AN APPROACH TO DETERMINE USER NEEDS FOR REMOTE SENSING IN KEY POLICY AREAS: THE CASE OF THE ALBERTA OIL SANDS in CANADA

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ABSTRACT: Monitoring of the oil sands development has been a topic of broad concern to a number of constituencies ranging from governments, academics, environmental NGOs, industry and regulators. This interest extends far beyond Canada's borders. In general, regulators were not fully aware of the recent developments in remote sensing and the rapidly developing capabilities of the field. At the same time, the knowledge of most remote sensing specialists about the specific information requirements of the regulators was also limited. A workshop was designed to bridge this gap and enhance mutual understanding. With this mutual understanding it was hoped that one could begin to build coherent and comprehensive applications of remote sensing to a major issue of broad interest in Canada and Canadians. The workshop, held February 28 and March 1, 2011 in Edmonton, was even more successful than had been hoped. The workshop is interesting in terms of both the results and the process that was used to lead to these results. The paper will describe the approach to user engagement, which is suitable for other assessments of the role of remote sensing in important policy areas anywhere in the world. The paper focuses on the more technical aspects of the process of how the workshop concept was developed, how participants were selected, how the workshop was organized, and how the final reports were developed.

A similar paper will be presented at the 33rd Canadian Symposium on Remote Sensing. This paper for the ACRS will present more of the results from the remote sensing point of view.