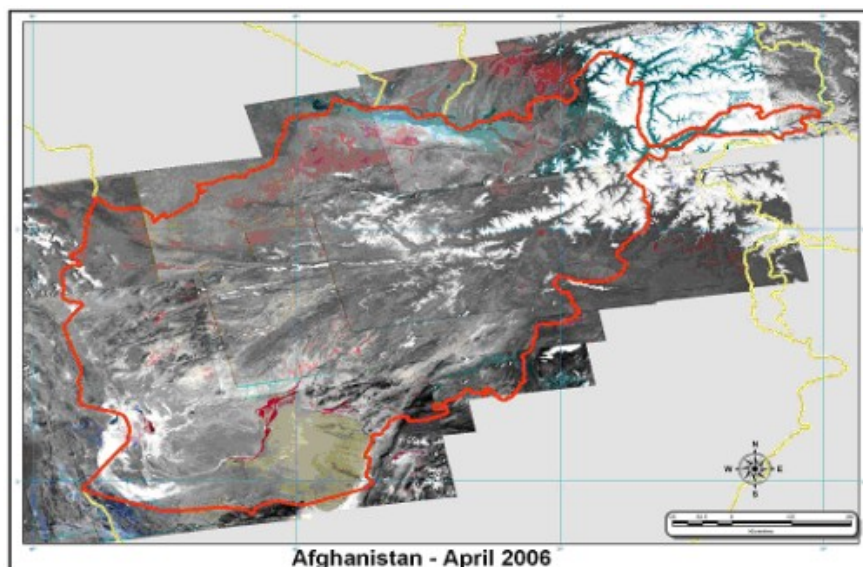


## **Afghanistan Opium cultivation monitored by international DMC constellation of small satellites.**

After extensive trials in 2005, DMC International Imaging Ltd. (DMCii) won a contract from the UK Government to supply high-resolution satellite coverage of the whole of Afghanistan to support the surveying of opium crops. The Disaster Monitoring Constellation (DMC) coordinated by DMCii includes the UK's own satellite, as well as four satellites built at the Surrey Space Centre for other DMC member nations; Algeria, China, Nigeria and Turkey.

Full country coverage at this resolution can be achieved because, unlike single satellites, the Disaster Monitoring Constellation is able to revisit an area every day. This enables data to be collected rapidly and the problems of cloud to be avoided.

DMC images were timed to match the peak in crop growth in different areas of the country. The 32metre resolution multispectral data enables crop characteristics to be measured at a field level, and the 600km wide images help analysts to unify the opium crop estimates from other data sources, including ground surveys, aerial photos and very high resolution satellite spot samples.



**Figure 1; Map of Afghanistan showing the coverage area**

The UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) stated; *“The FCO welcomes the role played by DMC in accurately measuring opium cultivation in Afghanistan. Detailed information is important in assisting the Afghan Government in implementing their Counter Narcotics Strategy.”*

DMCii's Marketing Director, Paul Stephens, said;

*“This is the first time that a full country survey of Afghanistan at 32 metre resolution has been carried out to coincide with the peak of the opium poppy crop. It really uses the strengths of the international DMC satellites to the full. The constellation of low cost small satellites enables us to monitor wide areas at a useful level of detail, and can keep repeating the images frequently until we get a cloud free shot. We are delighted that our orthorectified data received gold stars for precision, timeliness and quality from the analysts.”*

Opium cultivation in Afghanistan rose 59 percent in 2006, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said on 2nd September. UNODC's Annual Opium Survey for Afghanistan showed the area under opium cultivation reached a record 165,000 hectares in 2006 compared with 104,000 in 2005.

### **About DMC International Imaging Ltd**

**DMC International Imaging Ltd. (DMCii)** is a UK supplier of remote sensing data products and services for international Earth Observation (EO) markets. DMCii supplies programmed and archived optical satellite imagery provided by the multi-satellite Disaster Monitoring Constellation (DMC). DMC data is now used in a wide variety of commercial and government applications including agriculture, forestry and environmental mapping.

The small satellites of the DMC provide daily revisit in combination with an unmatched 600km imaging swath width at 32 metre ground sample distance (GSD) for frequent broad area coverage. DMC data products are calibrated and processed to a variety of levels according to customer requirements.

In partnership with the British National Space Centre (BNSC) and the other DMC member nations (Algeria, China, Nigeria, Turkey) DMCii uses the commercial exploitation of the DMC small satellite constellation to fund co-ordination of the DMC for humanitarian use in the event of major international disasters. DMCii works with the UN, the European Space Agency and The International Charter: Space and Major Disasters during disasters such as Tsunami, Fire, Flooding and Hurricanes.

DMCii was formed in October 2004 and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd, the world leader in small satellite technology. SSTL designed and built the DMC with the support of the BNSC and in conjunction with the DMC Member nations Algeria, China, Nigeria, Turkey and the UK. SSTL is a spin-off company from the University of Surrey.

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**Notes to editor:**

This press release and photo are available for download from the [SSTL virtual press office](http://www.ballard.co.uk) at [www.ballard.co.uk](http://www.ballard.co.uk) in MS Word and pdf formats. For more background information on the DMC, SSTL and commentary on space visit SSTL's Space blog at <http://space.ballard.co.uk>