

ISCS/ RMTN Teleconference
ISCS-G2e Implementation Strategy for RMTN
October 22, 2009
Questions & Answers

TECHNOLOGY

39:50

1. Question: Will the satellite equipment be replaced if made non-serviceable by damage, hurricanes or lightning strikes?

Answer: Yes, under the terms and conditions of the ISCS contract, all non-serviceable ground satellite equipment, e.g., antenna, feed horn, will be replaced. The workstation is not part of the ground satellite equipment so it will not be replaced under this contract.

43:00

2. Question: If I have a site that is currently a 1-way VSAT, do I need to have it replaced?

Answer: No. All 1-way VSAT are currently deployed with Comtech modems. They do not need to be replaced. They will continue to receive the data as usual with the ISCS-G2e network. All 2-way VSATs that are currently using the PES 8000 satellite modem will be converted to 1-way VSATs with Comtech modems.

45:15

3. Question: Will ISCS-G2e support the Chat function over the NOAA net circuits?

Answer: No. The Chat function will not be supported at this time. The only service that will be supported is the transportation of data using the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to the FTP server at the Regional Telecommunications Hub (RTH) in Silver Spring, Maryland. In the future, we are looking at the possibility of using NOAA net as a 2-way channel for the distribution and collection of approved data products.

Update 03 November 2009: A communication services requirement to support point-to-point or point-to-multipoint chat function within RA-IV does not currently exist.

54:23

4. Question: What is covered under the router maintenance?

Answer: Once the router is installed, the administrative privileges, i.e., updating or refreshing firmware, rules of operation, configuration will be handled by the NOAA net Program Office. The site will not have administrative access. If the router is severely damaged and needs to be replaced, the site will be responsible for the replacement costs. Only certain models of routers are permitted. Additional information on the replacement of routers can be found in the Interface Control Document (ICD) which is posted on the website: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/iscs/iscsG2e.htm>

1:13:40

5. Question: We are going from a 2-way system to a 1-way system and using the Internet for backup. Are we also using the NOAAnet for the Internet?

Answer: No. The NOAAnet connections are not Internet or part of the public Internet infrastructure. NOAAnet lines are dedicated circuits that are connected back to the Telecommunications Gateway in Silver Spring, Maryland. If there are problems with the NOAAnet circuits, then you can continue to use the Internet to send emails. The NOAAnet connections and the Internet are completely separate and different systems.

1:16:00

6. Question: What is the meaning of terrestrial or “land” lines?

Answer: The terrestrial lines are the private “hard copper” wire circuits that transport the data from your workstation back to the FTP server at the Telecommunications Gateway in Silver Spring, Maryland.

1:17:25

7. Question: In Slide 4 you have stated that workstation vendors may be contacted for assistance in configuring the workstations. Have you contacted them already?

Answer: Yes. We have already met with workstation vendors Morcom and GST and discussed the transition to ISCS-G2e. They have stated that they need to change the routing tables in the software within the workstation so that the path of the data is to the NOAAnet circuits instead of the VSAT.

1:19:20

8. Question: In the current ISCS we are transmitting the radar data through the satellite to Martinique. Under the NOAAnet FTP will the radar data be routed through Washington?

Answer: Yes. The sites will send their radar data via the NOAAnet circuit to the FTP server in Silver Spring. The data will then be sent over the satellite broadcast channel to Martinique. In Martinique the mosaic will be created, and then sent via the NOAAnet circuit to Silver Spring. From there the mosaic will be sent to the satellite hub in Andover Maine for broadcast over the satellite channel to all the sites.

At this moment, we don't know exactly in terms of timing what the total ramification or total impact on the generation and distribution of the mosaic RADAR product will be with ISCS-G2e, but we believe the performance should be comparable to what would be expected with the current ISCS.

1:20:40

9. Question: Since the NOAAnet circuits will have more capacity (bandwidth) than the current available satellite bandwidth to the RA-IV community, what will be the additional cost to us?

Answer: The sites will not have to pay for the NOAAnet circuits, nor the equipment or recurring costs for circuit operation.

1:22:27

10. Question: What changes will be required to the modems?

Answer: New equipment/modem will be delivered to the site. This equipment will be configured for the system.

1:32:28

11. Question: Is there a need to have the communications line installed between the meteorological service site and the local telephone provider prior to the new equipment being received?

Answer: The line can be installed before or after the equipment is received. After the router is received it will be connected to the circuit, and the circuit can be activated.

1:37:00

12. Question: How will the readiness of a site for installation be determined?

Answer: A Verizon VSAT technician will contact the site to schedule a visit. Also the site-survey form found on the ISCS website will need to be completed and sent to Patrick Gillis. Patrick will give each site's completed survey form to Verizon. Verizon will make an assessment based on your completed survey form as to whether your site is ready for installation. An installation schedule will be posted on the ISCS website so you will know when Verizon will install the VSAT equipment at your site. You should be notified by your local PTT concerning information regarding your NOAAnet circuit installation.

Update 03 November 2009: All site survey forms and pictures of the site are to be sent directly to the Verizon conversion coordinator (april.hoffman@verizonbusiness.com). Refer to the 'ISCS-G2e Conversion Checklist' on the ISCS web page at:

http://www.weather.gov/iscs/pdf/NOAA_2%20to%201%20Way%20Checklist__R4Web.pdf

13. Question: Recently a local telecom provider came to a site to make preliminary installations which the site knew nothing about. They were sent away. What can be done about rescheduling this work?

Answer: Patrick Gillis has made arrangements with NOAAnet to make contact with the provider to get back with the site. The NWS needs each site to complete and sign the NOAAnet User Connection Agreement and return it to the NWS (Patrick Gillis).

1:48:00

14. Question: Some sites do not have terrestrial communication lines. With the satellite link no longer in place there is a risk that if terrestrial communications goes down the Internet and NOAAnet access will be knocked out. What about this situation?

Answer: The costs associated with a satellite link would be prohibitive for NOAA/NWS and the Member State sites. The ISCS Program Office solicited a validated requirement for satellite broadcast but was unable to establish such a validated system requirement. Mr. Fred Branski of the WMO stated there was no requirement for satellite broadcast. The NWS will be revisiting this issue in the coming year. It was pointed out that Europe is using MPLS circuits currently.

BILLING

1:05:00

1. Question: How do we resolve outstanding bills?

Answer: We will be happy to assist any country that has outstanding bills. We will work with you and Verizon on a payment plan. We must work on this as soon as possible because the transition to ISCS-G2e is happening quickly. Please notify us as soon as possible if your country is facing this situation so that we can resolve this and transition you to the new network.

1:07

2. Question: Antigua had difficulty in getting information from Verizon on any outstanding bills. We have tried to get information as to whether we have outstanding balances but have not had a response. Can you assist us in getting this information?

Answer: Each country will be notified with the status of their bills and if they have an outstanding balance.

1:11:52

3. Question: Who is the NOAA POC for billing questions?

Answer: Patrick Gillis. His email address is: www.patrick.gillis@noaa.gov

1:25:05

4. Question: A site has damaged equipment. Who will pay for the replacement of this equipment?

Answer: The Program will provide for replacement equipment. The costs will be covered by a United Nations fund.

POCs

53:00

1. Question: When does NOAA require the site Point Of Contact (POC) information?

Answer: Answer: We would like the information by November 4, 2009. Specifically we need:

- Full name of single POC
- Full name of alternate POC
- Full site address
- Email addresses
- Telephone numbers
- FAX numbers

Update 03 November 2009: Please refer to Section 2 of the 'ISCS Generation 2e (ISCS-G2e) Conversion Checklist' found on the ISCS web page at:

http://www.weather.gov/iscs/pdf/NOAA_2%20to%201%20Way%20Checklist__R4Web.pdf

57:30

2. Question: Will the POC be responsible for signing off on the installation and acceptance testing at the site?

Answer: Yes. There will be contract personnel on site to insure that the equipment is properly installed, operating correctly, receiving the broadcast signal and the workstation is receiving the data. There will be a check list of procedures that Verizon or the Verizon contractor will present to the POC for signature acknowledging that the equipment has been properly installed and is operating correctly.

SHIPPING

58:20

1. Question: How will the equipment be shipped to the site?

Answer: The equipment will be shipped to each country by normal channels. Once the equipment is in-country, NOAA can assist in the coordination of ground delivery of the equipment to the site.

Update 03 November 2009: NOAAnet equipment will be delivered to the site by United Parcel Service (UPS). The new satellite ground station (VSAT) equipment will be shipped to the site by Verizon.

59:53

2. Question: How will you handle the customs duties and tariffs? What is the methodology for getting it through customs cost effectively?

Answer: NOAA will pay for all shipping and customs fees for the satellite ground station and NOAAnet equipment. The sites will not have to pay any additional fees.

It was suggested by Ecuador to work with the country's embassy in advance and create special shipping to avoid potential problems with customs. If this process is available in your country, please let us know if there are special arrangements that we need to make in advance. We will work closely with you to make sure we have all the necessary information to make the shipping process easier.

It was noted that in the English speaking Caribbean countries meteorological equipment can be shipped duty free. Please let us know if that is possible in your country.

1:12:00

3. Question: Who is the NOAA POC for shipping and special accommodations?

Answer: Douglas Walls. His email address is: www.douglas.walls@noaa.gov

1:30:50

4. Question: When will the new equipment arrive at the site?

Answer: The new equipment will arrive in the November 2009 – January 2010 timeframe. The NOAAnet equipment will be shipped internationally at the end of October

2009. Customs could be a factor in timeliness. The sites will need to verify they can receive the equipment.

Update 03 November 2009: Shipping dates for the new VSAT equipment will be coordinated with Verizon. Customs could be a factor in timeliness.

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