

C OVERVIEW - INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE/ENGR/TECH ADVISORY PANEL (ISETAP)

Leonard Slosky (Governor's Assistant - Science & Technology -
Denver, CO)

State Implementation - Policy Impacts & Institutional Issues

In 1978, the Intergovernmental Science, Engineering & Technology Advisory Panel (ISETAP) in the White House conducted a major study of Landsat use by state governments. The study concluded that "Landsat is an important technology that is presently making and can continue to make significant, often unique, contributions to the information base required for state government's management of natural resources." The study identified the principal characteristics which make Landsat data valuable to state governments.

The study determined the operational and R&D applications of Landsat data by state governments. The study assessed the commitments which state governments have made to utilizing Landsat. It was concluded that Landsat is now cost effective for a number of applications and will become more cost effective in an increasing number of applications.

ISETAP identified 8 major constraints to the utilization of Landsat by state governments —

- Data timeliness
- Indadequate federal technology transfer
- Ill-defined federal agency responsibilities
- Failure of federal agencies to use and encourage Landsat use
- Lack of state involvement in Landsat decicion-making
- Lack of federal understanding of state governments
- State constraints to the use of Landsat

The ISETAP Study made six major recommendations —

- The federal government should make a firm commitment to assure Landsat data continuity and compatibility
- The Landsat system should be federally supported
- Federal agency responsibilities should be clearly defined
- The Federal government should make the commitment to prior consultation with the states in Landsat decisions.

- The Federal government should make a strong commitment to a systematic and ongoing technology transfer program
- The data processing and delivery system should be improved.

Following the ISETAP study, the President issued NSC Directive 42 in June 1978. This Directive stated that —

- The United States will develop and operate on a global basis, active and passive remote sensing operations in support of national objectives.
- The United States will encourage domestic commercial exploitation of space capabilities and systems for economic benefit and to promote the technological position of the United States. However, all United States earth-oriented remote sensing satellites will require United States government authorization and supervision or regulation.
- Advances in earth imaging from space will be permitted under controls and when such needs are justified and assessed in relation to civil benefits, national security and foreign policy. Controls, as appropriate, on other forms of remote earth sensing will be established.
- Data and results from the civil space programs will be provided the widest practical dissemination to improve the condition of human beings on earth and to provide improved space services for the United States and other nations of the world.
- The Directive established a NSC Policy Review Committee to provide a forum to all Federal agencies for their policy views, to advise on proposed changes to national space policy, to resolve issues referred to the Committee, and to provide for rapid referral of issues to the President for decision as necessary.

Under the direction of the Policy Review Committee, the Private Sector Involvement Study and the Integrated Remote Sensing Systems Study were conducted. The Private Sector study explored mechanisms for expanded commercial involvement in land remote sensing. The study concluded that the private sector was not prepared to invest in the Landsat space or ground system without major government guarantees or subsidies. The Integrated Systems Study explored the feasibility of integrating land, meteorologic and ocean remote sensing space and ground systems of the civil defense agencies. The study concluded that certain integrations were technically feasible and could result in a cost savings of 15 to 20%. Institutional and technical barriers precluded more extensive integration particularly between civil and defense systems.

These studies culminated in Presidential Directive 54 in November 1979. This Directive assigned to NOAA the responsibility for managing the US civil operational land remote sensing activities. NOAA was directed to prepare a comprehensive transition plan and to establish an Interagency Program Board for continuing federal coordination and regulation. The directive restated the goal of eventual operation of the civil land remote sensing system by the private sector.

In mid June, NOAA submitted the Transition Plan to the White House and presented discussion document to the Congress.

The Transition Plan does not adequately address several of the key issues identified by the ISETAP report.

Now, the proposed Reagan budget cuts, further threaten the ability of state governments to utilize Landsat data. The current state of affairs will be discussed in more detail.