

Terms of reference of the Providers' Forum

A. Background

1. The International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) was established on a voluntary basis as an informal body to promote cooperation, on matters of mutual interest related to civil satellite-based positioning, navigation, timing and value-added services, as well as the compatibility and interoperability of global navigation satellite systems, while increasing their use to support sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.
2. In response to a recommended action in the ICG workplan, providers of global and regional navigation satellite systems and satellite-based augmentation systems proposed establishing a Providers' Forum to enhance compatibility and interoperability among current and future systems. The first Providers' Forum meeting, co-chaired by the United States of America and India, was held on 4 September 2007, immediately preceding the second meeting of the ICG. China, India, Japan, the Russian Federation and the United States, as well as the European Community, were present at the meeting.

B. Objectives

3. The objectives of the Providers' Forum are to:
 - a) Promote compatibility and interoperability among current and future global and regional space-based systems by exchanging detailed information about planned or operating systems and the policies and procedures that govern their service provision, consistent with the template for information sharing among providers that was circulated prior to the first meeting;
 - b) Act as a mechanism to continue discussions on important issues addressed by the ICG that require focused inputs from system providers.
4. The Providers' Forum is not a policymaking body, but provides a means to promote discussion among system providers based on agreed guidelines for provision of open services, including transparency, cooperation, performance monitoring and spectrum protection; and agreed principles for ensuring compatibility and interoperability among systems.

C. Membership

5. The Providers' Forum will be open to States Members of the United Nations that are or will be global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) providers. Current members and their respective systems are as follows:
 - a) *China*: Compass/BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (CNSS);
 - b) *India*: Global Positioning System and Geostationary (GEO) Augmented Navigation System (GAGAN) and Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS);
 - c) *Japan*: Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS) and Multi-functional Transport Satellite (MTSAT) Satellite-based Augmentation System (MSAS);
 - d) *Russian Federation*: Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS) and Wide-area System of Differential Corrections and Monitoring (SDCM);
 - e) *United States*: Global Positioning System (GPS) and Wide-area Augmentation System (WAAS);
 - f) *European Community*: European Satellite Navigation System (Galileo) and European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS).
6. Additional Member States who become GNSS service providers will be invited to join the Providers' Forum upon consensus of the current members.

D. Procedures of work, structure and organization

7. During each meeting, the members will select, on the basis of consensus, a chair for the next meeting. The Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, consistent with its role as the Executive Secretariat of ICG, will also fulfil these responsibilities for the Providers' Forum, in support of the chair.
8. The Providers' Forum will convene once every year in conjunction with the ICG annual meeting and more often if needed. Actions and recommendations developed by working groups of ICG that could impact the compatibility and interoperability, system development and operations, and/or service provision policies and procedures of providers of GNSS will be of particular interest to the Providers' Forum. Therefore, the results of Providers' Forum deliberations and consensus decisions on these and other issues will be reported to ICG as appropriate and when possible, at the next scheduled plenary session of ICG immediately following a Providers' Forum meeting.

9. The meetings of the Providers' Forum will be organized by the chair and designated host, with support from the Executive Secretariat. Each member should designate its principal and additional points of contact.
10. Any recommendations resulting from Providers' Forum meetings will be decided on the basis of consensus of its members.
11. Members will fund their own participation in the activities of the Providers' Forum. Financial support (in-kind or direct funding) to the Executive Secretariat that is above and beyond the annual budget of the Office for Outer Space Affairs or existing funds provided for ICG secretariat services will be provided by members on a voluntary basis.
12. The Providers' Forum may revise these terms of reference on the basis of proposals made by members and adopted by consensus.