Spatial rainfall data in open source environment

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Since January 2013 The Netherlands have access to innovative high-quality rainfall data that is used for watermanagers. This product is innovative because of the following reasons. (i) The product is developed in a 'golden triangle' construction – corporation between government, business and research. (ii) Second the rainfall products are developed according to the open-source GPL license.

The initiative comes from a group of water boards in the Netherlands that joined their forces to fund the development of a new rainfall product. Not only data from Dutch radar stations (as is currently done by the Dutch meteorological organization KNMI) is used but also data from radars in Germany and Belgium. After a radarcomposite is made, it is adjusted according to data from raingauges (ground truth). This results in 9 different rainfall products that give for each moment the best rainfall data.

Specific knowledge is necessary to develop these kind of data. Therefore a pool of experts (KNMI, Deltares and 3 universities) participated in the development. The philosophy of the developers (being corporations) is that products like this should be developed in open source. This way knowledge is shared and the whole community is able to make suggestions for improvement. In our opinion this is the only way to make real progress in product development. Furthermore the financial resources of government organizations are optimized.

More info (in Dutch): www.nationaleregenradar.nl