

Meeting Minutes of the SDR Earth Observation Task Group

2 October 2003, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 516, Office of Science and Technology Policy

Attendees

NASA

Craig Dobson

OSTP Liaison

Gene Whitney

NOAA

John Gaynor

Pai-Yei Whung

Dori Akerman (GRS)

Mary Kate Rubin (GRS)

USFS

Sue Conard

USGS

Rosalind Helz (Chair)

Mike Blanpied

Tim Cohn

Kathleen Gohn

Agenda

1:00 Welcome and Introductions
1:10 Overview on the SDR Task Group Role
1:20 Task Group Inputs Documents
2:45 Deliverables and Next Actions
3:00 Close

Handouts

Agenda
Meeting Minutes (September 9, 2003)
Attachment 1: Assignments and Related Documents
Model Outlines
User Needs for Hazard Information Template
User Needs for Geohazard Information Graph
Observations/Monitoring/Response Graph

Call to Order

Rosalind Helz called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A round of introductions were made.

Summary of Discussion

1. Overview on the SDR Task Group Role

Rosalind Helz opened the meeting with a discussion of the SDR Earth Observation Task Group's (EOTG) role in providing inputs to the National Plan from a disaster reduction perspective. Our input will be fed into the IWGEO User Requirements and Outreach Team. Roz is the USGS representative to that team. Our input can also be fed to the IWGEO Planning and Implementation Team, headed by Ron Birk (NASA). Helen Wood has identified Roz Helz as POC to the Planning and Implementation team, for inputs coming from the SDR EO Task Group.

2. Task Group Inputs Documents

Attachment 1 handout outlines the thematic divisions and agency participation for observational requirements for hazards. Some assignments were made at the last meeting, but further participants need to be identified. The group discussed further who from which agency might be most appropriate for each hazard theme. Most of the themes are multi-agency issues. For example, Tim Cohn of USGS, Andy Bruzewicz of USACE, and at least one person from NOAA/NWS Hydrology, would deal with observational requirements for floods. Also, some representatives may work on more than one theme (as will John Gaynor and Pai-Yei Whung for Tropical Cyclones and Severe Weather) In addition, the group looked over a chart developed by Ron Birk (NASA), summarizing existing strategic planning documents related to earth observations.

Action: Roz Helz will circulate the chart to the EOTG. The group will provide Ron Birk with feedback for his evolving multi-agency and multi-application chart.

Rosalind Helz distributed charts summarizing User Needs for Hazard Information (examples were earthquakes and volcanoes), plus a blank template, to illustrate how users were categorized in the Geohazards IGOS process, and to ask the group for their input. Three groups of “critical users” were identified. The first are the “end users”, or responsible authorities. The second group comprises scientists who monitor hazards and provide real-time status reports or (between events) provide hazard assessments. The third group includes scientists conducting research that supports improvements in hazards monitoring and assessment. The group discussed the categories and modified the descriptions in the blank template. In order to broaden and to more accurately describe the role of the second category of scientists, Sue Conard and others proposed that “scientists in monitoring and advisory agencies” be reworded to “scientific and technical staff in monitoring and advisory agencies.” The second modification proposed by the group was that “crisis” be removed from the second chart column heading and be replaced by “event”. Kathleen Gohn suggested that the media and public also are a “type of user.” However, the group preferred to consider the media as communicators and public as beneficiaries, rather than users of hazards information per se.

The discussion moved to the utility of the users chart and a proposed blank EO template. Tim Cohn questioned the usefulness of a filled in chart. Rosalind responded that they are simply a device for presenting hazards requirements briefly, in a standardized format. The idea is to facilitate presenting the EO needs for hazards to an audience that has little time for reading extended text. Roz encouraged everyone to test the proposed scheme and report back to the group. Craig Dobson inquired as to when the group should produce a final product. The reply was that an annotated outline is due in late October, before the next SDR/EOTG pair of meetings. The tables (if they work out) would serve as background and accompaniment for a text, which is due later. Craig Dobson asked if the domain for the National Plan was domestic or international in scope. There was some discussion, in which it was agreed that it should cover any hazard of area of the world that could impact US national interests. The question of observational requirements for Antarctica was raised; Gene Whitney said that he was not aware of any guidance on who would be “doing” Antarctica.

Action: The group members (below left) will seek involvement of the following people (below right):

Tim Cohn	Paula Gori (USGS) for landslides
	John Ingram or other (NWS) for floods
Mike Blanpied	John Filson (USGS) for earthquakes
Rosalind Helz	Bruce Hicks (NOAA) for volcanic ash
Craig Dobson	Steve Ambrose (NASA) for extreme weather
	Walid Ardilati (NASA) for sea ice
	John LaBrecque (NASA) for landslides, volcanoes, earthquakes
Sue Conard	Paul Greenfield or other (USFS) for wildfires

3. Deliverables and Next Actions

The next action for group members is to request participation from the hazard-specific contacts at key agencies. Another action is to formulate user needs for their hazard theme, and if they fit, to complete the User chart. The group will fill out the template and offer feedback for the standard format. Rosalind Helz will send out an email to confirm the information and deadline of its delivery. The initial feedback is due on October 17, 2003.

Dori Akerman will resend the United States Inter-agency Working Group on Earth Observation (IW-GEO) handouts from the last meeting.

4. Next meeting. The group tentatively agreed to hold the afternoon of October 23 (following the SDR discussion session that follows up the Disaster Roundtable of October 22). The SDR meeting will be at the WHCC from 10-12. The EOTG would meet (if necessary) from 1-3 pm.

NOTE: The Earth Observation Task Group later agreed to meet October 24, 2003 via teleconference from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET: 800-207-5493, passcode 301997.

5. Contact Information

SDR Leadership

Helen Wood, Chair, 301-713-1140, helen.wood@noaa.gov

John Filson, Vice-Chair for Science, 703-648-6715, jfilson@usgs.gov

Margaret Lawless, Vice-Chair for Policy, 202-646-3027, margaret.lawless@dhs.gov

Gene Whitney, NSTC Liaison, 202-456-6081, gwhitney@ostp.eop.gov

Earth Observation Task Group

Rosalind Helz, Chair, 703-648-6086, rhelz@usgs.gov

Secretariat

Dori Akerman, 703-560-7448, dori@grs-solutions.com

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.