

## **International Satellite Communication System (ISCS) New Service Delivery**

The International Satellite communication System (ISCS) Program Office of NOAA's National Weather Service, as announced in 02 December 2011 Change Notice on the ISCS broadcast, is initiating two new services for transmitting and receiving meteorological data to replace current systems that will be terminated by June 2012. The new telecommunication services are called the Secure Socket Layer Virtual Private Network (SSL VPN), and the Global Telecommunications System Internet File Service (GIFS) and will facilitate data exchange with the international community including the World Meteorological Organization Region IV (WMO RA-IV) Member States and other approved users in the Americas, Caribbean, and the Pacific.

The GIFS service enables RA-IV National and Regional Centers to securely obtain files from the Regional Telecommunications Hub (RTH) using computer systems and traditional File Transfer Protocol (FTP). GIFS file servers will provide authorized users access to all hydro-meteorological products currently broadcast over the ISCS. A complete listing of these products (by abbreviated WMO header) is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/iscs/baseline.html>.

The RA-IV national and regional centers will be able to use the new SSL VPN service to securely send data files to the RTH-Washington using FTP. Transition to the new service will begin January 30 and it is expected to be completed by the end of March 2012. All existing NOAAnet service used for sending data files using ISCS FTP will be terminated upon the successful transition of the Member States to the SSL VPN Service. Member States can continue to use the RTH-Washington eMail Data Input System (EDIS) as a backup service. After March 2012, NOAAnet (OPSnet) will no longer be available to users.

### **Key Dates for Transition to New ISCS:**

- December 16, 2011 Teleconference for RMTN Users questions about the Transition to new services
- January 30, 2012 – Transition to New ISCS SSL VPN Service begins
- March 31, 2012 – Completion of Transition to New ISCS SSL VPN Service
- April 1, 2012 - Remaining NOAAnet (OPSnet) terrestrial circuits now being used by RA-IV ISCS users to be terminated
- April 1, 2012 – New GIFS is available for operational use
- June 30, 2012 – The ISCS satellite broadcast service ends; all sites should be fully transitioned to GIFS

RTH-Washington will provide Member States with the free client software required for the transmission interface to the RTH SSL VPN server. All costs associated with maintaining a local VPN-capable Internet service to permit the SSL VPN connection will be the responsibility of the Member States. A proposed sequence for the individual site transitions to the SSL VPN service is listed below and will be discussed in the teleconference on December 16, 2011.

## Website and ISCS Point of Contact

Information and status updates about the implementation and transition to both of the new services (GIFS and SSL VPN) will be provided on the ISCS webpage:

<http://www.weather.gov/iscs/countdown.php>

Questions or comments may be directed to:

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## RA-IV RMTN Service Change: OPSnet to SSL VPN

*Proposed Transition Sequence Transition Period: January 30 - March 31, 2012*

Transition Sequence #	Site	Internet Access Avail	Email Access Avail	NOAAnet Port Speed	Radar* Site
1	Guyana	Y	Y	64k	✓
2	Guadeloupe	Y	Y	64k	✓
3	French Guiana	Y	Y	64k	✓
4	Martinique	Y	Y	64k	✓
5	Trinidad & Tobago	Y	Y	64k	✓
6	Jamaica	Y	Y	64k	✓
7	Belize	Y	Y	64k	✓
8	Barbados	Y	Y	64k	✓
9	Cayman Islands	Y	Y	64k	✓
10	Dominican Republic	Y	Y	64k	✓
11	Antigua & Barbuda	Y	Y	64k	
12	Grenada	Y	Y	64k	
13	Saint Lucia	Y	Y	64k	
14	Curacao	Y	Y	128k	
15	Sint Maarten	Y	Y	64k	
16	Nicaragua	Y	Y	64k	
17	Panama	Y	Y	64k	
18	Colombia	Y	Y	64k	
19	Costa Rica	Y	Y	64k	
20	Haiti	Y	Y	64k	
21	Bahamas	Y	Y	64k	
22	Honduras	Y	Y	64k	
23	El Salvador	Y	Y	64k	
24	Guatemala	Y	Y	64k	
25	Ecuador	Y	Y	64k	
26	San Juan	Y	Y	64k	
27	Mexico	Y	Y	64k	
28	Miami	Y	Y	64k	
29	Cuba	Y	Y	**	

\*\* - Trade Embargo Restrictions may apply and NOAA will work with partners to solve issues.

\*Radar Mosaic sites are scheduled to be transitioned first.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ISCS**

**Question 1:** Will users in RA-IV be able to continue to submit their data to ISCS over the terrestrial NOAAnet (OPSnet) circuits after June 2012?

**Response:** No, the ISCS Program Office is initiating a new Internet service for ISCS users to submit meteorological data to WMO RA-IV RTH–Washington. The new Internet based service will use Secure Socket Layer Virtual Private Network (SSL VPN) technology to enable RA-IV ISCS users to securely submit their data to the RTH using traditional File Transfer Protocol (FTP). The transition to the new Internet based service will begin in January 2012, and is expected to be completed by 31 March 2012. The existing NOAAnet (OPSnet) terrestrial circuits now being used by RA-IV ISCS users will be terminated immediately following the successful transition to the new ISCS SSL VPN Service.

**Question 2:** What changes are needed at each site and will equipment currently used to submit ISCS data be necessary to use the new ISCS SSL VPN service?

**Response:** The RA-IV users will need to make some changes to automated computer scripts that they may be using to submit their data. The modifications will at minimum include changing the IP address of where to send data and will need to install free ISCS software on their PC or workstation to be used for accessing the ISCS SSL VPN service over the Internet. WAFS workstation vendors will provide limited assistance in the transition process and activities, and should be contacted for further information.

**Question 3:** Who will be responsible for making the modifications and installing the ISCS provided software?

**Response:** The RA-IV ISCS users will be responsible for any modifications and installations needed. Users should contact their workstation vendor for assistance and/or instructions about how to modify existing workstation scripts used for the FTP of data, and how to install the ISCS SSL-VPN software to workstations.

**Question 4:** Will new access accounts and passwords for the ISCS SSL VPN service be assigned to RA-IV ISCS users?

**Response:** New accounts are not needed for existing RA-IV ISCS users because they will be able to continue to use their existing ISCS user account file folder names and passwords for access to the new ISCS SSL VPN service. New RA-IV ISCS users will be assigned an ISCS user account file folder name and password to access the ISCS SSL VPN service when they register with the ISCS Program office. Other users may also consult with the ISCS Program Office about their eligibility to use the new ISCS service.

**Question 5:** Where can RA-IV ISCS users get information about the new ISCS SSL VPN service and the upcoming transition away from the OPSnet circuits?

**Response:** Information and status updates about the new SSL VPN Service implementation and transition will be provided on the ISCS webpage:

<http://www.weather.gov/iscs/countdown.php>

This website will be updated continually to keep ISCS users informed about the progress and status of this transition.