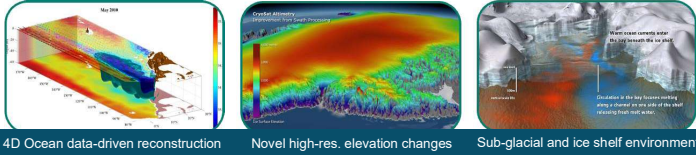# EO-based Digital Twin Components of the Earth System

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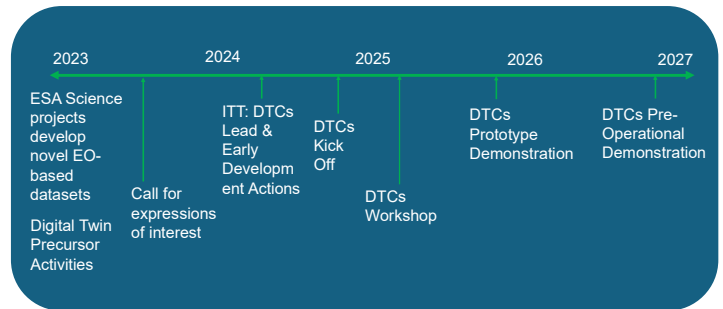
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Introduction

ESA Science cluster activities have developed novel Earth Observation (EO) datasets that characterise many components of the Earth system.

These datasets form the foundation for EO-based digital replicas of the Earth system → EO-based DTCs
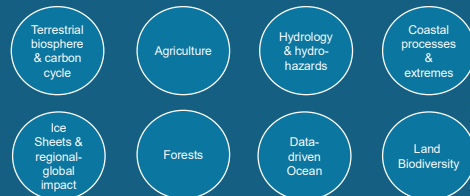

4D Ocean data-driven reconstruction   Novel high-res. elevation changes   Sub-glacial and ice shelf environment

Timeline

2023
ESA Science projects develop novel EO-based datasets

Digital Twin Precursor Activities

Call for expressions of interest

2024
ITT: DTCs Lead & Early Development Actions

DTCs Kick Off

DTCs Workshop

2025

2026
DTCs Prototype Demonstration
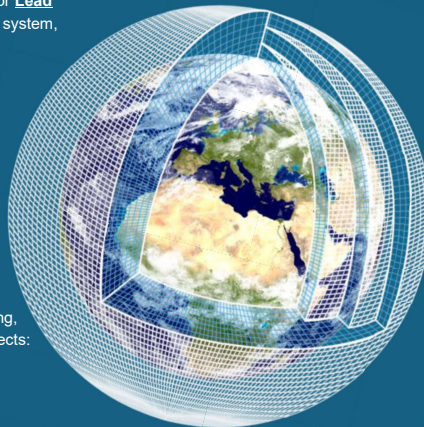
2027
DTCs Pre-Operational Demonstration

DTC Themes

Following a public consultation on the scientific priorities of the European community, 8 Earth system components or Themes were selected for **Lead Development Actions**: Development of end-to-end pre-operational system, maximum price of 1.5MEuro each and 24 months duration.

- Terrestrial biosphere & carbon cycle
- Agriculture
- Hydrology & hydro-hazards
- Coastal processes & extremes
- Ice Sheets & regional-global impact
- Forests
- Data-driven Ocean
- Land Biodiversity

Further themes were selected for **Early Development Actions** to consolidation and advance the themes in terms of community building, concept definition or science/technical aspects. Up to 6 parallel projects: maximum price of 0.5MEuro each and 12 months duration.

- Wildfires
- Geo-Hazards
- Arctic: land & ocean
- Air quality & health
- Transport & infrastructure
- Mountain glaciers
- Solid Earth
- Urban areas & smart cities
- Energy Sector

Functional Elements

Advanced Data and Digital Services:
- enhanced digital analysis and simulation of the Earth system, representing breakthrough in terms of accuracy, holistic understanding, access-to-information, and interactivity.

Multivariate data-driven reconstruction (by advanced Earth Observation data):
- valorise and maximize the use of EO-based data to produce a **4D (space-time) reference multivariate dataset** of high-level products offering an advanced, holistic, and dynamic reconstruction of the target Earth system component.

Scientifically sound processing blocks, simulations & workflows:
- connecting data with state-of-the-art models, geophysical functions, AI and hybrid methods allowing digital simulations and the creation of what-if scenarios.
- Enhanced representation of the Earth system and its processes at **higher spatial and temporal resolution** compatible with the demands for policy making and resources and/or risk management.
- Improved the representation of poorly known processes.

User-driven interactive capabilities, data analytics and visualisation layer

Basic Principles

EO DTCs shall:
- Valorise the capacity and maximize the use of EO data.

- Provide a comprehensive description and scientifically sound representation of the Earth system component including its connections with human activities.

- Follow high scientific and technical standards, ensuring the use of state-of-the-art data, AI, models, and data-driven processing based on thorough and scientifically sound validation and uncertainty characterisation processes.

- Maximise the use of open science and FAIR principles, ensuring datasets and workflows could be further developed and expanded in time by the community.

- Provide advanced scientific support and science-based decision support capabilities, including enhanced simulations and what-if scenarios.

- Be based on a strong community support and developed in view of serving a wide variety of stakeholders including:
  - The scientific community
  - Policymakers, international and national public institutions.
  - Value-added companies/industry
  - Citizens

- Allow interrogation of the DTC system with high levels of interactivity (e.g., through notebooks, interactive dashboards, immersive visualisation) with different levels of access and interoperability to different categories of user.

DTCs shall ensure complementarity with ongoing initiatives and programmes, including other Digital Twin activities related to DestinE and other European (e.g., Digital Twin of the Ocean) or national activities.
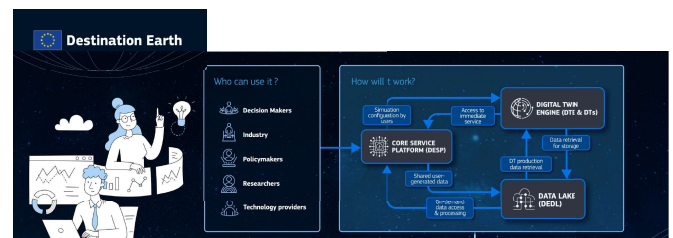
ESA DTCs Community Workshop

ESA will be hosting a workshop for their DTC activities, also open to the wider community.

Details are still to be finalised, but likely: ESA, ESRIN, Frascati, Italy 3rd -5th February 2025