AUSTRALIA'S APPROACH TO USING REMOTELY SENSED DATA TO DETERMINE TERRITORIAL SEA BASELINES

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Abstract

Australia's maritime jurisdiction is amongst the three largest in the world. The land from which this jurisdiction is measured extends from the mainland Australia and its territories and includes more than 8000 islands. Many of these islands are remote, dispersed over an enormous region that stretches across the Indian, Southern and Pacific Oceans. The extent of this jurisdiction highlights the scale and diversity of the issues that Australia must deal with in determining the territorial sea baselines.

Like most countries, Australia must make use of limited resources to determining the location of its territorial sea baselines. This has given rise to the development of a "fit for purpose" approach founded on remote sensing as a relatively low-cost method of rigorously determining the baseline. This approach is not only effective for remote locations, but also for highly dynamic sections of coastline.

This presentation outlines some of the techniques and data sources used by Australia in determining the location of its territorial sea baseline. Australia's approach to the issue represents a reasonable balance between effort and confidence that is relevant to all States, particularly small island and developing States. Examples provide the relative costs and accuracies and identify this technique as being a cost effective, pragmatic approach to maintaining the territorial sea baselines of a coastal State.