



D6.6 Sustainability Plan

WP6 – Communication and Dissemination

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Executive Summary

This document covers actions undertaken by the PARSEC consortium in order to ensure the sustainability of the project and the assets created or advanced through it after the end of its duration in December 2021. The actions were mostly performed within the scope of WP6 and task T6.3 Sustainability led by European Association of Remote Sensing Companies (EARSC), the project coordinator. According to the European Commission's definition of the sustainability of the project, "a project is sustainable when it continues to deliver benefits to the project beneficiaries and/or other constituencies for an extended period after the Commission's financial assistance has been terminated." This report outlines the efforts of the consortium partners to achieve this goal.

The sustainability of the project is conceived primarily as the sustainability of the project's assets – elements created or maintained within the scope of the project. Assets identified and considered worthwhile to be sustained include the PARSEC Community, Business Catalysts, the PARSEC brand, the PARSEC User and Technology Talks concept, and communication and dissemination channels & tools. The PARSEC Community, being the crucial asset of the programme, will be the main focus of sustainability actions, as the maintenance of the ecosystem is key for the maintenance of the cross-border and cross-sectoral environment PARSEC created and for the continuity of PARSEC as such. The connections will be maintained through future meetings, events, and further collaboration with the ecosystem. Business Catalysts brought into the project and further developed through it - three Earth Observation (EO)-based platforms - will remain available after the duration of the project: Big Data Toolbox on a commercial basis, In Situ Data Hub as a publicly open service (with the option for commercial exploitation in the future), and eoMALL and eoPAGES under EARSC activities will be available accordingly – eoPAGES for free, and eoMALL under a fee for eligible entities. PARSEC's brand will be used to promote PARSEC success stories, and kept alive for the possibility of re-use in future similar activities, as below. PARSEC User and Technology Talks as a successful format to engage with user communities will continue to be organized by EARSC to facilitate the cross-sectoral interactions. PARSEC communication channels and tools such as social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube), email alerts, and the website will remain active and maintained by Evenflow.

Separately, the sustainability of the project's beneficiaries is considered. PARSEC beneficiaries proved to be active members of the ecosystem even after their participation in the programme. They are further developing the solutions they applied with for the second Open Call and are creating new ones.

And finally, the sustainability of the accelerator and its partners as whole is discussed. Due to successful completion of the acceleration programme, the consortium is highly encouraged and willing to proceed with the continuation of the Accelerator. While alternative sources of funding of the programme (i.e. a new round of acceleration) are sought out, consortium partners provide further support services to the beneficiaries to keep them an active part of the ecosystem and to foster their economic sustainability.

1 Introduction

Challenges

The global crises and the emergencies we are facing not only in recent years, but over the last few decades, are applying increasing pressure on society, and underscore the need to face for powerful and efficient solutions. The transition to more innovative and environmental-friendly solutions is driven by global health emergencies, climate change, food insecurity, pollution and waste, urban expansion, demographic change and many more. To overcome all these obstacles, there is a need to implement new technologies and new methods to be able to operate on a global scale.

Infrastructure

The use of the Earth Observation (EO) data is proven to provide cost-reducing and time-efficient solutions in comparison to the traditional methods used in diverse sectors.¹ The technology provides more accurate measurements and data, allows coverage of larger areas, and provides the same objective information to stakeholders based in different locations. To facilitate access to such information, a vast infrastructure has been created to provide European citizens and businesses with data and information about Earth. The European Commission's Copernicus programme developed with the support of European Space Agency, delivers more than 12TB² of data daily which can be processed, analysed and incorporated into new solutions making the traditional methods more cost- and time-effective. The programme not only provides the users with raw data, but also with several services targeting six key domains – Atmosphere, Marine, Land, Climate Change, Security, Emergency, ready to be implemented into other solutions. The tremendous amount of information and data are available and updated daily, ready to be used. The challenge is to make entrepreneurs aware of the opportunity and encourage them to build new EO-based solutions.

Regulations

The need for innovation in the key global and European sectors has been strengthened by recent policies. Due to the European Union's (EU) commitment to implementing the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, several strategic documents imposed changes on sectors changes which demand new, game-changing solutions. The most impactful set of regulations are European Green Deal, which focuses on making the EU's economy sustainable, the "Fit for 55" package on reducing the carbon emissions, and Common Agriculture Policy reform which will impact the traditional agriculture sector. The documents mentioned are just a few examples of regulations which encourage the use of new environment-friendly solutions, such as those powered by Earth Observation and publicly available Copernicus data. The implementation of the policies and the introduction of cutting-edge solutions can contribute to the strengthening of European resilience and self-sufficiency.

PARSEC

In response to the global challenges outlined above, as well as the needs expressed in the various regulations, the PARSEC Accelerator launched its activities within the Horizon 2020 programme in 2019. The PARSEC Accelerator started with the ambitious plan of fuelling the innovation of European

¹ Sentinel Benefits Studies <https://earsc.org/sebs/about/>

² <https://www.copernicus.eu/en/access-data>

SMEs with EO capabilities within three key sectors, which need to develop and innovate significantly in the upcoming decades – Food, Energy, and Environment. To achieve that, PARSEC launched two open calls to which innovative entrepreneurs, researchers, start-ups, and SMEs applied to work on their ideas. Huge interest in the applications for the 1st Open Call (more than 340 applications) confirmed that the innovation potential in the selected sectors with the use of EO is high. The so-called #100PARSEC – referring to the 100 SMEs selected in the first round of peer-2-peer evaluation, got accepted into the acceleration programme and started working on the development of their solutions. The key element of the support given to the companies, apart from the seed capital they received, was the creation of international ecosystems facilitating the interactions between stakeholders and the innovation flow between them, applying co-design principles, and guaranteeing that the solution developed would be suitable to meet the end users' needs. Companies could interact directly with their potential end users through communities created and integrated, as well as with entities from the focus sectors and EO experts. For the 2nd Open Call, 60 cross-border and/or cross-sectoral teams applied with their early-stage solutions. Such a high number of newly proposed solutions also confirms how beneficial it was for the companies to be a part of such a thriving ecosystem, giving them a space to create new connections. #15PARSEC – the 15 best rated consortia were selected to be supported for a year to launch their products onto the market by the end of the project.

Support services

Beneficiaries of the Accelerator not only received financial funding, but also obtained training in diverse subjects which were identified as crucial for the company development (*e.g.*, legal aspects, Intellectual Property Protection rules, digital marketing, business development), technical support from EO experts, and access to EO tools facilitating the access to and preprocessing of data. Above all, the beneficiaries emphasized that being an integral part of the cross-border and cross-sectoral PARSEC Ecosystem was the biggest added value. Therefore, to make sure the efforts and the impact of the project continues beyond its 32 months of duration, this sustainability plan has been created.

Sustainability

This Sustainability Plan documents the aims and efforts which can ensure long lasting results and benefits of the project after the end of the EU-funded project phase. Numerous actions were undertaken during the project duration to stimulate the potential for the sustainability, and the following sections summarize them, as well as enumerate the assets created within the scope of PARSEC which can be considered as valuable for the ecosystem and therefore, to be sustained.

2 Stakeholders in PARSEC's sustainability

The Sustainability Plan considers the following stakeholders:

- **Consortium partners:** European Association of Remote Sensing Companies, Biosense Institute, Asociacion Valenciana de Empresas del Sector de la Energia, bwcon GmbH, rasdaman GmbH, Geomatrix UAB, Draxis Environmental SA, Eversis Sp. z o.o., Evenflow.
- **Consortium beneficiaries:** 100 companies benefiting from the first Open Call, 15 consortia composed of 33 companies benefiting from the second Open Call.
- **European Commission:** as the provider of the funds for the project duration
- **Broader ecosystem:** all the stakeholders involved in the creation of the programme, through participation in the trainings, provision of the trainings, investors, potential end users, applicants for both calls, etc.

3 PARSEC assets

The PARSEC consortium is composed of three cluster organisations, a research institute, and five SMEs; each of the partners bringing their own assets and knowledge to the project. The background IP was regulated in the Grant Agreement of the project, while the newly created asset ownership after the project and the continuation of using it is covered in this section.

3.1 PARSEC Community

The cross-border and cross-sectoral spirit of the programme, focused around creation of an international ecosystem of diverse stakeholders, including SMEs, start-ups, researchers, and individuals as beneficiaries of the Accelerator, as well as partners, trainers, mentors, coaches providing the trainings, other projects and programmes spreading their expertise, investors, and clusters broadening the network and bringing it to almost 1,000 entities, can be seen as the most valuable asset of PARSEC Accelerator. The network made it possible to bring together stakeholders from Food, Energy, Environment, and the Earth Observation (EO) sector to create PARSEC consortia, help them in the development of their solutions, expose them to investors, put them in touch with end users, and promote them, their solutions, and the uptake of EO as such to the benefit of various sectors.

Sustainability aim: keeping the community alive

A community created around a time-limited activity, such as a European project, is challenging to maintain. Nevertheless, to strengthen the links between involved entities, PARSEC started stimulating a sustainable network since the early stage of the project.

Actions towards sustainability

As the launch of the support services for the 1st Open Call coincided with the announcement of the state of pandemic in 2020, all the actions shifted to an online focus. Apart from planned bootcamps and webinars, **Happy Hours** and **Get Together** meetings were organized to let the companies create more interpersonal connections. At the same time, an online **matchmaking platform** was available for three months, where stakeholders from the ecosystem could create links. The used tool – Brella – was selected as the matchmaking platform because the created connections, and contact details are still available on the platform for the users, regardless of how long after the initial event and creation of the connection. During the 2nd Open Call support services, two Get Together sessions were organized. To make sure the community does not focus only on #15PARSEC, several webinars and meet ups were including also #100PARSEC to reconnect with entities not involved in the second stage of PARSEC. Lastly, the **PARSEC final event – Launchpad to Success** – was crucial to reconnect, especially thanks to interactions in person which were possible.

A broader community of more than 300 subscribers to **PARSEC email alerts** has been kept updated throughout the duration of the project, and invited to join all the open initiatives which the programme launched.

To maintain the community after the project, several actions are planned:

- **Communication channels** - as explained in detail in section 3.5, the PARSEC website and social media channels, the tools to connect with the community will remain active. The PARSEC community in the final months of the project was informed that the channels will remain available to maintain the communication. The most important tool to retain visibility and interest among the ecosystem will be email alerts and social media posts. Evenflow srl

will be in charge of the management of the tools, including also content and updates provided by the consortium partners.

- **Get Together** – to keep the connections alive, as PARSEC managed to do for more than two years, more Get Together meetings are planned in the future. PARSEC consortium partners are organizing their own events which might host such a PARSEC-branded meeting and facilitate the connection of the PARSEC community
- **Partners' projects** – as a part of the sustainability, the consortium agreed to keep PARSEC beneficiaries invited for relevant events and projects, such as AVAENSEN's Greenventory Hub.

3.2 Business Catalysts

The PARSEC acceleration programme in its exceptional focus on the use of EO, provided its beneficiaries with three platforms: Big Data Toolbox, In Situ Data Hub, eoMALL & eoPAGES. These platforms were developed within the scope of PARSEC to make an easy access point to data for EO users and promote their solutions. All the tools were created in consultation with the programme's beneficiaries, to correspond to their needs and to inform them about the capabilities of the platforms, but also with future users in mind.

Sustainability aim: keeping the tools available for existing and new users

Big Data Toolbox allows SMEs to exploit the power of Big EO data towards building added-value services/products. Thus, building on the unique combined experience of Rasdaman GmbH and Geomatrix UAB, PARSEC provides access to OGC standards-based, analysis-ready spatial datacubes that will allow SMEs and application developers to build their own product.

In Situ Data Hub is an active, multi-source repository with automated discovery, retrieval, harmonisation and transformation services. This has been developed by Draxis Environmental SA who carry strong expertise in the deployment of such platforms/hubs.

eoMALL and eoPAGES serve to maximise the customer reach. eoMALL is a unique global platform for the promotion of online EO-based companies, services and success stories. It is currently available for EO businesses in Europe and Canada. eoPAGES showcases companies and their bespoke service offerings.

Actions towards sustainability

All the platforms were created with the **consultation with PARSEC beneficiaries** of both Open Calls to make adjust the offered datasets to their needs. Experts creating all the tools had **calls with beneficiaries** to explore their needs, but also to inform them about the capabilities of the platforms. During the first stage of support services, #100PARSEC attended **webinars presenting each of the tools** and had a chance to discuss directly with the experts. While in the second stage of support services, #15PARSEC participated in the **Business Catalysts Workshop** – a one-day online event dedicated to hands-on trainings and **one-on-one sessions with the experts**. Through these interactions, the grounds for creating a user base, integration of the tools into user workflows, and a market-oriented development of the tools have been established.

To increase the **visibility** of the developed tools, a marketing presentation of which is available on the website, and the slide presenting the tools was always included in all PARSEC promotion presentations.

Throughout the project, consortium partners responsible for the Business Catalysts participated in regular meetings with the project's Innovation Office to discuss internally the development of the

tools and their sustainability. Through this interaction, potential paths have been discussed such as business models or alternative potential users. **Sustainability Sheets** were created for each of the Business Catalysts to outline the ownership, business model, pricing model and all the needed details to guarantee sustainability of the tools.

Big Data Toolbox will remain available and will be further developed with new data sets and new features as a part of rasdaman's offer and a member of EarthServer Datacube Federation. The In Situ Data Hub will remain available for further use and development, crawling new data sources, as a publicly available service provided by Draxis Environmental SA funded either by similar EU or national funded projects or by leasing the use of sophisticated scientific models offered on-demand by the data hub. eoMALL and eoPAGES will remain active and will be further developed and populated under the management of EARSC.

Sustainability aim: maintaining the PARSEC brand

3.3 PARSEC Brand

PARSEC created its unique brand which conveys the freshness and innovation of the Accelerator. Branding elements such as name and key visuals (i.e. logo, icons, colour schemes) are closely linked to other assets such as the community and means of communication. Its value lies qualities and topics associated with PARSEC. The PARSEC identity will remain connected to the acceleration programme, and will be used for further promotion of the added value of the programme and the success stories of the beneficiaries.

Actions towards sustainability

The focus of the PARSEC promotion was digital, therefore the materials and the branded can be easily found online. That concerns PARSEC website, as well as the websites of Business Catalysts which mention PARSEC and the EU funding information. To support the connection between the PARSEC brand and achievements of the programme, during the Launchpad to Success gadgets were given out to the attendees to give them something tangible PARSEC-branded that will be used after the project's duration. All beneficiaries of the second Open Call, #15PARSEC, received a special digital badge to use on their website to promote it as their achievement and to reinforce the visibility and sustainability of PARSEC brand. PARSEC will continue to publish insights and social media posts related to EO-based innovation under its brand. Likewise, community events will be organised using the PARSEC identity.

3.4 PARSEC User and Technology Talks

As one of the tools created to facilitate the interactions between service providers and industrial end users, as well as being validated by the expert in the respective domain, PARSEC organized User and Technology Talks. The online meetings, in a format of a webinar, brought together EO community and targeted sector's community – Food, Energy, and Environment through moderated sessions. Each session included a round table of panellists, discussion on the challenges faced in the sector, presentation of new EO-based solutions targeting the sector, their evaluation, review done by the EO experts and end users.

Sustainability aim: fostering further development of cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration

Bringing together the provider and user side, accompanied by the domain's experts provides both sides with the most important information, such an approach provides the EO innovators with immediate feedback on the suitability of their solution, creates potential links with the end users, and gives exposure to the audience attending the webinar.

Actions towards sustainability

During the project, three sessions were organised – PARSEC User Technology Talk: Food, Energy, and Environment. All of them were promoted among the PARSEC Ecosystem. They gathered more than 100 attendees, and to make the session available for broader audience, they were recorded and are available on PARSEC's YouTube channel. The approach and the topics of the session proved to be of high interest, as the recordings of sessions were viewed more than 350 times. The interest among the community confirms the need for such interactions, therefore, the PARSEC consortium would continue the initiative after the end of the project.

As the idea of the sessions is to put together EO providers and end users from a sector, EARSC will be involved in organization of such events with interested partners (*e.g.*, another energy session organized with AVAENSEN community focusing on a particular value chain in the sector). At least two of such sessions are planned in the following year to interact with sectors crucial for creating or strengthening links with.

3.5 PARSEC Channels

Connected to the PARSEC brand, but mostly important as a means of interaction with and awareness among the ecosystem, PARSEC channels can be identified as a crucial asset. Among the channels we can find: 1) social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube), 2) PARSEC email address and distribution list, 3) website and its dedicated sections.

Sustainability aim: providing tools to maintain the ecosystem and create opportunities for further collaboration

As mentioned in section 3.1 PARSEC Community, the maintenance of the communication channels is crucial for the sustainability of the ecosystem. Therefore, the PARSEC consortium agreed to keep the following channels: 1) social media accounts– Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, 2) email address info@parsec-accelerator.eu and most importantly distribution list to share 3) email alerts, 4) PARSEC website.

Actions towards sustainability

Regarding maintaining the contact with beneficiaries and the subscribers, in the final days of the project, the community will be informed about the completion of the project and will be able to express if they want to remain on the list for email alerts after the end of the project. PARSEC beneficiaries were since the beginning of the collaboration encouraged to share their achievements with the consortium, therefore, they are still encouraged to do so through the channels. That way PARSEC success stories can be still updated through sharing posts and updating relevant content on the website, *e.g.*, related to partners' events relevant for the community.

The PARSEC website on the other hand, not only provides the gateway to information about the programme and its beneficiaries, but also knowledge repositories were created as a part of it – PARSEC Insights and Smart Specialisation. PARSEC Insights gathers information about market and technology trends relevant for the PARSEC ecosystem. The repository of the articles will remain available for the website visitors, and might be updated with the new content if found relevant by consortium partners. As a part of the PARSEC website, the Smart Specialisation section was created, which will be further developed through other projects that partners are involved in. Keeping the website alive will also guarantee a higher visibility of PARSEC beneficiaries, especially thanks to the content published in the final weeks of the project showcasing in a new way the developed solutions. It will thus contribute as well to the sustainability of both, the community and the brand.

The communication channels (social media accounts), email alerts and website will be further managed by Evenflow.

4 Sustainability of PARSEC beneficiaries

Beyond the sustainability of PARSEC and its assets, the overarching goal of PARSEC was to support European SMEs and entrepreneurs and to foster an ecosystem to facilitate cross-border and cross-sectoral collaborations between them. Therefore, the sustainability of the newly created companies, their solutions, and their consortia is also a crucial element of the sustainability of the project.

Sustainability aim: supporting the business success potential of EO-based solutions on the market

Actions towards sustainability

Already the first Open Call of PARSEC contributed to the development of European capabilities and the competitiveness among European SMEs. 31 new companies have been created to join the first stage of the Accelerator. Support given by PARSEC, including the seed capital, increases the chances of the new start-ups staying on the market. Especially that the training provided focused not only on the EO element, but also on the business modelling, marketing, and seeking further funding sources. Based on the experience with #100PARSEC and their feedback, they still remain in touch as a community, which support their business development and facilitates the networking. For the second Open Call, 60 cross-border and/or cross-sectoral teams applied, and only 15 were accepted to work further with PARSEC. As we were informed during one of gatherings with the community, some of the teams proceeded together and are seeking opportunities to develop the solution they applied with for PARSEC Open Call. This confirms that the impact PARSEC made on the ecosystem and European value chains has long-lasting consequences. As planned, more than 35 new solutions were proposed, and 15 were developed within the acceleration programme. Based on the calls with the finalists, almost all of the consortia will proceed working together with the created solution and see the potential to develop more solutions together.

To make sure consortia are strong enough to survive beyond the project duration, PARSEC training was focused on business modelling and mentoring the entities in their collaboration. Without a clear understanding of division of tasks, responsibilities, and in the end, income, the consortia would not be able to proceed successfully. Also, they needed to be prepared for securing follow-up investment allowing them to further develop their solutions. Therefore, it was a big part of PARSEC Investment Readiness Programme under which consortia were developing their business and financial plans, and were preparing their pitches.

As a final push towards sustainability of the teams and to reconnect with them before the project's closure, a Sustainability Workshop was organized in December 2021. The meeting aimed at reconnecting with the community, but also to allow them to share their stories and learn from each other's experiences, explore the funding types and opportunities in 2022, and have an exercise with Investment Readiness Programme mentors to discuss their preparedness for leaving the acceleration programme. The workshop was successful gathering both #15PARSEC and #100PARSEC who left the programme more than a year before. That also proves their willingness to be a part of the ecosystem and long-lasting connection created between the stakeholders.

To allow the companies to further benefit from the training they received, all the materials and the recordings are available accordingly to #100PARSEC and #15PARSEC on Hyperspace platform which was created at the beginning of each of the stages of support services. The platform will remain open and available for beneficiaries after the project end.

The content summarizing the developed solutions, and teams which are proceeding with their products and services is available on [PARSEC website](#).

5 PARSEC as a sustainable accelerator

PARSEC Accelerator as a concept received a great feedback from involved parties (both beneficiaries, externals, and the consortium partners). The scheme of cascade funding and the support for SMEs based on Earth Observation data still has a lot of potential to explore. Especially due to current trends and regulations encouraging innovation in key sectors such as Food, Energy, and Environment. The newly implemented Green Deal or Common Agricultural Policy opens a lot of opportunities for the sectors to benefit from the EO technology. Therefore, the PARSEC consortium is actively seeking ways to continue the programme.

Already during the project lifetime, the consortium organized several meetings to explore current opportunities, such as calls for grants or potential collaboration with private funding. The action will continue in 2022 to find a suitable way to revive the programme. The consortium has scheduled a dedicated meeting directly after the project closure to gather the lessons learned and feedback to improve the programme for the next opportunity.

The connections created, also between consortium partners, will persist and open ways for cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration under the umbrella of other endeavours. The created links will be mostly exploited by clusters in the consortium (AVAESEN, EARSC, bwcon) which on a daily basis need to provide support to the affiliated SMEs, for instance, benefiting from newly created connections with investors. For the involved SMEs, the ecosystem brings potential users, business partners, and clients.

PARSEC support will expand beyond the duration of the project, through the communication, available tools and materials, and the support from the contribution partners. PARSEC beneficiaries due to their work with Earth Observation, can become EARSC members, and some of them have already become that. EARSC also continues the onboarding on the eoMALL and eoPAGES platforms, which will extend to 2022. AVAESEN as a regional cluster creates close links with the entities based in the region, but will also share other initiatives with the community, such as participation in other projects benefiting the beneficiaries, like EU Tech Bridge. Bwcon network will keep the community invited for their annual event – High Tech Summit. Evenflow offers their consultancy services on communication and business sustainability for interested beneficiaries. And the Business Catalysts providers remain available for the users, offering their expertise and support in using the created tools.

6 Conclusions

Since the beginning of the PARSEC Accelerator, actions towards sustainability were undertaken. The consortium organised dedicated meetings to clarify what can be done to ensure the sustainability of the companies and consortia beyond the project duration, and what can be done to maintain the created tools and most importantly, the created community. An Innovation Office was established specifically for ensuring sustainability of the Business Catalysts. The digitalization of the programme, due to global pandemic, made in-person connections more challenging, and for majority of the time impossible. Nevertheless, the consortium successfully made the effort to connect with the relevant stakeholders and provide an offer which will guarantee their long-lasting existence and collaboration. Considering that five months away from official end date of the consortia's contract with PARSEC Accelerator, they were still launching their products, attending promotional events, joining PARSEC Sustainability Workshop and PARSEC Launchpad to Success event, confirms that the created ecosystem will prevail. The created connections, and the established companies are a prove of a long-lasting current and future impact of the PARSEC Accelerator, which can be strengthened through further interactions with the ecosystem and potential creation of a continuation of the PARSEC Accelerator. The potential of EO for various sectors and emerging challenges discovered and the positive impact created by PARSEC in that regard confirms the original ambition of the PARSEC consortium and encourages them to continue their efforts and practise.



Our Partners



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