the positioning of operational satellites, space debris, near Earth objects and space weather. All of these elements represent hazards that European satellites have to avoid when entering space and when positioning in orbit. Indeed, with an increasing number of satellites and space debris circling Earth, reliable information on the positioning of such objects is paramount to avoid collisions in space.

The SPA project undertakes a study into the possible functioning of an operational European system for SSA. Undertaken by the European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC), which supports the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU, the SPA study benefits from the existing expertise that the EUSC possesses in handling, analysing and disseminating data and derived products within the highest security standards. Through the SPA study, the EUSC is set to enhance the technical definition of SSA and to participate in the validation of critical precursor SSA services, such as satellite conjunction warnings, satellite over-flight alerts and space debris re-entry prediction, by hosting an SSA prototype system to be developed by ESA.



JUAN LUIS VALERO
IS PROJECT COORDINATOR



Bee-Hive-6_H © SPA

The SPA project studies the tracking of space objects, preparing the way for a European system for space situational awareness (SSA).

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What do you want to achieve with this project?

The SPA project will contribute to the implementation of the European Space Policy by backing the development of a European capability for the monitoring and surveillance of its space infrastructure and of space debris, initially based on existing national and European assets.

Why is this project important for Europe?

The EU and its Member States, as owners of space assets and future potential owners of the SSA system, will benefit from the experience of operating pre-operational SSA services, providing a smooth transition towards an operational implementation of a European SSA capability.

How does your work benefit European citizens?

Space assets are essential for the activities of modern societies and their proper protection translates into important economic savings for European citizens as well as the ability to have critical space services, including those related to European external operations.

SPA

Support to Precursor SSA Services



LIST OF PARTNERS

- European Union Satellite Centre, Spain

COORDINATOR

European Union Satellite Centre, Spain

CONTACT

Juan-Luis VALERO

Tel: 34 91 6786042

E-mail: j.valero@eusc.europa.eu

PROJECT INFORMATION

Support to Precursor SSA Services (SPA)

Contract no: 262930

Starting date: 01/03/11

Duration: 18 months

EU Contribution: € 500.000

Estimated total cost: € 655.910

