

# MedRIN Annual Meeting 2021

## Summary

The MedRIN Annual Meeting 2021 took place virtually through the ZOOM platform on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2021. Vincent Ambrosia and Garik Gutman opened the meeting on behalf of GOFC-GOLD and NASA respectively. START International's Jon Padgham spoke briefly on START's connection to the GOFC-GOLD program and Clay Oboth spoke briefly about the structure and logistics of the meeting. Diofantos Hadjimitsis and Ioannis Gitas gave an introductory presentation of the MedRIN background and introduced the speakers as they presented. The meeting included 3 invited presentations, 4 presentations from new members, 2 presentations from existing members and 1 presentation highlighting new programmes and activities. The meeting concluded with a short presentation and closing remarks by Petya Campbell, Vincent Ambrosia, Diofantos Hadjimitsis and Ioannis Gitas. At the end of the meeting, a joint MedRIN/SCERIN virtual workshop, slated to take place in June 2021, was also announced.

## Meeting objectives

MedRIN was established after discussions with European, African, Asian, and American colleagues and is a new GOFC-GOLD network focusing on the Mediterranean region. It serves as a link between land-cover/land use change remote sensing scientists and stakeholders in the region.

During the meeting, new members had the opportunity to present on their field(s) of interest. Representatives from the existing members/partners, as well as new members, then had the chance to discuss common interests and current and potential collaborations between interested parties.

One objective of the meeting was to review the potential and limitations of modern techniques and methodologies for land cover and land use mapping in the Mediterranean region, as well as the impact of climate change in terms of environmental sustainability. A second objective was to inform the GOFC-GOLD Mediterranean regional information network on the latest in LCLUC science.

## Summary findings of the presentations

The meeting began with welcoming remarks from MedRIN US Regional Network Lead Vincent Ambrosia and NASA LCLUC Program Manager Dr. Garik Gutman, START International Executive Director Jon Padgham and Administrative Specialist Clay Oboth, and MedRIN In-Country Leads Professors Diofantos Hadjimitsis and Ioannis Gitas.

After the opening remarks, invited presentations were delivered from the following countries: USA (University of Idaho); Greece (Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania); and Lebanon (University of Balamand). After the invited presentations, briefings by new members were presented by representative from Malta (University of Malta); Jordan (iMMAP); Greece (Hellenic Association of Space Industry - HASI); and Italy (CNR). The presentations focused on new technologies and insights on land use and land cover, as well as driving factors and impacts of change. Following the briefings of new members, existing members from Turkey (Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University College of Agriculture) and Israel (Ben Gurion University) delivered presentations on forest cover change and mapping of wildfire scars.

After the members' presentations, Prof. Diofantos Hadjimitsis introduced the EXCELSIOR H2020 Teaming Project and the newly established ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence in Cyprus, and highlighted the needs, opportunities and new challenges for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring of the Environment in the Eastern Mediterranean.

## Key recommendations and next steps for the network

Next steps for the network discussed during the meeting include 1) the registration of MedRIN as a legal entity, 2) the establishment of a cooperation with other networks and organisations in the region, 3) the creation of an inventory of capacities and achievements from the members of the network, in order to seek synergistic collaborations and 4) the establishment of focus groups in order to achieve international scientific collaboration and cooperation in existing and future projects are already in progress. MedRIN coordinators are also working on nominating leaders for each of the defined focus groups (recommendation 4) related to thematic priorities of the network.

The meeting was attended by over 80 participants. Based on the presentations given during the meeting, there are many opportunities for further collaboration between the members of the network, which is under the main priorities of MedRIN. Stakeholders in the region face common challenges which are specific to the Mediterranean region. Mediterranean ecosystems are known to be fire-prone by nature and sensitive to the effects of climate change, thus one of the most important challenges is the increased wildfire risk, as well as the high probability of floods and droughts. This common basis creates favourable conditions for the stakeholders to form consortia and participate in funding schemes, through which they can research and innovate while aiming to overcome common problems in the region. Furthermore, the dynamic of the involvement of NASA in the MedRIN network gives an additional boost and support to the network.

At the end of the meeting it was announced that, after postponing the joint MEDRIN and SCERIN meeting in June 2020 due to COVID, the workshop is now scheduled to take place in June 2021. The joint regional network meeting, which will be co-organised by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in collaboration with the Interbalkan Environment Center and the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas, is planned as a 3-day event as well as a Trans-Atlantic Training on 15-17 June 2021.



The graphic features a purple world map on the left with the text 'Mediterranean Regional Information Network (MedRIN)' overlaid. In the center is the 'START' logo, consisting of three overlapping circles in blue, green, and yellow. To the right is the 'GOFCC-GOLD' logo, which includes three orange cross symbols and the text 'Global Observations of Forest Cover and Land Use Dynamics'. The background is a gradient of yellow and purple. At the bottom right, there are social media icons for Facebook and Twitter, with the handle '@MedRINetwork' below them.

**Mark your calendar for the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2021!**

**What:** MedRIN 2021 Annual meeting (agenda will follow shortly)

**Where:** Online (ZOOM link will be provided)

**When:** 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, 15:00-18:00 EET (13:00-16:00 UTC)

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@MedRINetwork

Figure 1: MedRIN Annual Event 2021 Meeting Invitation

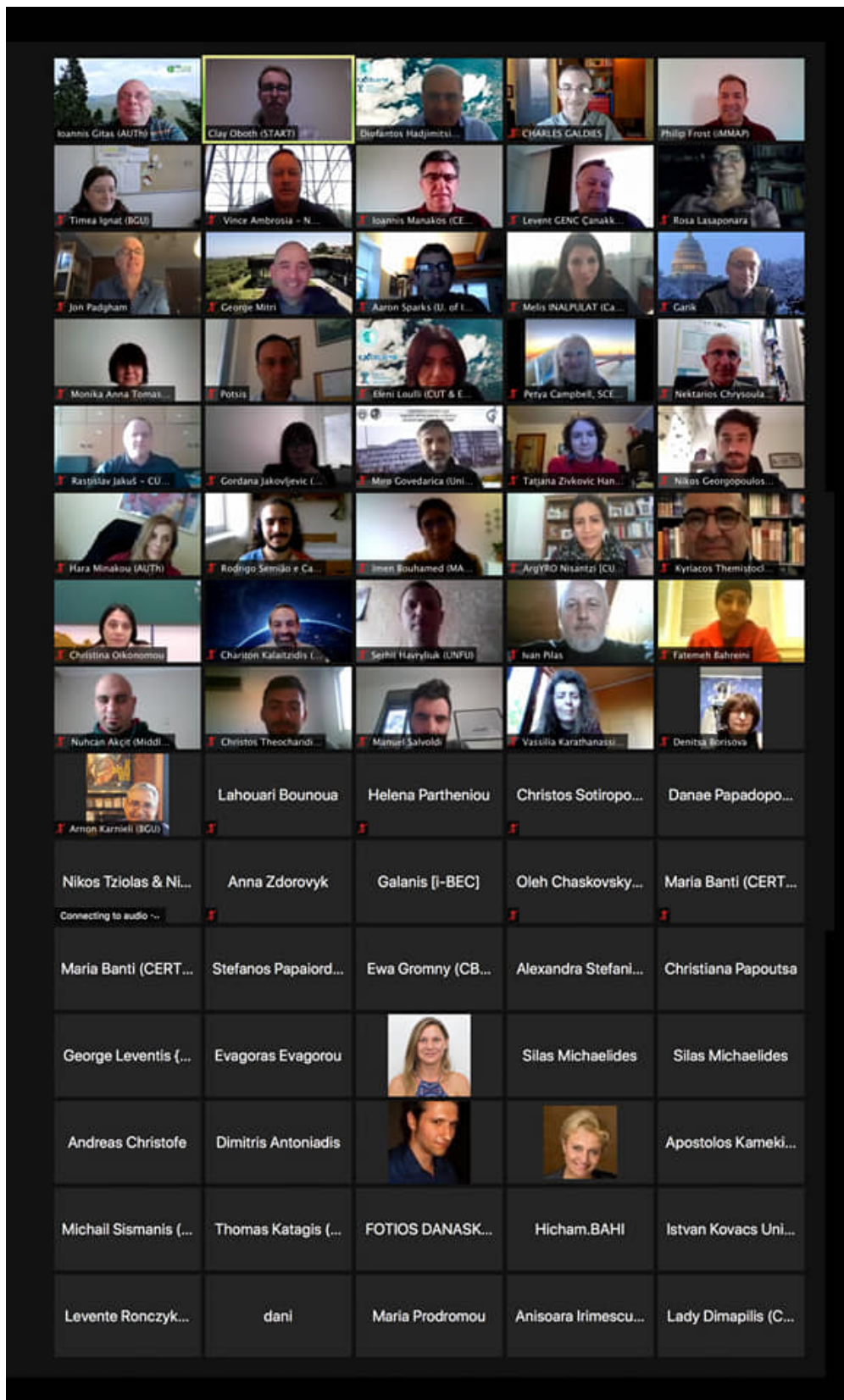


Figure 2 MedRIN Network Family Picture

Annex 1 / Agenda



**Seminar Title:** MEDRIN 2021 Annual Meeting

Link to join: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82082204062>, active ½ hour before the start\*

\*Clay Oboth – [coboth@start.org](mailto:coboth@start.org)\*

\*Questions answered in the QA section\*

Session responsables: Diofantos Hadjimitsis & Ioannis Gitas

Feb 25 2021 (14:00 – 17:00 CET; 15:00 – 18:00 EET)				
<p><b>Opening</b> – (NASA) Vincent Ambrosia and Garik Gutman (10 min each) <b>START</b>; Clay Oboth, Jon Padgham (5 min each) <b>MEDRIN background</b> – Diofantos Hadjimitsis, Ioannis Gitas (10 min both); <b>Introductions</b> – (power point provided in the chat)</p> <p><b>Questions</b> in the Chat – Clay Oboth</p>				
Invited presentations				
Country		Presenter(s)	Title	e-mail
15:30 - 15:40	USA	Aaron Sparks	Understanding the socioeconomic drivers of agricultural land abandonment and associated fire risk in Greece	asparks@uidaho.edu
15:40 - 15:50	Tunisia	Imen Buhamed	Mapping abandoned olive groves using Landsat/Sentinel2 imagery and Google Earth Engine	imen.bouha@gmail.com
15:50 - 16:00	Lebanon	George Mitri	Earth Observation for monitoring land and natural resources in Lebanon	george.mitri@balamand.edu.lb
Briefings by new members				

16:00 - 16:10	Malta	Charles Galdies	Use of Earth Observations for Land-use Dynamics in Malta	charles.galdies@um.edu.mt
16:10 - 16:20	Jordan	Philip Frost	Open Data Cube for the humanitarian sector	pfrost@immap.org
QA, Family picture, 15 minutes break				
Briefings by new members				
16:35 - 16:55	Greece	Athanasios Potsis	Hellenic Space Ecosystems. Past experience and future trends	athanasios.potsis@gmail.com
16:55 - 17:05	Italy	Rosa Lasaponara	Google Earth Engine and Sentinel data for Mapping Burned Areas and Burn Severity: from a local up to a global scale view	rosa.lasaponara@imaa.cnr.it
Briefing by existing members				
17:05 - 17:15	Turkey	Levent Genc	Forest Cover Change in the coastal area of Turkey	leventgc@gmail.com
17:15 - 17:25	Israel	Arnon Karnieli	Mapping Wildfire Scars – NDVI vs. NBR vs. AFRI	karnieli@bgu.ac.il
Highlighting new programs and activities				
17:25 - 17:35	Cyprus	Diofantos Hadjimitsis	ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence: Needs, Opportunities and new challenges for Earth Surveillance and Space-Based Monitoring of the Environment in the Eastern Mediterranean	d.hadjimitsis@cut.ac.cy
QA (in chat)				
17:45 - 17:55	Petya Campbell Vincent Ambrosia Diofantos Hadjimitsis Ioannis Gitas	Concluding presentation – Closing remarks Announcement of Joint MedRIN / SCERIN Virtual Workshop, June 2021		

## Annex 2 / List of participants

Name	Affiliation	Presenter?
Aaron Sparks	U. of Idaho	Presenter
Alexandra Stefanidou	AUTH	
Andreas Christofe		
Anisoara Irimescu	MeteoRomania	
Anna Zdrovyk		
Apostolos Kamekis	CERTH	
ArgYRO Nisantzi	CUT - ECoE	
Arnon Karnieli	GBU	Presenter
Athanasios Potsis		Presenter
<a href="#">Bishama</a>		
Chariton Kalaitzidis	MAICH	
Charles Galdies		Presenter
Christiana Oikonomou		
Christiana Papousta		
Christos Sotiropoulos	AUTH	
Christos Theocharidis	CUT & ECoE	
Clay Oboth	START	Facilitator
Danae Papadopoluou		
Denitsa Borisova	SRTI-BAS	
Dimitris Antoniadis		
Diofantos Hadjimitsis	CUT/Eratosthenes CoE	MEDRIN Coordinator
Eleni Loulli	CUT & ECoE	
Evagoras Evagorou		
Ewa Gromny	CBK PAN	
Eyal Ben Dor		
<a href="#">Fatemeh</a>		
Fotios Danaskos	8th Junior Senior High Sch	
Galanis	i-BEC	
Garik Gutman	NASA	GOFC
Geoff Henebry		
George Boldeanu		
George Leventis	CUT & ECoE	
George Mitri		Presenter
Gordana Jakovljevic	University of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzeg	
Hara Minakou	AUTH	
Helena Partheniou		
Hicham Bahi		

Imen Buamed	MAICH	Presenter
Ioannis Gitas	AUTH	MEDRIN Coordinator
Ioannis Manakos	CERTH	
Istvan Kovacs	Univ. of Pecs	
Ivan Pilas		
Jana Albrechtova	SCERIN, CUNI CZ	
Jon Padgham	START	Facilitator
Kyriacos Themistocleous	CYPRUS - CUT-ECOE	
Lachezar Filchev		
Lady		
Lahouari Bounoua		
Levent Genç	Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University	Presenter
Levente Ronczyk	UniPécs, HU	
Manuel Salvoldi	BGU	
Maria Banti	CERTH	
Maria Prodromou	(CUT & ECOE)	
Melis Inalpulat	Canakkale 18 Mart Uni.	
Michail Sismanis	CERTH	
Miro Govedarica	University of Novi Sad, Serbia	
Monika Anna Tomaszewska	Michigan State University SCERIN	
Musa Samwel Lubamba		
Nektarios Chrysoulakis	FORTH	
Nikolas Iordanou		
Nikos Georgopoulos	AUTH	
Nikos Tsakiridis	AUTH	
Nikos Tziolas	AUTH	
Nuhcan Akçit	Middle East Technical University	
Oleh Chaskovskyy	Ukraine, UNFU	
Petya Campbell	SCERIN	
Philip Frost	iMMAP	Presenter
Pooja Chaudhary		
Ratislav Jakus	CULS Prague	
Rodanthi Elisavet Mamouri	CUT-ECOE	
Rodrigo Semião e Castro		
Rosa Lasaponara		Presenter
Samantha Gumkowska		
Serhii Havryliuk	UNFU	
Silas Michaelides		
Stefanos Papaioordanidis	AUTH	
Tatjana Zivkovic Hansen	DNV GL	
Thomas Katagis		

Timea Ignat	BGU	
Vassilia Karathanassi	NTUA	
Vince Ambrosia	NASA	MEDRIN Coordinator
Xyza Vasily Dela Pena		