



CGMS-39 WMO-WP-17
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Prepared by WMO
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DEVELOPMENT OF A SATELLITE PRODUCT ACCESS GUIDE

WMO-WP-17 describes the proposed concept of a web-based Product Access Guide for satellite products within the WMO Space Programme website.

Such an access guide would give greater visibility to satellite products made available by CGMS Members at the global level. The Product Access Guide would not store information on individual products, or the products themselves, but rather point users to the respective sources, through an agreed categorization. This approach is intended to avoid any duplication of satellite operators' catalogues, but to provide a thematic high-level overview on what is available in terms of satellite products and where to get detailed information.

CGMS is invited to provide feedback and guidance on the proposed approach for such an access guide.

Action/Recommendation proposed:

It is recommended that WMO, in collaboration with EUMETSAT and other interested CGMS Members, refine the concept and develop a demonstration version of the Product Access Guide taking into account the feedback from CGMS-39.

Development of a Satellite Product Access Guide

1 Introduction

As regularly reflected by user enquiries, and highlighted by the Expert Team on Satellite Utilization and Products (ET-SUP), there is a need for enhanced, easily accessible information on available satellite products, especially from users in less advanced countries.

The WMO Space Programme has hosted a preliminary table of links to products categorized by theme since 2007. This table however had not been systematically populated and remained in a test mode pending clarification of users' needs, bearing in mind the on-going implementation of the WMO Information System. ET-SUP 5 confirmed however the needs in this respect and requested the WMO Space Programme to develop this list into a "portal" (ET-SUP Action 5.11) providing thematic access to Earth Observation products. In order to avoid duplication with existing catalogues available from satellite operators or with complex portals developed by different organizations (e.g. the GEO portal) it is envisaged to respond to the ET-SUP action by developing a "Product Access Guide" privileging simplicity and sustainability.

The Product Access Guide is meant to fill a gap since not all CGMS operators currently have an on-line catalogue with search possibilities such as the *Eumetsat Product Navigator*, *Geonetcast Product Navigator*, *JMA Satellite product pages* etc. providing thematic access to satellite products, furthermore these catalogues are not all linked and harmonized, therefore less experienced users still need guidance to find their way towards product information.

2 Objectives

The main objectives of such a Product Access Guide are hence

- To provide a simple top-level overview on globally available sources of satellite data and products;
- To provide users with first guidance on how to access these products, in particular for less experienced users;
- To enhance the visibility of products provided by the various operators and facilitate increased usage of those products.

The proposed access guide is not meant to duplicate existing efforts, such as agency-specific portals or the WIS metadata catalogue, but to supplement these as another path of accessing satellite product information.

This access guide should form an integral part of the WMO Space Programme Website. The information provided must be well-structured and easy to access, and limited in scope in order to be easy to maintain. This implies that the number of links provided on the page has to be within a reasonable scale.

3 Proposed Approach

The Product Access Guide would offer two parallel ways of accessing products: either by provider (i.e. pointing to the overall product catalogues of the respective CGMS satellite operators), which is straightforward or by theme or domain and product category (e.g. Atmosphere/Clouds, Ocean/SST).

In order to fully implement thematic access to products, the taxonomy of product categories to be used for user search should, as far as practical, follow internationally agreed standards. A tentative list of product categories is provided in the Annex.

In each category, the access guide would be populated with links pointing directly to the relevant subset of the respective product catalogues of CGMS Members. This is a critical point, since it implies that the respective satellite operators' catalogue allows direct access to a thematic subset of products through a URL. The feasibility to apply this approach to all providers needs to be confirmed, depending on the structure and technical interface of their catalogues.

By linking to the product catalogues, WMO would encourage the satellite operators to document their products in accordance with WIS metadata standards and to adopt a common thematic structure, thus contributing to further harmonization of terminology.

The value of the access guide would be particularly vulnerable to deprecated links and content. It should thus be not too ambitious in scope, and contain a limited number of links in order to be maintainable (typically one link by CGMS satellite operator and by product category). Success would depend on the practicality of the interface with the respective member's catalogues, and good communication and collaboration between the WMO Space Programme office and points of contact to be designated by the satellite operators.

Finally, information shall be associated with appropriate disclaimers and credit of ownership.

4 The way forward

A preliminary example of this approach, only partly populated for demo purpose, is available under www.wmo.int/pages/prog/sat/product-access-guide_en.php

It is envisaged to develop an initial version in collaboration with EUMETSAT for review by ET-SUP 6 in December 2011. Guidance from CGMS would be appreciated in particular as concerns the feasibility and the readiness of CGMS members to provide the relevant links in a harmonized manner.

It is anticipated that the additional effort required to link the catalogues to the access guide would be rewarded by greater user awareness and increased usage of satellite products.

ANNEX : TENTATIVE CATEGORIZATION OF PRODUCTS

Cross-Cutting

- » Satellite imagery
- » Radiances

Atmospheric Domain

- » Temperature and Humidity
- » Wind Vectors
- » Clouds
- » Radiative Fluxes
- » Lightning
- » Precipitation
- » Aerosols and Dust
- » Ozone and Trace Gases

Oceanic Domain

- » Sea Surface Temperature
- » Sea level
- » Sea State
- » Ocean Surface Wind
- » Ocean Color
- » Salinity
- » Sea Ice

Terrestrial Domain

- » Land Surface Temperature
- » Vegetation and Land use
- » Floods
- » Snow and Ice
- » Fire
- » Volcanic eruptions
- » Surface radiation and Albedo
- » Soil moisture