

Call for Proposals to Establish and Host the International Altimetry Service Integrating Office (IAS-IO)

-- 14 January 2007 --

Objectives

Satellite altimetry will become an essential component of global Earth observing systems as coordinated by GEOSS (Global Earth Observing System of Systems). It is requested to provide long, accurate time series of multi-mission radar and laser altimeter data. It requires standards on formats, processing algorithms, and geophysical/media/instrument corrections. Attention must be paid to the adoption of a common reference frame and to the long-term availability and stability of the altimeter instruments and ancillary sensors implying cross-calibration between all altimeter missions as well as between different altimeter technologies (pulse limited nadir, laser/Lidar, fibre laser, wide swath, Delay Doppler, etc.). These requirements hold for both, scientific and operational applications.

There is a broad consensus that all these requirements can be best fulfilled by an International Altimetry Service (IAS), acting in a mission- and agency-independent capacity. In view of the many organisations already providing data and products for satellite altimetry, IAS can only be realised by an integrating effort, e.g., as collaboration between data providers, archive and product centres, research laboratories and experienced users. It is the purpose of this Call to establish an IAS Integration Office that will provide the necessary integration and, when possible, the gradual improvement of existing services for the benefit of the broad altimeter user community. The IAS-IO should provide added value to the services and products provided by the existing altimetry centres internationally.

This Call emanates from the IAS Planning Group (IAS-PG), commissioned by

- the Global Sea Level Observing System, GLOSS;
- the International Association of Geodesy, IAG; and
- the International Association of the Physical Science of the Ocean, IAPSO.

All three organisations have endorsed the establishment of an International Altimetry Service.

Call

This Call is seeking proposals for the establishment of an IAS-Office with clear justification on how the new IAS will lead to improved or new services for the altimeter user community.

IAS Integrating Office

The general objectives of this IAS-Integrating Office shall be:

- to provide a platform (and single point of contact) for general information on satellite altimetry and its applications;
- to communicate with, and interface to, altimeter mission data providers, centres which process, archive, and analyse altimeter data, and other related services and organizations;
- to promote satellite altimetry as a core element of Global Earth Observing Systems; and
- to help compile and analyse data, and respond to altimeter user requirements.

The IAS Integrating Office accomplishes its mission by:

- collaborating as appropriate with space agencies, processing centres, research institutes and altimetry experts;
- establishing a collaborative web site (a Wiki or Content Management System) that is able to compile basic information on satellite altimetry, its data, products and applications as given by data providers, archive and product centres, research laboratories and experienced users;
- directing user requests for altimetry data, services, models, etc., to the appropriate organization;
- establishing pilot projects which will enhance and expand its activities; these will target various needs of the altimetry community, and may become permanent components of the International Altimeter Service; and
- reporting to IAG, IAPSO, GLOSS, GOOS, GGOS, GEOSS and other bodies related to satellite altimetry on the status, achievements and plans of the altimetry service.

IAS-IO initial tasks and added-value activities:

- Improve information and documentation on altimetry mission data and related products. Provide users with information on where to get altimetry data and products by compiling and providing associated meta data, setting links to existing data providers and giving advice how to read, transform, and apply data and products. Enable users to assess data and product quality and to compare similar products generated by different organisations.
- Develop tools, interfaces or systems to provide GDR/level2 data or derived higher level products which have been upgraded by improved geophysical corrections, reprocessed orbit ephemeris or re-tracked sensor data. Strengthen the future upgrade capability for GDR/level 2 data by distributed processing mechanisms.
- Provide interfaces to allow user-defined data extracts where experienced user can decide what record parameter they want to get and inexperienced users are given recommended extract formats for specific applications. This requires to set-up and maintain electronic version of data element dictionaries for GDR/level 2 data or higher level products.

Nomination Committee

Review and selection of proposals for the establishment of the IAS-Office will be performed by the Nomination Committee composed by the initiators of the IAS planning group, representatives of GLOSS, IAG and IAPSO, representatives of related services, and additional representatives which may be called in as appropriate:

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|-------------------|-----------------|
| - W.Bosch (Chair) | - G. Mitchum |
| - H. Drewes | - M.G. Sideris |
| - R. Gross | - C.K. Shum |
| - S. Imawaki | - Ph. Woodworth |

The Nomination Committee will recommend **by March 31, 2007** one of the applicants for the establishment of the IAS Integrating Office for approval by the Executive Committees of IAS and IAPSO.

On the basis of submitted proposals the Nomination Committee may compile a specific list of initial tasks and value-adding activities which should be realized by the recommended applicant.

Instructions for Submitting Proposals

- Organizations interested in submitting a proposal in response to this Call to establish and host the IAS-IO should submit a written proposal structured as specified below.
- In addition to the proposer(s), the form must be signed by an official authorized to certify institutional support, sponsorship and management of the proposed activities.
- The deadline for receiving proposals is **March 1, 2007**. The completed and signed document must be attached to an e-mail and sent on or before the due date to bosch@dgfi.badw.de with CC to ckshum@osu.edu.
- A copy of the completed proposal with the original signature page must be sent by regular mail to the chair of the Nomination Committee:

Wolfgang Bosch
DGFI
Alfons-Goppel-Str. 11
D-80539 München Germany

Proposal Form

The proposal should be no longer than six pages long and should provide the following information:

1. Name, full addresses/contact information and signatures of proposer(s) and signing authority of the host organization.
2. A statement of interest, with background information on the research experience, international contacts, and administrative and collaborative capabilities and expertise of the proposers.
3. Clear identification of available computing, office, space, financial and administrative resources that will be available for the IAS-IO.
4. A plan on how the IAS-IO initial tasks and added-value activities mentioned above (as well as new ones that the proposers may want to suggest) will be achieved, including attracting, and establishing communication and harmonious cooperation with, the existing altimetry services and centres.
5. Other information on how the IAS will be able to function as an independent but integrating Office, now and in the future.