

Background

INTEGRATED GLOBAL OBSERVING STRATEGY PARTNERSHIP (IGOS)

IGOS is a strategic planning process, uniting the major satellite and surface-based systems for global environmental observations of the atmosphere, oceans, and land in a framework for decisions and resource allocations by individual funding agencies. The purview of the IGOS Partnership includes the needs of multiple domains, the entirety of which no single Partner is able to address by itself. The Partnership takes a strategic view across all Earth observing requirements, evaluates capabilities of current and planned observing systems, and has begun to obtain commitments for addressing critical gaps in observation.

The IGOS Partnership focuses specifically on the observing dimension in the process of providing environmental information for decision making. This includes all forms of data collection concerning the physical, chemical and biological environments of our planet, as well as data on the human environment, pressures on the natural environment, and environmental impacts on human well-being. Data collection is not an end in itself, and the observing strategy must therefore fit into a broader global strategy to assess the environmental data and to deliver meaningful data products to users. Many of the various environmental initiatives, Treaties, and Conventions implemented over the last few decades require systematic observations of the Earth, and the IGOS Partnership is prepared to provide the necessary observational links in support of Conventions and other international initiatives.

The Partnership has finalized its consensus view on the way forward with regard to ocean observations, which are in the implementation phase under the coordination of the Global Ocean Observing System. The IGOS Partnership is currently focusing on identifying and gaining commitments for essential requirements for observing global carbon, atmospheric chemistry, global water cycle, geohazards, and coral reefs. Other domains are under consideration.

The IGOS Partners include the:

- Global observing systems
 - Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)
 - Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)
 - Global Observing System and Global Atmospheric Watch of the WMO (GOS/GAW)
 - Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS)
- Sponsors of the global observing systems
 - World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
 - U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
 - U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP)
 - Intergovernmental Oceanographic Organization (IOC)
 - International Council for Science (ICSU)
 - Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (which includes all national and regional government agencies with an Earth observing satellite system)
- Global change research programs
 - International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP)
 - World Climate Research Programme (WCRP)
- International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA)