

What We Discussed

We convened this workshop to elicit your recommendations for NOAA's future, particularly in the areas of technology policy and development of an integrated earth observation system. In your questions to Under Secretary Lautenbacher and in the breakout discussions which ensued, you told us:

That we should foster development of technology by the private sector rather than develop it ourselves, that you would like us to provide funding and clear specifications of our future requirements, and that we should promote creative use of existing and new technologies, for example, underwater acoustics as an element of an ocean observation system.

You advocated the following division of responsibilities among the various players with interests in developing an integrated earth observation system.

Federal Government/NOAA: Provide leadership and long-term commitment, funding, policy, guidance, and operational management; provide and maintain the fundamental infrastructure; maintain global participation.

Regional/State/Local Government: Help define research priorities by enunciating needs of governmental entities, play role in distributing data from the system

Industry: Help define research priorities and design requirements, identify efficient technologies to build into system, play role in planning and construction, support data integration and management, add value to data analysis and help disseminate information.

Academia: Carry out basic research, support link to operations, provide technical expertise including IT/data management, ensure that future scientists have relevant skills.

You also emphasized the importance of:

- Balancing sensitive relationships – e.g., between commercial and recreational fishing interests, or between public and private sector weather information providers.
-
- Placing greater emphasis on analysis of existing NOAA data vs acquisition of new data
- Improving accessibility of NOAA data; achieving consistency of data formats across NOAA
- Linking NOAA research to operations, services and decision-making

- Streamlining the NOAA grants process
- Streamlining and reconciling NOAA's legal mandates; aligning management structure with mandates
- Achieving consistently high-quality contact between NOAA and its stakeholders
- Promoting environmental literacy

Although other issues also emerged, those on the preceding list appeared to concern stakeholders across the board, whatever their backgrounds. We would appreciate your comments on any or all of these topics as we prepare to update the NOAA Strategic Plan.