Thursday, 9 January, 2014

Malaria is still a big killer in southern Africa, and all available technologies need to be employed effectively to control the mosquitoes that spread it. Earth Observation (EO) techniques, such as remote aircraft and satellite sensing, can be employed to monitor and manage these malaria vectors.

Africa suffered over 90% of the world's 655,000 malaria deaths in 2011, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) report. The international community hopes to substantially reduce the burden of malaria by 2015, and with EU funding, Europe and Africa are working together towards this.

The 'EO in malaria vector control and management' (Malareo) consortium aims to build geographic information systems (GIS) and EO capacities in southern Africa. These capacities will enable better malaria control and will be focused on the high-risk areas of southern Mozambique, eastern Swaziland, and north-eastern South Africa.

The project is developing land cover maps, household and water body maps, potential breeding sites as well as population density distributions. These detailed maps can be used to track mosquitoes so that infection can be prevented or controlled.

An important aspect of Malareo is the bilateral exchange of knowledge and capacity building. The consortium has initiated training courses on GIS, remote sensing and spatial statistical modelling in the region.

The ultimate goal is to set up an EO monitoring unit that will support the activities of national malaria control programmes. In addition, the project results are expected to push the boundaries of malaria research and the application of EO to fight the disease.

See also:
Info-centre [2]

Project:
EO in Malaria Vector Control and Management

Project Acronym:
MALAREO