

CGMS HIGH LEVEL PRIORITY PLAN (HLPP) – 2026 TO 2030

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INTRODUCTION

The main goals of the coordination activities of the Coordination Group for Meteorological Satellites are to support operational weather monitoring and forecasting as well as climate monitoring, in response to requirements formulated by the WMO, its programmes and other programmes jointly supported by the WMO and other international agencies.

It is the policy of CGMS to coordinate satellite systems of its members in an end-to-end perspective, including protection of in orbit assets and support to users - e.g. through appropriate training - as required to facilitate and develop shared access to and use of satellite data and products in various applications. This policy is reflected in the structure of this 4-year High Level Priority Plan, covering:

1. Operational continuity and contingency planning
2. Coordination of satellite systems and operations
3. Coordination of data access and end user support
4. Enhancement of the quality of satellite-derived data and products
5. Monitoring of climate including greenhouse gases
6. Space weather monitoring
7. Outreach and training activities

CGMS reviews the HLPP on an annual basis, considering in particular new requirements and perspectives arising from interactions with the user and scientific communities, the development of applications, e.g. numerical weather prediction (NWP), and relevant research activities. It ensures proper interaction with other space agencies and their relevant constituencies (e.g. CEOS including its working groups and virtual constellations).

Following CGMS-50 in 2022, CGMS conducted a strategic review of its response to several new challenges. The outcome of the review included a number of new or revised medium- and long-term targets, all of which are reflected in this proposed HLPP.

HIGH LEVEL PRIORITY TASKS

The high-level priority tasks are presented according to the logic of the CGMS end-to-end systems.

1 ENSURE OPERATIONAL CONTINUITY AND PERFORM CONTINGENCY PLANNING

1.1 Mitigate the impact of identified degradation or loss of capabilities of the CGMS baseline and ensure appropriate contingency measures are in place

The annual CGMS Risk Assessment concluded that the overall CGMS constellation is very robust, but that for a few observation areas risks have been identified to the provision of operational services in the next decade. Based on this analysis, CGMS will take actions to:

1.1.1 Ensure continuity of scatterometer observations.

1.1.2 Ensure continuity of Radio Occultation observations with required quantity, geographical coverage and temporal sampling for numerical weather prediction and for ionospheric monitoring.

1.2 Advance the response to the Vision for WIGOS in 2040 for space, by the implementation of new capabilities beyond the CGMS baseline

The annual review of the CGMS baseline concluded that the baseline is still a comprehensive response to the WIGOS vision, addressing the key application areas. However, in the coming years CGMS members will be launching several satellites with new capabilities expanding the response to the vision. CGMS therefore agreed to revise the CGMS baseline and to:

1.2.1 Work towards establishing optimum constellations for new observations introduced in the CGMS baseline:

- Short-wave IR spectrometers for monitoring of greenhouse gases (CO₂ and CH₄).
- UV limb sounding spectrometry for profiles of Ozone and trace gases.

In addition, a number of new satellite programmes are under consideration by CGMS members, that offer the potential to expand the response to the WIGOS vision either through application of new technologies or through extending the coverage of existing capabilities. In this respect CGMS will strive to:

1.2.2 Advance the new generation of GEO satellites, including advanced imaging, lightning mapping and Hyperspectral IR sounding for the whole geostationary ring.

1.2.3 Work towards operational hourly daytime UV/VIS mapping of air quality from geostationary orbit.

- 1.2.4 Work towards ensuring optimised Hyperspectral IR measurements from LEO and GEO orbits to improve time sampling, spatial and spectral resolution and timeliness of observations, including the deployment of HSIR instruments across the GEO ring as per WIGOS vision 2040.
 - 1.2.5 Establish observational requirements for microwave observations (sounder and imager) for NWP and precipitation, perform gap analysis against CGMS baseline and quantify the impact of identified gaps to support the definition of future mission architectures including low-inclination constellations. For precipitation, develop a benchmark to conduct comprehensive assessments of current and future scenarios for the CGMS baseline.
 - 1.2.6 Advance the atmospheric radio occultation constellation, with the long-term goal of providing 20000 occultations per day with uniform spatial and local time coverage on a sustained basis.
 - 1.2.7 Work towards operational 3D wind profile observations from space-based lidar.
 - 1.2.8 Work towards operational infrared/ μ wave limb sounding for climate monitoring and NWP applications.
 - 1.2.9 Establish the operational framework for the provision of magnetometer data from LEO orbit.
 - 1.2.10 Investigate continuous space weather observations from lunar orbit for terrestrial and future lunar space weather services as well as for heliophysics research, complementing the geostationary and L1 measurements.
 - 1.2.11 Work towards auroral monitoring capabilities.
- 1.3 Assess impact and benefits of CGMS satellite missions**
- 1.3.1 Support satellite impact studies, including in particular impact of data latency and the impact of the early morning orbit.
 - 1.3.2 Collect and make available to CGMS members, Socio-Economic Benefits case studies of relevant satellite systems for the purpose of identifying common practices in next phase.
 - 1.3.3 Explore with WMO and other agencies the possibility to develop a study on the SEB value of the space-based observing system responding to WIGOS 2040 in cooperation with CGMS, and to trigger collaboration with CGMS members

2 COORDINATION OF SATELLITE SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS

2.1 Coordination/Optimisation of Data Collection Systems (DCS)

- 2.1.1 Promote the use of Data Collection Services provided by CGMS Agencies.
- 2.1.2 Foster international collaboration in DCS, including the establishment of an Enhanced DCP standard and common DCS data access.

2.2 Radio Frequency (RF) protection

- 2.2.1 Facilitate an effective preparation of national and ITU-R regional groups' positions for the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) 2027 favourable for CGMS-related issues, in particular but not exclusively with regard to:
 - Establish protection for passive microwave sensors in the bands 50.2-50.4 GHz, 52.6-54.25 GHz and in bands above 86 GHz from unwanted emissions from active services in neighbouring frequency bands (WRC-27 agenda items 1.1, 1.3, 1.8 and 1.18).
 - Establish possible new primary frequency allocations to EESS (passive) in the bands 4200-4400 MHz and 8400-8500 MHz for Sea Surface Temperature (SST) measurements to complement the SST measurements in the 6/7 GHz range (WRC-27 agenda item 1.19).
 - Establish protection of the frequency bands 7450-7550 MHz, 7750-7900 MHz and 8025-8400 MHz, used for the downlink from MetSat and EO satellites, from possible future frequency usage by International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) (WRC-27 agenda item 1.7).

2.3 Low Latency Data Access

- 2.3.1 Provide a forum for CGMS agencies to address improving LEO satellite systems low latency data access from both a global and regional perspective, harnessing common emerging technologies and taking account of the evolution of the commercial and agency space systems.
- 2.3.2 Address technical and operational aspects of direct broadcast services (present and future) of mutual or global interest for the CGMS agencies.
- 2.3.3 Promote standards and interoperability and operational procedures to the CGMS agencies for the benefit of the user community of their direct broadcast services and the associated regional retransmission services.

2.4 Satellite Data and Codes

- 2.4.1. Foster the implementation of global data format conventions, ensuring satellite-derived data are fit for global dissemination and use.

2.5 Space Environment Sustainability

2.5.1. Encourage common approaches for collision avoidance and re-entry prediction across CGMS satellite operators.

2.5.2 Engage with UN-COPUOS to articulate the CGMS best practices in Space Environment Sustainability, prioritising Space Traffic Coordination as a first step.

2.5.3. Foster space sustainability efforts across CGMS satellite operators.

2.5.4 Evaluate existing operational space weather products and services in support of CGMS members' spacecraft operations and recommend additional services as appropriate.

3 COORDINATION OF DATA ACCESS AND END-USER SUPPORT

- 3.1 Support the user-provider dialogue on regional/continental scales through regional coordination groups maintaining requirements for dissemination of satellite data and products through the various broadcast services**
- 3.2 Prepare operational users for new generation of meteorological satellites through user readiness programmes, with coordinated contributions from CGMS members**
 - 3.2.1 Develop Best Practices for Operational User Notifications
- 3.3 Provide support to users in the WMO Application Areas, including for agricultural, hydrology, cryosphere, marine/ocean and other applications, with a focus on the WMO co-led UN Early Warnings for All (EW4All) identified priority hazards (heat, drought, flood, and tropical cyclones); and, where appropriate, identify and follow-up on opportunities by other entities (e.g. CEOS led activities).**
- 3.4 Coordinated global data exchange**
 - 3.4.1 Develop Best Practices for Global Data Exchange, taking into account both WIS 2.0 and satellite operator broadcast services.
 - 3.4.2 Support the coordination of the operational Digital Video Broadcast (DVB) satellite services for the Americas, Africa, Europe and the Asia Pacific regions
- 3.5 Support to WIS 2.0 implementation**
 - 3.5.1 Actively ensure the WIS 2.0 usage for satellite data provision and discovery.
 - 3.5.2 Support WIS and WIGOS in the definition of harmonized product metadata for satellite data and implement for CGMS missions.
- 3.6 Increase access to, and use of, data from R&D and pre-operational missions**
- 3.7 Investigate the feasibility of utilizing existing dissemination infrastructure for meteorological information in helping to mitigate disasters**
- 3.8 Increase operational access to data and products in support to the ocean user community**
 - 3.8.1 Ensure the timely access to and exchange of near-real-time scatterometer data, share access to calibration and validation information across CGMS agencies.
- 3.9 Application of Cloud Technologies**

3.9.1 Monitor the implementation of best practices for cloud services interoperability.

3.10 Research to Operations

3.10.1 Based on the results of the conducted R2O survey, propose a consistent CGMS Research-to-Operations baseline process that includes flexibility and adaptability and facilitates the participation of R&D agencies.

4 ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF SATELLITE-DERIVED DATA AND PRODUCTS

4.1 Establish a fully consistent calibration of relevant satellite instruments across CGMS agencies, recognising the importance of collaboration between operational and research CGMS agencies

- 4.1.1 Maintain within GSICS a framework for inter-calibration of hyper-spectral sounders.
- 4.1.2 Establish within GSICS a consistent inter-calibration for thermal IR channels using hyper-spectral sounders as reference. The implementation will be done successively by the individual satellite operators.
- 4.1.3 Establish within GSICS a consistent inter-calibration for solar channels using instruments with adequate in-orbit calibration and vicarious methods as reference. The implementation will be done successively by the individual satellite operators.
- 4.1.4 Establish within GSICS a common reference solar spectrum with appropriate spectral coverage and spectral resolution
- 4.1.5 Develop common methods and tools for on-ground calibration and characterisation and inter-calibration of UV-VIS-NIR SWIR spectrometers.
- 4.1.6 Establish a methodology to characterise microwave instruments for O₂ absorption channels through the SNO and RTM modelling. The implementation will be done successively by the individual satellite operators.
- 4.1.7 Establish mechanisms for cross-calibrating scatterometers across the constellation.

4.2 Establish commonality in the derivation of satellite products for global users where appropriate (e.g., through sharing of prototype algorithms)

- 4.2.1 Establish commonality in the derivation of AMV products for global users where appropriate (e.g., through sharing of prototype algorithms) and consider backwards compatibility when designing AMV algorithms for the 16-channel imagers, so that present state-of-the-art algorithms can be applied to old imagery.
- 4.2.2 Assess value of winds derived from GEO and LEO Hyperspectral IR observations
- 4.2.3 Establish a coherent development of volcanic ash products and applications with close user community coordination.
- 4.2.4 Assess the cloud properties generated from the geostationary and polar orbiting imagers and pursue best practices that lead to improved consistency and accuracy across the globe and the Geostationary ring.

- 4.2.5 Explore the application and value of stereographic approaches to combinations of GEO and LEO satellites/instruments for the derivations of winds
- 4.2.6 Explore the use of optical flow approaches to derive dense wind datasets aimed at targeted applications to include nowcasting, Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP), nowcasting, and air quality forecasting.
- 4.3 Foster the continuous improvement of products through validation and inter-comparison through international working groups and SCOPE-type mechanisms**
 - 4.3.1 Apply the IPWG validation protocol (as defined on its web page) to precipitation combination datasets generated using multiple satellite and in-situ data sources, and expand the number of participating agencies to broaden the validation domain. The IPWG website is currently being transitioned and will be updated to reflect the status of previous, current and newly added operating validation regions.
 - 4.3.2 Conduct an intercomparison study between the different methods to derive level 2 data from infrared hyperspectral sounders, recognising that there are several software packages available that utilize AIRS/IASI/CrIS data.
 - 4.3.3 Coordinate and improve the use of cloud properties in the high impact applications, in particular Atmospheric Motion Vectors and All-Sky Radiance Products .
 - 4.3.4 Support the continued analysis and growth of the cloud climatology assessment data archive initiated by GEWEX and coordinate the development and assessment of cloud climate products for the next generation of the International Cloud Climatology Project (ISCCP-NG)
 - 4.3.5 Establish a coherent development of a Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) product and applications with close user community coordination.
- 4.4 Maintain, enhance and improve the methods to describe the error characteristics of satellite data and products**
 - 4.4.1 Establish a common vocabulary and methodology with appropriate error propagation to include the errors associated with validation data (e.g. radiosonde temperature, water vapour, precipitation and winds).
- 4.5 Strengthen interaction with users in selected thematic areas by establishing a close relation with them as beta-testers and foster optimum use of satellite data**
 - 4.5.1 Report on the progress within the Nowcasting community toward the use of hyperspectral sounders and work toward common products to serve the requirements of the global community.

4.5.2 Enhance the use of satellite precipitation datasets through an IPWG-led user workshop where training on visualisation and analysis tools will be one of the topics.

4.6 Foster and support research regarding enhanced radiative transfer capabilities, recognising the paramount importance of radiative transfer developments for satellite products

4.6.1 Continue support for line-by-line (LBL) reference model development and enhanced characterization of spectroscopy to ensure that product development teams and users of level 1 data have access to the latest updates in LBL forward modelling and the uncertainties involved.

4.6.2 Perform validation and intercomparison of LBL models/spectroscopy to assess the impact of spectroscopic uncertainties and the differences between line-by-line and fast radiative transfer models.

4.6.3 Through coordination between IPWG, ITWG, IESWG and ICWG, continue to improve microwave radiative transfer models to include complex surfaces (e.g. snow, desert, etc.) and scattering atmospheres (e.g. frozen hydrometeors) to support improved algorithm development for current and future sensors.

4.7 Stimulate trade-off analyses for the development of future passive sounding instruments

4.7.1 Conduct studies investigating the technical feasibility (instrument/constellation/processing) relevant to future observing concepts, in particular for microwave sounding.

4.8 Support to emerging application areas

4.8.1 Review capabilities of and identify critical gaps in the CGMS constellation for the provision of physical snow and ice products in support of operational cryosphere, polar and high-mountain monitoring, reflecting WMO priorities to address global and regional impacts of changes in the cryosphere (2024-2027).

4.8.2 Establish product development priorities including synergistic products for operational monitoring of cryosphere, polar and high-mountain regions.

4.9 Coordinated response to the AI/ML challenge

4.9.1 Promote a collaborative framework to share CGMS catalogue for discovering and reusing AI/ML applications, expertise, and AI-ready data formats.

5 ADVANCE THE ARCHITECTURE FOR SPACE-BASED MONITORING OF CLIMATE, INCLUDING GREENHOUSE GAS MONITORING

- 5.1 Update the Climate Data Record (CDR) Inventory, which replaces the former Essential Climate Variable (ECV) Inventory. The CDR Inventory features an enhanced user interface with added functionalities to improve the discoverability and usability of space-based CDRs. Inputs to the Inventory will be harvested by the EUMETSAT support team from publicly available data sources and will be updated continuously. Periodic gap analyses and development of a coordinated action plan (CAP) based on the CDR Inventory will be carried out by CEOS and CGMS to support climate research and services.
- 5.2 Engage the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice – Research and Systematic Observation (SBSTA-RSO) to ensure the provision of fit-for-purpose satellite data that informs decision-making. This is a recurring effort, with regular annual reporting at the UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties (COP).
- 5.3 Support GCOS in the preparation of its status report and the GCOS Implementation Plan and lead the development of the space agency response. This is a cyclical task aligned with GCOS's five-year planning cycle.
- 5.4 Coordinate CGMS contributions to the operational greenhouse gas constellation with CEOS and WMO. This includes coordination on mission planning, inter-calibration, product development and validation, data formats and access mechanisms, reprocessing, as well as capacity building and outreach efforts.
- 5.5 Expanding the utility of the CDR Inventory to meet emerging needs.

6 ADVANCE OPERATIONAL SPACE WEATHER MONITORING FROM SPACE

- 6.1 Coordinate CGMS activities and align priorities with the operational space weather user community, in particular the ICAO Space Weather Centres, ISES, WMO ET-SWx and the UNCOUOS STSC.
- 6.2 Establish a consistent inter-calibration framework in GSICS for energetic particle measurements using instruments with adequate in-orbit calibration and vicarious methods.
- 6.3 Advance the integration of Space Weather coordination activities into the relevant CGMS working groups.
- 6.4 In coordination with IROWG establish requirements for and recommend an implementation of an optimised system for radio occultation observations for ionosphere monitoring.
- 6.5 Ensure the timely access to and global exchange of space weather data of CGMS Members, including instruments hosted on third-party satellites.
- 6.6 Document current data formats for space weather observations.
- 6.7 Produce a report of space weather (SWx) observation requirements for improved STC services and space sustainability and consider impact on future SWx observations due to increased demand on SWx services.
- 6.8 Work on comparing different measurement strategies/techniques for characterising thermospheric environment.

7 OUTREACH AND TRAINING

7.1 Engage in communication and outreach activities to promote Space Weather observations benefits

7.2 Training

7.2.1 Continue to foster optimum use of satellite data for weather forecasting, climate applications, and environmental assessments including hazardous events such as volcanic ash and flooding.

7.2.2 Update and develop new training material through the WMO-CGMS Virtual Laboratory for Education and Training in Satellite Meteorology (VLab) and in partnership with the WMO Training and Education Programme. Link training materials to the 2025 update of 'Guidelines on Satellite Skills for Operational Meteorologists and Specialists in Related Application Areas'

7.2.3 CGMS Members and Centers of Excellence (CoE) to coordinate and collaborate on succession planning. Many members are experiencing staff shortages due to employee turnover and retirement.

7.2.4 CGMS members and CoEs to establish agreements to collaborate on training development programmes for CoE trainers.

7.2.5 Ensure availability and training in usage of satellite data and products in monitoring regional priority hazards in addressing the UN Early Warnings for All initiative.

7.3 User Conferences

Conduct regional satellite users' conferences to:

- i) share experience and foster the exchange of ideas;
- ii) promote better access, and improve the utilisation of, existing satellite data and products;
- iii) prepare the user community on new satellite systems' data products and services;
- iv) engage with the user community on the application of new Climate Data Records, supported by the CEOS-CGMS Joint Working Group on Climate;
- v) gain user feedback on data, product and system real-world application;
- vi) engage young people entering the field; and
- vii) other items as appropriate.