

Short History of STIWG

The technical successes of NASA and NOAA in developing and orbiting satellite telemetry systems for collection of global environmental data enabled a number of Federal agencies to make use of such systems. A working group of major agencies, the Satellite Data Collection System Interagency Working Group (SDCSIWG), was formed in 1976 to formulate a plan for a National GOES DCS. The SDCSIWG was composed of the Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), NOAA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and NASA.

The SDCSIWG served as a focal point for the various GOES DCS user agencies to NESDIS. In addition to its coordination function, the SDCSIWG also arranged for cooperative funding for specific surveys and research projects, and identified issues related to the GOES DCS. The issues identified by the SDCSIWG reflected the need for a continuous, operational data collection system. The work of the SDCSIWG leads to the issuance of a Presidential Directive (PD), in November 1979, giving NOAA a mandate to operate the GOES DCS to satisfy national requirements.

The SDCSIWG completed a draft plan for satellite data relay in May 1980; but the plan was never formalized by the member agencies or forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In 1983, NESDIS published a document (Ref NOAA/NESDIS, 1983) describing the GOES DCS and identifying requirements of the GOES DCS user agencies.

From 1980 to 1984, the SDCSIWG held regular meetings with NESDIS to formulate a national plan, and to reach agreement on interagency funding for expansion of the DCS to the full capabilities of the GOES spacecraft. Neither of these objectives was attained. Nevertheless, demand for use of the GOES DCS by the various Federal agencies increased by about 20 percent annually.

To anticipate the impact of increasing demand for use of the GOES DCS, the SDCSIWG commissioned the preparation of two important studies. The first study (Ref U.S. Army, January 1984) defined further user requirements and associated costs for optional upgrades of the DCS ground system. The second study (Ref U.S. Army, October 1984) identified critical elements in the GOES DCS relative to projected system saturation. It proved useful for NESDIS to extend existing ground system capabilities at that time to accommodate over 7,000 Data Collection Platforms (DCPs).

In March 1985 and July 1986, NESDIS asked user agencies for proposed enhancements to the upgraded DCS and advised the user agencies that they might be required to fund the enhancements. At this time, NESDIS assigned the name "DCS Automatic Processing System (DAPS)" to the upgraded ground system.

In June 1985, the Interdepartmental Committee for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research (ICMSSR) under the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorological Services (OFCM) and the Interagency Advisory Committee on Water Data (IACWD) chartered the STIWG to continue in a capacity similar to that of the SDCSIWG. The ICMSSR and IACWD derived their authority from OMB Circulars A-62 and A-67, respectively. Circular A-67 has since been supplanted by M-92-01 (10 December 1991).

During 1986 and 1987, the STIWG worked to obtain agreements from the Federal user agencies concerning DAPS enhancements and how to pay for them. This effort resulted in the decision to purchase additional demodulators to operate additional GOES DCS channels. Funding for the additional demodulators was to be in proportion to the number of DCPs assigned to each of the user agencies, with only agencies having 4 percent or more of the DCP assignments taking part. STIWG also agreed to fund an interim Domestic Satellite (Domsat) broadcast communications link until a NOAA satellite broadcast called NOAAPORT becomes operational.

When the IACWD was dissolved, the STIWG was left without a parent committee on the Hydrology side. The STIWG eventually reconnected with the ACWI and were placed as a workgroup under the SOH.

(Compiled by Ernest Dryer, USGS in June 2007)