A Proba-V view of the internationally protected, volcanic archipelago of the Galápagos and its surrounding marine reserve. This island chain is renowned for its many endemic species that were studied by Charles Darwin, directly contributing to his famous theory of evolution by means of natural selection.

In 1535, the Spaniard Tomás de Berlanga, fourth bishop of Panama, first visited these islands by chance when he was sailing to Peru. On the maps of Mercator and Ortelius, famous geographers, the islands were named Insulae de los Galopegos or Islands of the Tortoises after the giant tortoises found there.

This false colour composition highlights vegetation in red on the flanks of several volcanoes, in particular Wolf, Darwin, Alcedo, Santo Tomás and Cerro Azul volcanoes on Isla Isabella, the largest island.

Launched on 7 May 2013, Proba-V is a miniaturised ESA satellite tasked with a full-scale mission: to map land cover and vegetation growth across the entire planet every two days.

Its main camera’s continent-spanning 2250 km swath width collects light in the blue, red, near-infrared and mid-infrared wavebands at a 300 m pixel size, down to 100 m in its central field of view.

VITO Remote Sensing in Belgium processes and then distributes Proba-V data to users worldwide. An online image gallery highlights some of the mission’s most striking images so far, including views of storms, fires and deforestation.

This 100 m spatial resolution image was acquired on 27 February 2017.