

Argos User's Manual

Worldwide tracking and environmental
monitoring by satellite



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1. Introduction

Argos is a global satellite-based location and data collection system dedicated to studying and protecting our planet's environment.

It allows any mobile object equipped with a compatible transmitter to be located across the world. It also offers the possibility of collecting data from measurement sensors connected to this transmitter. The rules of the Argos system restrict its use to programs for studying and protecting the environment and protecting human life or programs of declared government interest.

The Argos system results from Franco-American cooperation involving:

- [CNES](#) (*French Space Agency*),
- [NOAA](#) (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), with support from [NASA](#) (National Aeronautics and Space Administration),
- [CLS](#) (*Collecte Localisation Satellites*), operator of the system.

In 2006, [Eumetsat](#) (European meteorological organization) joined the Operations Committee.



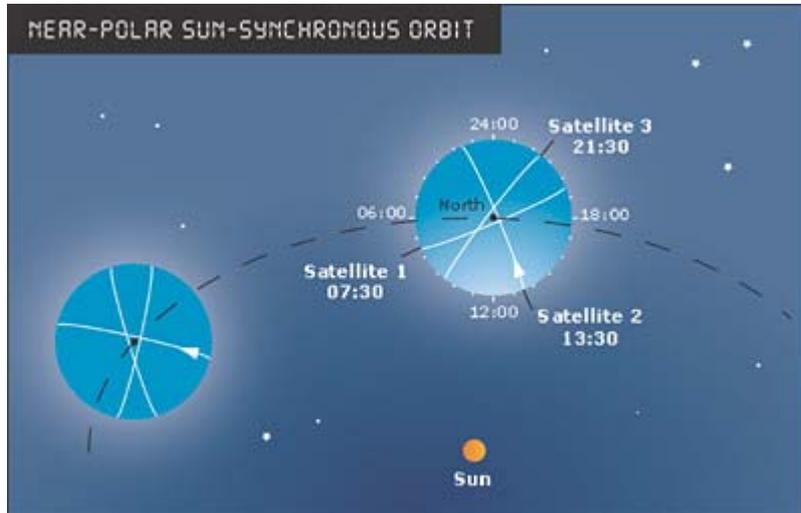
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2. System components

2.1 Overview

1/ Argos platforms automatically transmit messages that are received by satellites in low polar orbit.

2/ The satellites then transfer the messages to ground receiving stations.



3/ The ground stations automatically transfer the messages to Argos Processing Centers. The Processing Centers calculate the position of the transmitters and process the data measured by the sensors.

4/ Finally, the Processing Centers automatically deliver the results to the users. Several methods of data access are available:

- secure connection to the **ArgosWeb** (www.argos-system.org) website,
- **ArgosDirect automatic distribution** (e-mail, ftp, fax or data transmission network, or CD-ROM),
- connection to **ArgosServer** transmission network (Telnet),
- custom types of dispatch (archiving data for up to twelve months, during which they can be sent on request).

2.2 Platforms

A platform refers to **any equipment integrating an Argos-certified transmitter**. Each platform is characterized by an identification number specific to its transmission electronics. A platform transmits periodic messages characterized by the following parameters:

- **transmission frequency** (401.650 MHz \pm 30 kHz), which must be stable as the location is computed on the basis of Doppler effect measurement (see [Chapter 3.2](#)),
- **repetition period**, which is the interval of time between two consecutive message dispatches, varying between 90 and 200 seconds according to the use of the platform,
- **platform identification number**,
- **all collected data**.

The transmission duration of each message is less than one second.

2.3 Satellites

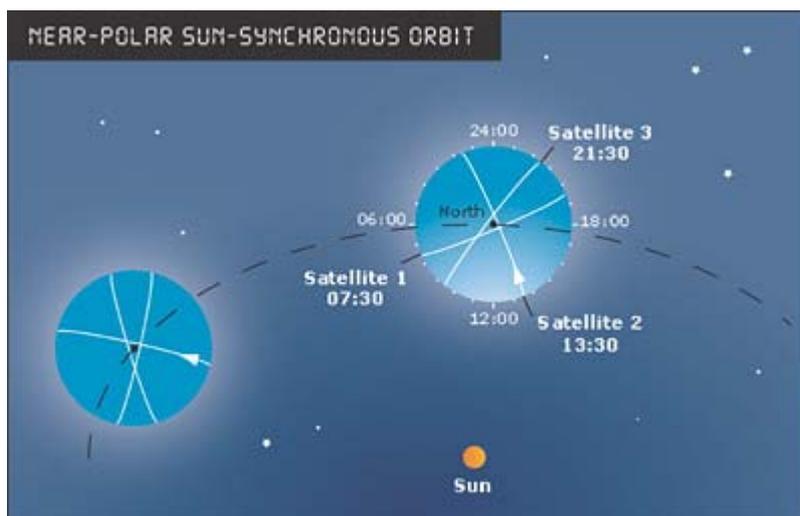
The Argos instrument flies aboard **POES (Polar Orbiting Environmental Satellites) satellites** of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) and MetOp, of the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites ([Eumetsat](#)). The first **MetOp** satellite was launched on 19 October 2006.

The next instruments will be carried on board the two MetOp satellites (planned for 2010 and 2014) and on NOAA N' (planned for 2009). Cooperation projects with other space agencies are currently being studied.

Argos messages are received by the satellite then simultaneously:

- 1/ stored on the onboard recorder and retransmitted to the ground each time the satellite passes over one of the three main receiving stations: Wallops Island (Virginia, United States), Fairbanks (Alaska, United States), and Svalbard (Norway), or
- 2/ retransmitted to the ground to regional reception stations in the satellites's field of view.

The satellites are on a **polar orbit at an altitude of 850 km**: the satellites see the North and South Poles on each orbital revolution. The orbit planes revolve around the polar axis at the same speed as the Earth around the Sun, i.e. one revolution a year. Each orbital revolution transects the equatorial plane at fixed local solar times. Therefore, **each satellite passes within visibility of any given transmitter at almost the same local time each day**. The time taken to complete a revolution around the Earth is approximately 100 minutes.

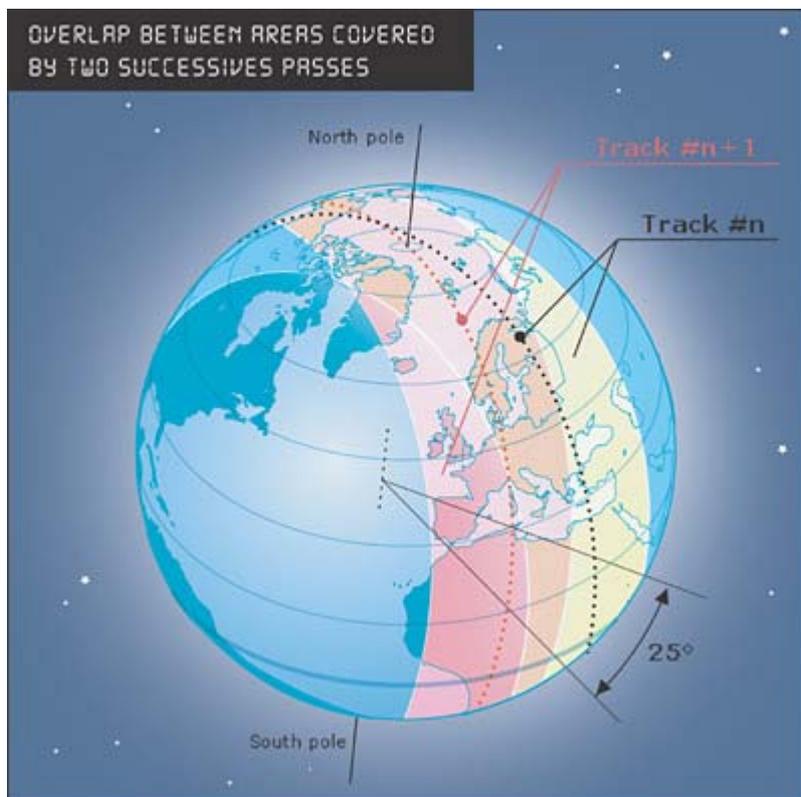


At any given time, each satellite simultaneously "sees" all transmitters within an **approximate 5000 kilometer diameter "footprint", or visibility circle**. As the satellite proceeds in orbit, the visibility circle sweeps a 5000 kilometer swath around the Earth, covering both poles.



Due to the Earth's rotation, the swath shifts 25° west (2800 km at the Equator) around the polar axis at each revolution. This results in overlap between successive swaths. Since overlap increases with latitude, the number of daily passes over a transmitter also increases with latitude.

At the poles, **the satellites see each transmitter on every pass, approximately 14 times per day per satellite.**



The **period during which the satellite can receive messages from a platform** is equivalent to the time during which the platform is within its visibility. **On average this is 10 minutes.**

2.4 Receiving stations

Nearly 50 stations receive real time data from the satellites and retransmit them to processing centers.



This network of L band antennas, distributed to provide worldwide coverage, is a key element of the Argos service.

Main receiving stations

The three main receiving stations collect all the messages recorded by the satellites during an orbit, thus providing worldwide cover. These three stations are Wallops Island and Fairbanks in the United States and Svalbard in Norway.

Data received by the satellites are retransmitted to regional stations in real time if the station is within satellite visibility. The main receiving stations also receive data in real time.

2.5 Processing centers

Two processing centers with redundant operation, one near **Washington D.C. (United States)** and the other in **Toulouse, France**, process all received data. The computers calculate locations and process the received data.

The following processing is carried out at the global processing centers:

- check of message quality, reception level, time-tagging, transmitter identification number, sensor message lengths and received frequency value (to compute the location);
- message time-tagging in coordinated universal time (UTC);
- message classification by platform and by chronological order;
- data processing.

All these results are stored and made available to users.



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2.6 User Services centers across the world

The User Services teams are the first contact points for any request for service or technical support from Argos users. They manage all data base declarations to allow users to obtain data correctly and act as an interface with Argos's technical staff. If they cannot respond directly to user requests, they will direct users to experts able to provide a satisfactory answer.

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3. Location calculations

3.1 Overview

Argos platforms automatically transmit messages which are received by satellites and relayed to Argos processing centers to compute results and make them available. Locations are computed from all the messages received during a satellite pass. Argos system users have the advantage of two independent positioning modes:

- **Argos location:** Argos centers calculate a transmitter's location using the Doppler Effect on transmission frequency.
- **GPS positioning:** On request from the user, a specific processing module extracts the GPS positions included in the messages, validates them and distributes them in the same format as the Argos locations.

In both cases, the coordinates used are the latitude and longitude and the reference system is WGS 84 (World Geodetic System 1984).



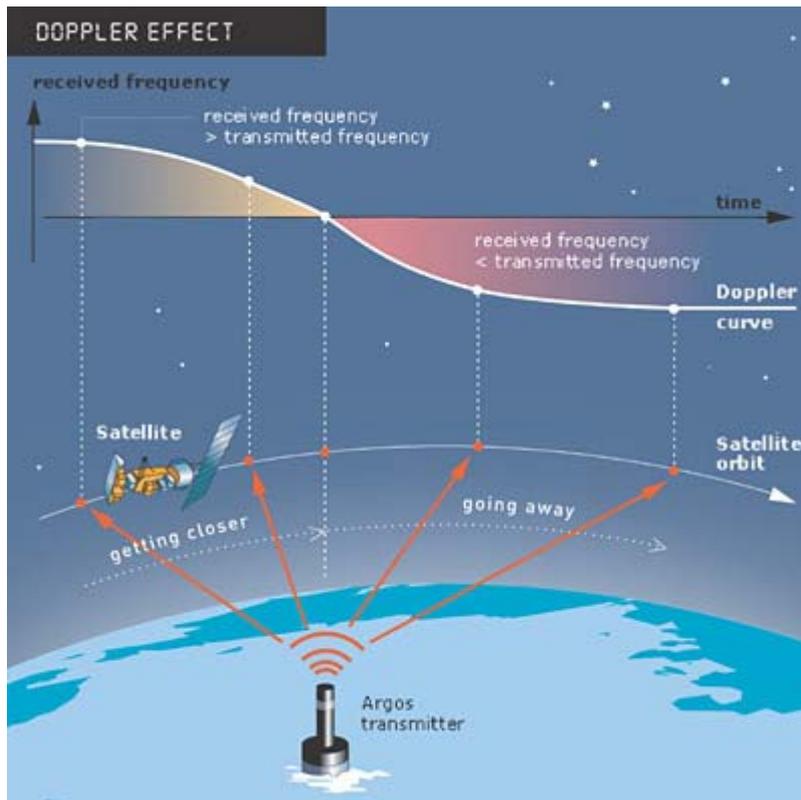
Consulting a platform's location with ArgosWeb.

3.2 Argos location principle

The Argos system calculates locations by measuring the Doppler Effect on transmission frequency. The Doppler Effect is the change in frequency of a sound wave or electromagnetic wave that occurs when the source of vibration and observer are moving relative to each other.

The Doppler Effect

The classic case is when an observer notices a change in the sound when a train approaches and moves away. Similarly, when the satellite approaches a transmitter, the frequency of the transmitted signal measured by the onboard receiver is higher than the actual transmitted frequency, and lower when it moves away.



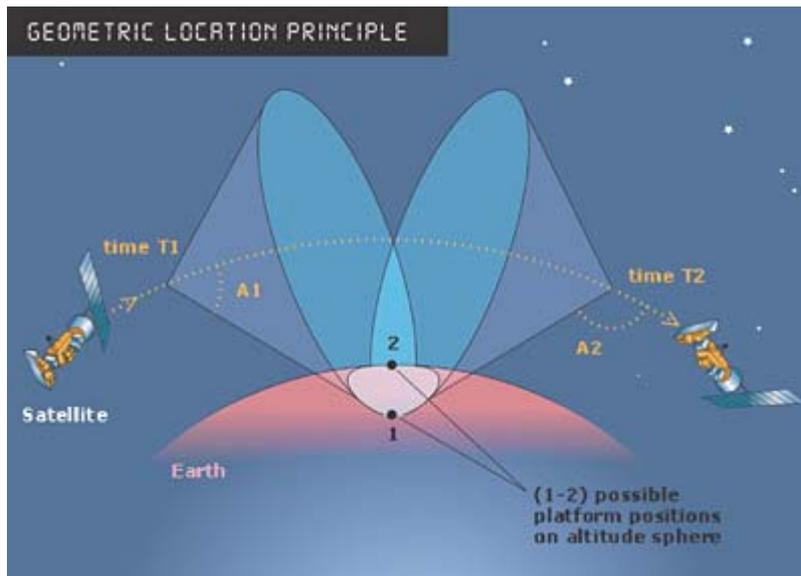
Each time the satellite instrument receives a message from a transmitter, it measures the frequency and time-tags the arrival. The Argos processing centers compute the locus of possible positions for the transmitter, a cone defined by:

- a **vertex at the position of the satellite when it received the message,**
- **the angle at the vertex,** a function of the difference between the frequency measured on board the satellite and the transmitter frequency.

Location calculations

If four or more messages are received by the satellite, the location calculation process follows the following steps.

An initial estimate of the platform position is computed from the first and last messages collected during a single satellite pass and the last computed frequency of the transmitter. The intersection of the cones for these two messages with the terrestrial radius plus the height declared for the transmitter (altitude sphere) gives two possible locations.



For each of the two possible locations, a least-squares analysis is used to refine the estimates of the transmitter's position and transmit frequency. If this analysis fails, the location calculation process cannot continue and no location is provided.

The **location with the minimal residual error is chosen, and its plausibility is tested.**

Plausibility tests

Four plausibility tests are used to validate the location:

- **Minimum residual error,**
- **Transmission frequency continuity,**
- **Minimum displacement** (shortest distance covered since latest location),
- **Plausibility of velocity between locations.**

Two tests must be positive for the location to be validated. If the first location fails more than two tests, the second possible location is tested. If both locations fail more than two tests, then the location is not distributed to users, unless they subscribe to Service Plus/Auxiliary Location Processing (See [Chapter 3.5](#) for more information).

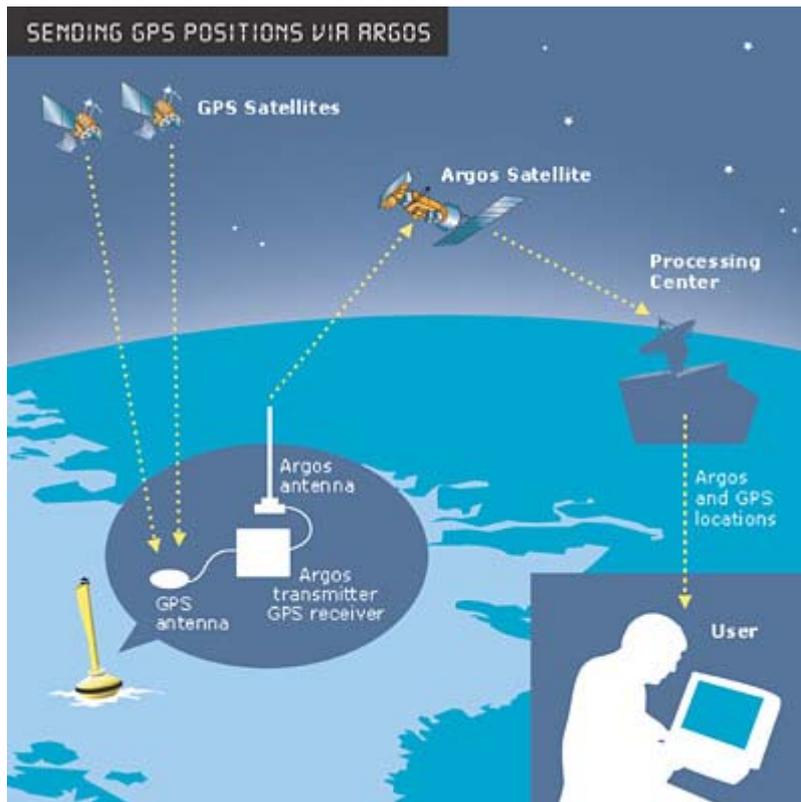
A location class (estimation of the location accuracy) is calculated using the residual error and the satellite pass characteristics.

Altitude estimations

Location computations are extremely sensitive to altitude variations. A significant error in altitude can considerably reduce the accuracy of a location, especially if satellite visibility is unfavorable.

To improve location accuracy, a **digital elevation model (DEM)** is automatically included in all location computations for ground mobiles and birds. The DEM used is based on the USGS GTOPO30 model. It is broken down into squares with sides of 30 arc seconds of an arc and is used to estimate platform altitude.

3.3 Transmitting GPS data via Argos



The Argos system can be used to transmit GPS positions. The advantages are:

- **Positions are more accurate and do not depend on transmitter quality,**
- **Positions can be collected more regularly over the day.**

The GPS positions are transmitted in Argos messages. To allow GPS positions to be processed and presented in Argos location form, their decoding must be declared to User Services.

3.4 Location classes

From the beginning of Argos service, locations have been classified according to the following criteria:

- **type of location** (Argos or GPS),
- **estimated error***,
- **number of messages received** during the pass.

For each location for which at least four messages are received during a satellite pass, an estimated error is calculated. The error is assumed to be isotropic and hence characterized by a single number called the radius of error. It corresponds to one standard deviation (sigma) of the estimated location error. The location class is attributed based on the radius of error. The location class and associated error is sufficient for many applications.

Still, the location error is not strictly isotropic and hence is better approximated by an ellipse than by a circle. Users wishing to use an improved description of the location error, for example to assimilate positions into an animal movement model, will now have access to this information (see [Chapters 3.6](#) and [3.7](#)). Note however, that the classical error description based on location class and radius of error will remain available to all users.

| Class | Type | Estimated error* | Number of messages received per satellite pass |
|-----------|-------|--|--|
| G | GPS | < 100m | 1 message or more |
| 3 | Argos | < 250m | 4 messages or more |
| 2 | Argos | 250m < < 500m | 4 messages or more |
| 1 | Argos | 500m < < 1500m | 4 messages or more |
| 0* | Argos | > 1500m | 4 messages or more |
| A | Argos | No accuracy estimation | 3 messages |
| B | Argos | No accuracy estimation | 2 messages |
| Z | Argos | Invalid location (available only for Service Plus/Auxiliary Location Processing) | |

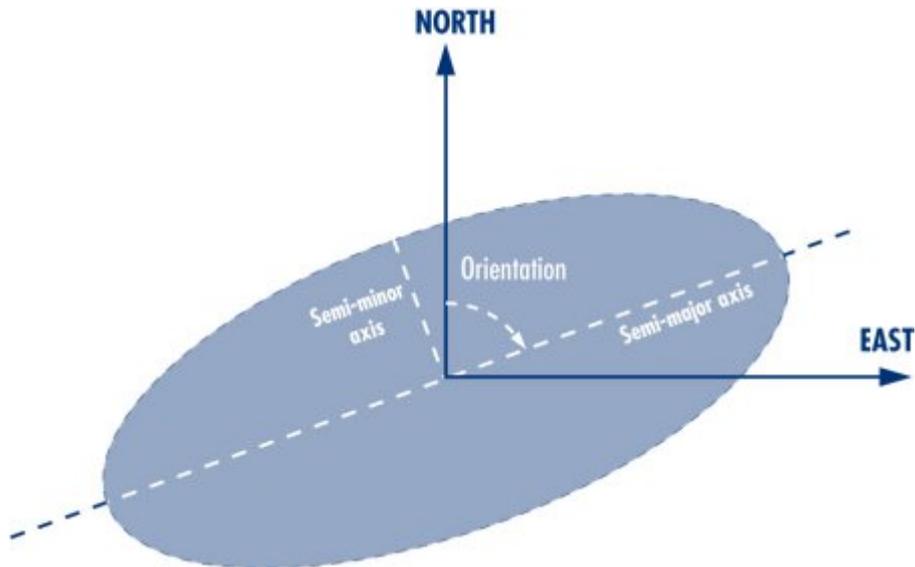
* **Class 0 locations** are available by request only.

3.5 Service Plus/Auxiliary Location Processing

This value-added service **provides users with complementary information about transmitter performance**. It also distributes **non-standard locations**, including locations calculated with less than four messages (Locations classes A, B, and Z) and locations that fail plausibility tests. This service is very useful in certain cases, and is thus activated by default for a number of applications, including animal tracking.

3.6 Additional data to qualify error estimates for Location Classes 0,1,2,3

Due to the satellite's polar orbit, the Argos position error is better represented by an ellipse rather than by a circle. For those users who wish to use it, CLS now provides the following values corresponding to the ellipse of error Class 0,1,2,3 locations:



- **Error radius**
- **Length of the semi-major axis**
- **Length of the semi-minor axis**
- **Ellipse orientation** (expressed as an angle with the North, going towards to the East)
- **GDOP*** (Geometric Dilution of Precision)

These values are available as **Diagnostic Data** in ArgosWeb and **distributed in tabular format ONLY** via ArgosDirect.

***Geometric Dilution of Precision (GDOP)** is a measure of the effect of the geometry of the satellite-beacon configuration on location accuracy. The actual Argos location accuracy depends on both the GDOP value and the quality of the transmitter (frequency stability). As a general rule, a smaller GDOP value yields a more accurate position.

3.6.1 How to access these parameters

These parameters are available as **Diagnostic Data**.

Via ArgosWeb

Users can access the information via ArgosWeb in the **Consultation/Data Table** section (display

Diagnostic Data by clicking on this icon , then selecting Diagnostic data) or from the **Data**

Download screen (display diagnostic data by clicking on Diagnostic data). These parameters are available in clearly identified table columns (see below). For additional information, consult ArgosWeb's online help.

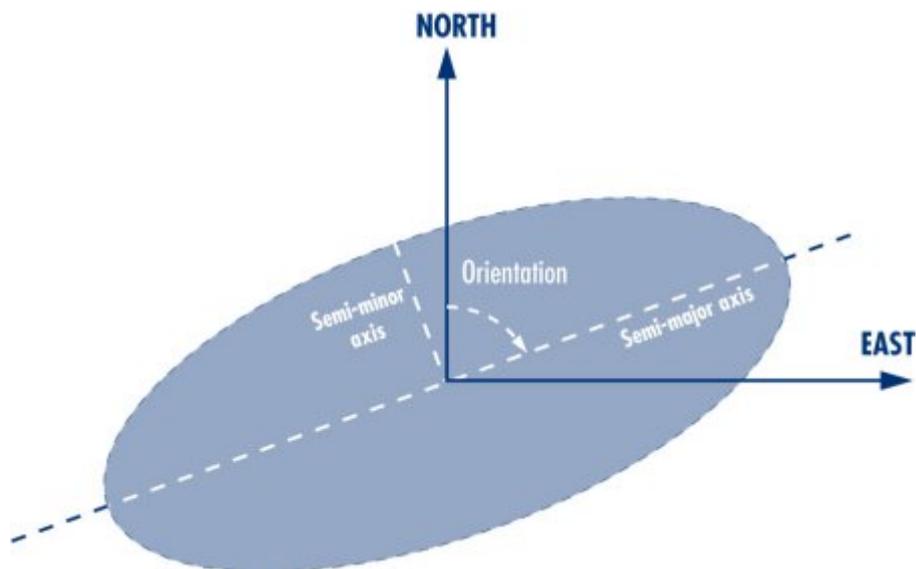
Via ArgosDirect

These parameters are also available via ArgosDirect. Users must request them from their User Services. They are distributed in clearly identified table columns (see below).

| Column title | Error radius | Semi-major axis | Semi-minor axis | Ellipse orientation | GDOP |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|------|
| Units | Meters | Meters | Meters | Degrees (from North when heading East) | m/Hz |

3.7 Additional data for qualifying Location Classes A and B

For Class A and B locations (for which users previously had no information on the accuracy), CLS now provides:



- Orientation of the ellipse
- **GDOP*** (Geometric Dilution of Precision)

These values are available as **Diagnostic Data** in ArgosWeb and **distributed in tabular format ONLY** via ArgosDirect.

For more information on how these parameters are distributed to users, please see [Chapter 3.6.1](#) (above).

***Geometric Dilution of Precision (GDOP)** is a measure of the effect of the geometry of the satellite-beacon configuration on location accuracy. The actual Argos location accuracy depends on both the GDOP value and the quality of the transmitter (frequency stability). As a general rule, a smaller GDOP value yields a more accurate position.

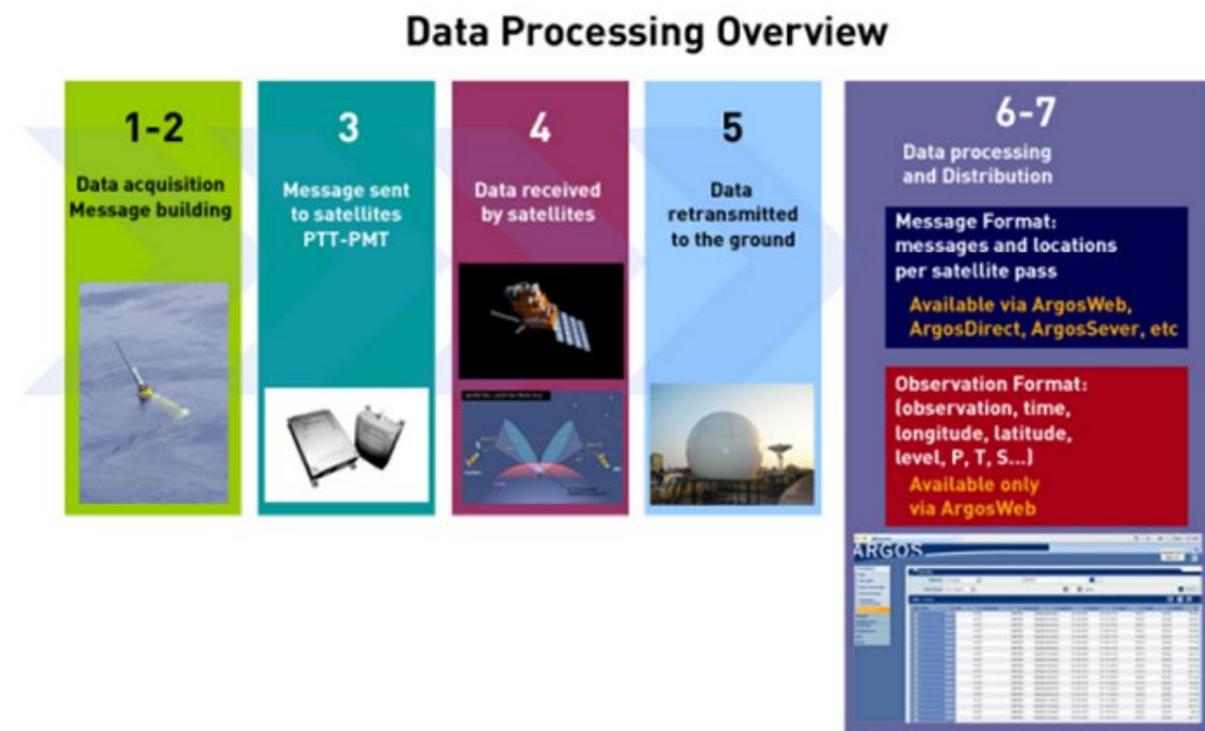
4. Data processing

4.1 Overview

Argos messages are sequences of binary digits. The data contained in these messages are processed then distributed by the Argos system. Data processing operations range from straightforward binary-to-decimal conversion to sophisticated transfer functions.

The system can run different types of processing on the same data, so that raw data can be distributed as validated physical values as well. In addition, if the messages contain GPS positions, these may also be decoded and distributed in the same way as Argos locations.

4.1.1 Observation processing vs message processing



The above schema illustrates the different steps involved in collecting and processing in-situ data at CLS:

1. **Data acquisition:** The platform collects data and dates the observations.
2. **Message building:** The measurements are dated, encoded and recorded in messages.
3. **Messages sent to satellites:** Messages are then sent by the Argos transmitter (PTT) or modem (PMT) to the satellites.
4. **Data received by satellites:** The satellites receive the messages, date them and measure signal frequency.
5. **Messages transmitted back to the ground:** The satellites then retransmit to ground stations all received messages, along with the date they were received and frequency measurements.
6. **Message processing:** Argos centers calculate platform positions by processing the received frequency measurements (Doppler Effect), or by extracting the GPS positions contained in the messages. Messages are then decoded in accordance with user's needs.

7. **Observation processing:** The observations made by the platform are extracted from messages, dated, given a geolocation and validated.

Since May 20, 2008, complete Observation processing (Step 7) is available for all Argos platforms.

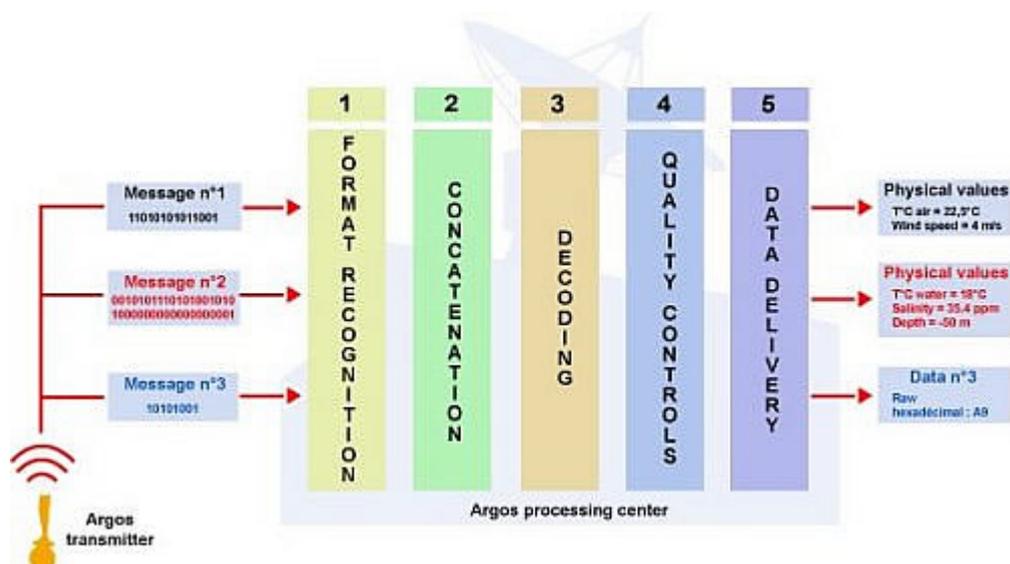
User results are currently available in two formats:

- **Message format (Step 6):** User results are grouped together by satellite pass, then distributed along with a location (corresponds to the location calculated for the satellite pass).
- **Observation format (Step 7):** Physical data (sensor measurements) are dated and assigned a location based on the time the observation was made and the best corresponding location (calculated as close to the observation time as possible).

4.1.2 Multi-format data processing

The Argos processing system can handle several message formats for one transmitter. A message format is a specific type of message sent by an Argos platform. Each format has a specific structure. The Argos processing system can now handle processing of a variety of formats for the same platform.

Here is an example of **how the processing system works** for an Argos platform transmitting three different types of messages:



Three different types of messages from one platform are converted into physical values by the Argos processing system.

4.2 Message format recognition

Once the system recognizes a binary message based on its Argos ID number, then the message format must be recognized, so that specific processing can be applied. Several identification procedures are available:

1/ The system recognizes all messages from a platform and systematically applies the same processing. This type of recognition offers the possibility of processing messages of varying length in an identical manner (no default is available).

2/ The system recognizes the message format through its length and processes accordingly. If the length of the received message is different than the declared length, the data are

distributed in 8-bit hexadecimal words (default format).

3/ The system recognizes the message format through an equation of the type $[f(Ax + By + C)]$, x and y being 2 values encoded in a part of the message, and processes accordingly. With this type of recognition, if no equation is verified the data will be distributed in 8-bit hexadecimal words (default format).

4.3 Message segmentation

During this step, messages are segmented according to their format. A segment is defined by a position in a message, a length in bits and a specific type of binary decoding. This segment is called a binary element.

There are three types of binary elements:

- a **standard element**,
- a **checksum**,
- a **block** (set of standard elements repeated n times in a message).

Binary segmentation is determined by the platform manufacturer.

Standard element

A **standard element is a series of bits which, after decoding, provides a value** (integer or real) or a string.

Checksum

A **checksum is an encoded binary element used to validate the integrity of an Argos message**. Bit errors may slip in as messages are transmitted through space: platform to satellite to reception antenna to processing center.

Using an encoding algorithm, the platform computes a sum and encodes it in the message. Argos processing uses the same algorithm to decode this sum. If the two sums are identical, the message is considered to be valid. Checksums only apply to parts of Argos messages. Several checksums may be encoded in one message.

Block

A **block is a binary element of fixed length repeated n times and containing one or more standard elements**. The block may have a fixed or variable length. This type of element is used to declare measurement sets (e.g. Temperature-Salinity-Pressure triplets) repeated several times in an Argos message.

4.4 Data decoding

Data decoding converts a raw binary value into a physical value. The first step consists in decoding the binary elements. The data can be computed from two binary elements. The second step is to restore the physical value using a transfer function. Once processed, the data (or physical values) are defined by an output format:

- **Decimal** (e.g. 158)
- **Hexadecimal** (e.g. 9E)
- **Scientific** (0.158E + 3).

The main transfer functions available to convert your data are listed in the table below:

| Transfer function | Description |
|------------------------|---|
| B1 Curve | Calibration table: linear function |
| B2 Curve | Calibration table with a compensating sensor: linear function |
| B3 Curve | Polynomial function (2nd degree) with one compensating sensor |
| B4 Curve | Polynomial function (5th degree) with one compensating sensor |
| Exponential | Exponential function with a compensating sensor |
| Identity | Decimal conversion of the raw value without transfer function |
| Polynomial XY | Polynomial function (4th degree) with one or two compensating sensors |
| Polynomial XZY | Polynomial function (3rd degree) with 2 or 3 compensating sensors |
| Weather modules | Specific modules for calibration of weather data |
| Lookup Table | Table converting decimal data into characters |
| Table | Extraction of a physical value from a table |

If your calibration does not correspond to these standard functions, it may be possible to develop a specific processing module (software module), subject to acceptance by Argos processing experts.

4.5 Observation processing

Observation processing is performed independently of Message processing (Step 6) and therefore does not affect user's results processed and distributed in Message format.

As shown in the schema below, the observation calculation process does not interfere with the Message processing procedure. User results are still available in Message format via the usual Argos data distribution channels (ArgosDirect, ArgosServer, ArgosWeb...).



The new capabilities of the Argos processing system make it possible for users to receive the decoded physical values measured by a platform's different sensors (See [Chapter 4.1: Data Processing Overview](#)). These resulting observations are time-stamped (marked with the date and time calculated or transmitted by the platform), then the dated observations are assigned a location, based on the closest corresponding Argos or GPS position.

To take advantage of Observation processing, users must provide the related data decoding and assembly parameters to their User Services Group, with a description for each different platform type (this information is generally available from the platform manufacturer).

Observation processing is already available for meteorological platforms that distribute their data to the GTS (See [Chapter 6.7: GTS](#))

4.5.1 Advantages of Observation processing

The Observation processing module makes it possible to recover the time stamped, geo-located physical measurements made by a platform, in a useable format, simplifying interpretation. The values are arranged in chronological order by observation time, then by level (height or depth in meters above or below sea-level).

Another significant advantage of observations is a reduction in the amount of data distributed. This reduction is due to the quality-controls performed (checksum, compression index for sensor values,...) as well as to the suppression of redundant messages.

4.5.2 Distributing observations

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Consultation | In order to consult observations, users should logon to ArgosWeb, then select the Observations tab in the Consultation menu bar. |
| Map | |
| Data table | |
| Most recent data | |
| Data Download | |
| Download COM/PRV/DIAG | |
| Observations | |

Users can select the data they wish to view by choosing between:

- All user platforms,
- One or more Argos ID numbers,
- One or more platform names,
- One or more platform types,
- One or more Argos programs,
- One or more WMO ID numbers (only for platforms distributing data on GTS)

Data from 10 days prior to the request (including the current day) are available for user consultation. Data are distributed in tabular format and can be exported to CSV or Excel.

| | |
|---|--|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> All ▼ </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> All </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> by ID numb. (s) </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> by name(s) </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> by type(s) </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> by model(s) </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> by program(s) </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> by WMO ID numb. (s) </div> </div> | <p>By default, observations are distributed in the following way:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. by program 2. by ID number 3. by date and observation time 4. by level (in meters) of the physical measurement |
|---|--|

Data viewing options and observation sorting can be modified via ArgosWeb. Examples about how to interpret observations are shown below:

| Data - 34 items | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Platform ID No. | Platform type | Obs. Date | Latitude | Longitude | Loc. date | Level | ATMPRES | SEATEMP |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 03:40:00 | 10° 58' 45"N | 65° 52' 29"W | 2008/07/27 01:25:42 | 0 | 1013.1 | 26.23 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 04:40:00 | 10° 58' 45"N | 65° 52' 29"W | 2008/07/27 01:25:42 | 0 | 1012.9 | 26.149 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 05:40:00 | 11° 22' 13"N | 65° 20' 19"W | 2008/07/27 09:40:36 | 0 | 1012.5 | 25.989 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 06:40:00 | 11° 22' 13"N | 65° 20' 19"W | 2008/07/27 09:40:36 | 0 | 1012.3 | 26.069 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 07:40:00 | 11° 22' 13"N | 65° 20' 19"W | 2008/07/27 09:40:36 | 0 | 1012.3 | 26.23 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 08:40:00 | 11° 22' 13"N | 65° 20' 19"W | 2008/07/27 09:40:36 | 0 | 1012.5 | 26.31 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 09:40:00 | 11° 22' 13"N | 65° 20' 19"W | 2008/07/27 09:40:36 | 0 | 1013.0 | 26.39 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 10:40:00 | 11° 22' 58"N | 65° 17' 59"W | 2008/07/27 10:03:39 | 0 | 1013.2 | 26.39 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 69005 | DRIFTER | 2008/07/27 11:40:00 | 11° 22' 58"N | 65° 17' 59"W | 2008/07/27 10:03:39 | 0 | 1013.7 | 26.47 |

The above screen capture shows nine observations (nine different dates) for platform ID number 69005, distributed via ArgosWeb Observations. Each observation is made up of two physical measurements (ATMPRES and SEATEMP) at level 0M. We can note that the time of the position is different from the observation time (time at which the physical observations were made) but that the position time is as close as possible to the observation time.

| Platform ID No. | Platform type | Obs. Date | Latitude | Longitude | Loc. date | Level | PSAL | TEMP |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -5 | 34.702 | 27.586 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -9 | 34.702 | 27.57 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -19 | 34.703 | 27.571 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -29 | 34.702 | 27.569 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -39 | 34.703 | 27.579 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -49 | 34.703 | 27.575 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -59 | 34.703 | 27.582 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -89 | 34.676 | 25.023 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -79 | 34.657 | 20.71 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -89 | 34.705 | 19.497 |
| 21903 | ARGO FLOAT | 2008/07/27 23:48:00 | 11° 45' 38"S | 89° 39' 51"E | 2008/07/27 23:41:53 | -98 | 34.742 | 19.064 |

This ArgosWeb screen capture shows an observation collected from platform ID 21903, composed of two types of physical measurements (PSAL and TEMP). Each one was measured at 11 different levels (-5m, -9m, -19m...). This observation is a vertical profile of two measurements, dated and positioned (one date and one location for all levels). Information relative to the observation and positioning time are repeated for all of the measurements.

4.6 Should I choose observations or messages?

The procedures for “Observation processing” and “Message processing” are completely independent. Therefore, user results can be distributed simultaneously as messages and observations.

4.6.1 Observation processing

Observations are useful in the following cases:

1. For easy data interpretation

The Observation format delivers the measurements recorded by a platform in a clear, reliable and non-redundant manner, making it the easiest way to interpret data. Observation data sets are immediately useable. They do not require additional processing to track the evolution of sensitive parameters, for example, the changes in an atmospheric pressure sensor.

2. For easy data sharing

Observation data sets are completely processed and validated. They can easily be shared with your partners worldwide via ArgosShare. The Observation format is also the data format that is used for data dissemination on the WMO’s Global Telecommunication System (GTS).

3. For setting up a monitoring system

The processing and quality-controls performed on observation data sets makes it ideal for setting off alarms with ArgosMonitor and, thus makes it easy to identify certain occurrences, such as weak battery, unusually high temperature, unusually high water level, etc...

4.6.2 Message processing

Even though Observation format is more thorough and practical, Message format is necessary in the following cases:

1. For examining the transmission process and verifying platform performance

Presenting data in Message format faithfully represents the data collection process carried out by the satellites. It is thus a useful format for manufacturers and developers who wish to optimize the transmission process in their platforms, analyse performance, or perform maintenance operations.

2. For ensuring compatibility with your existing software

Since the only format used for data distribution by CLS until May 2008 was Message format, most manufacturer and user decoding software are programmed to recognize these formats. Until they are updated, Message format is the only way to guarantee compatibility with pre-existing software programs.

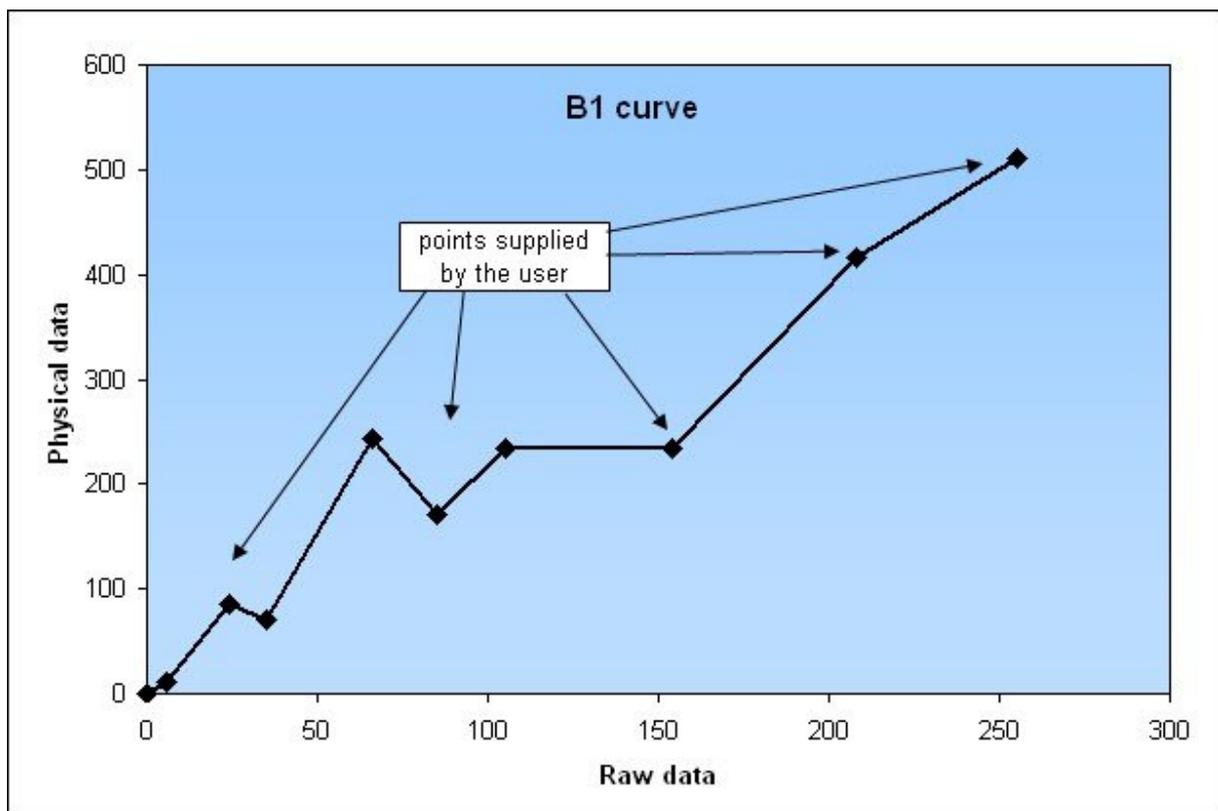
3. For processing complex formats that change over time

Even if CLS is continually developing new automatic processing tools, certain manufacturer formats are too complex to be automatically decoded as observations. This is the case for platforms that are programmed to change at pre-defined dates (certain animal application platforms, for example).

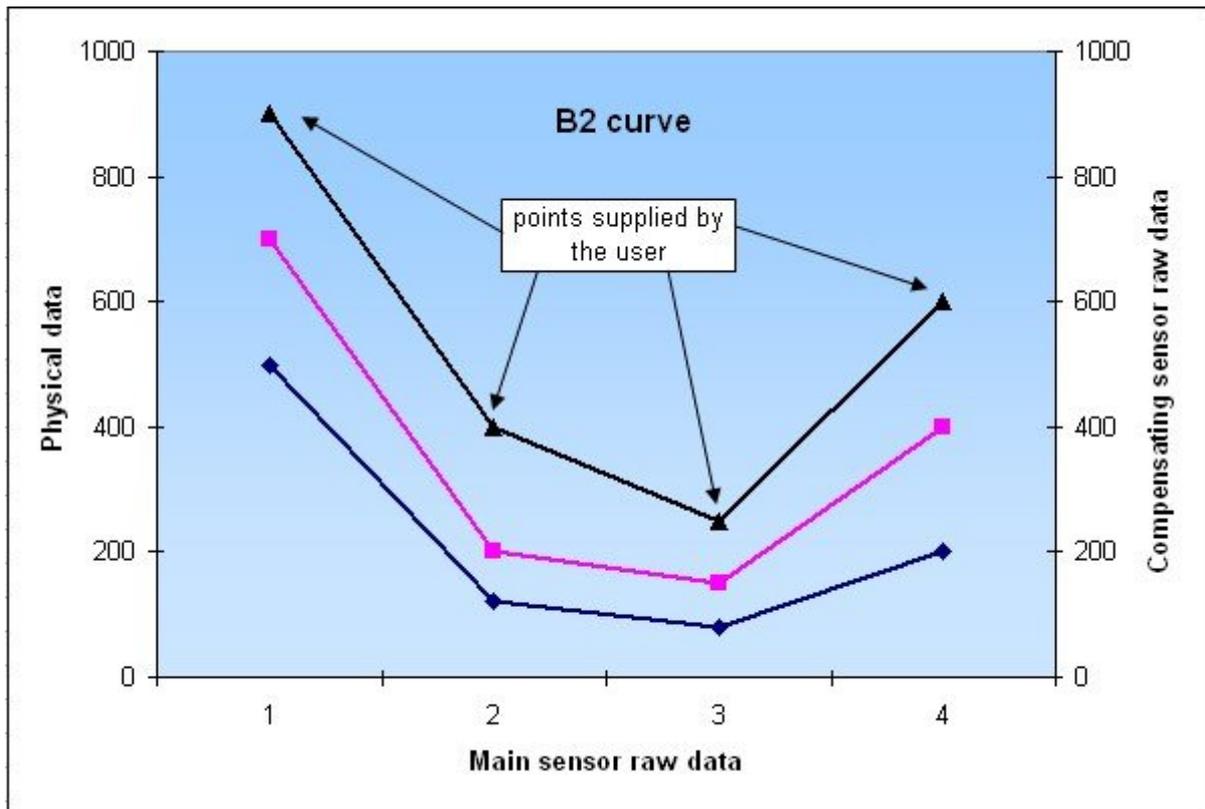
4. For keeping a raw data archive

If you are building a data archive, it can be advantageous to store your data in Message format. That way, you can apply updated processing techniques later on, or easily identify a processing error.

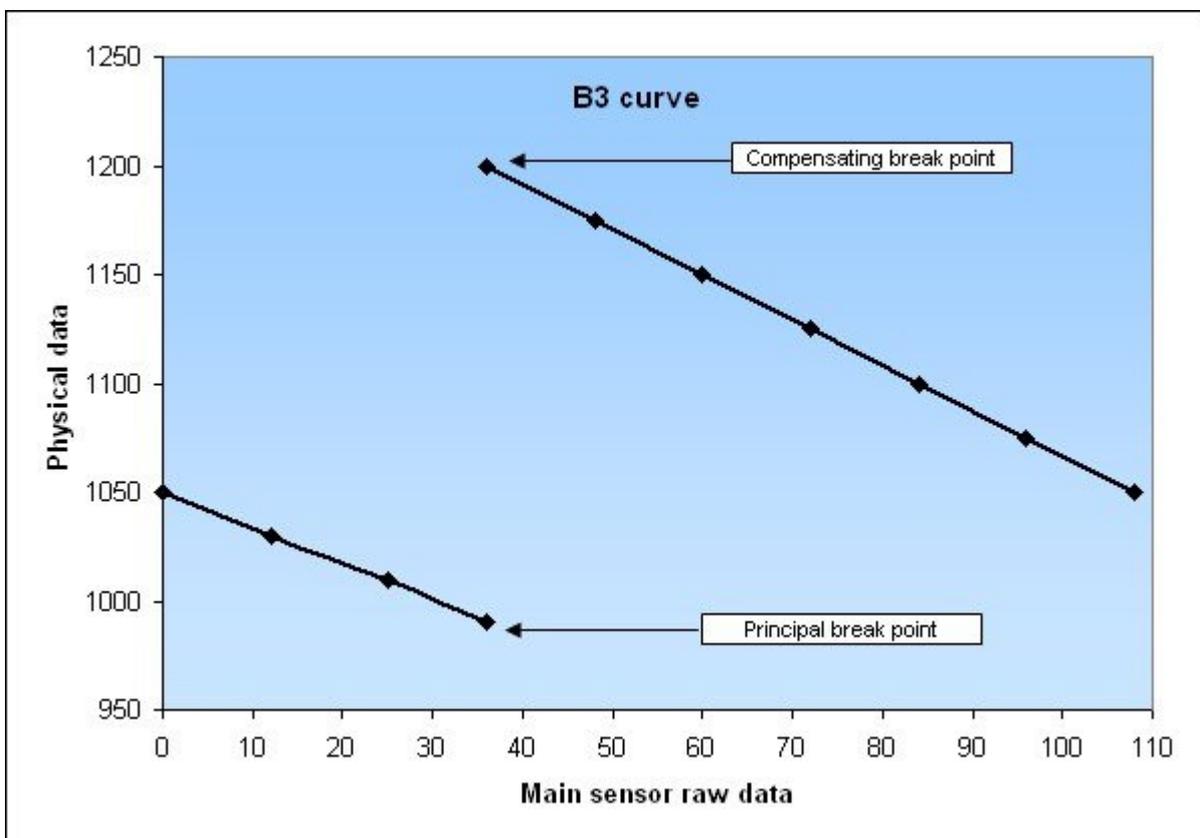
B1 Curve



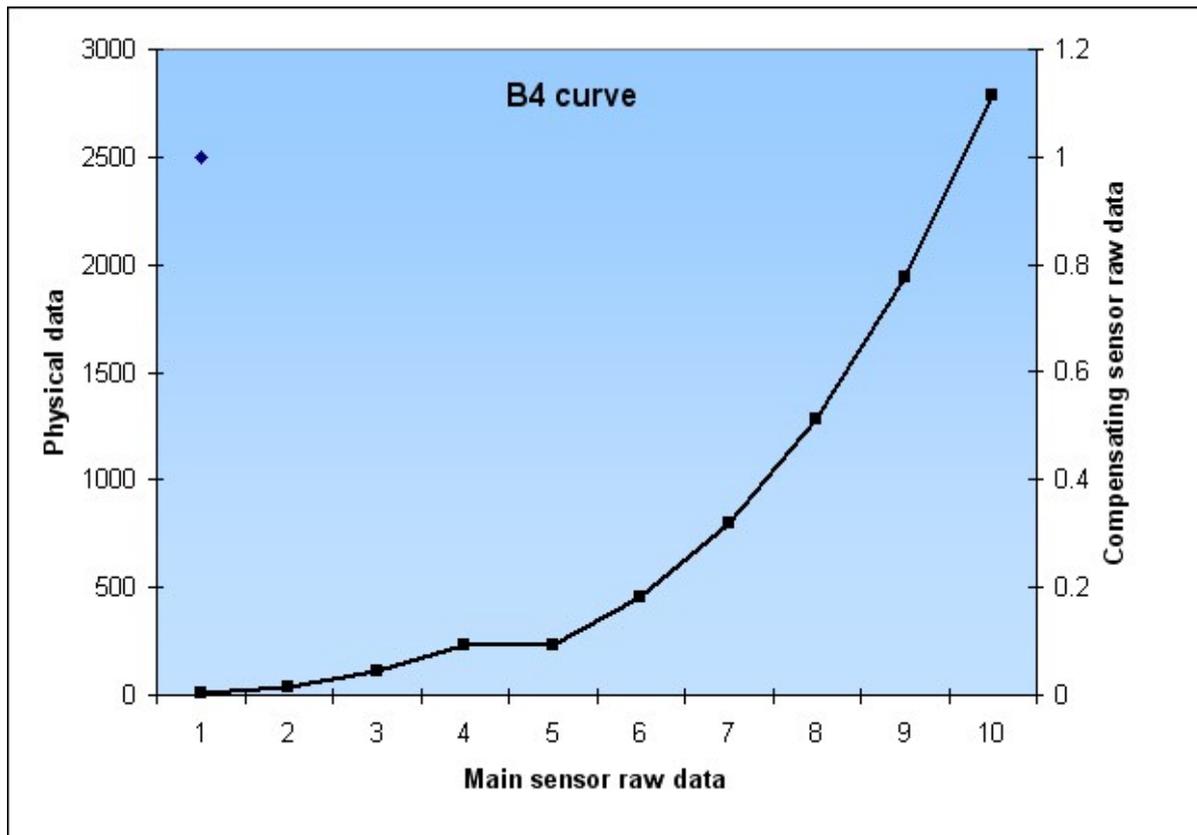
B2 Curve



B3 Curve



B4 Curve



5. How to open an Argos account

5.1 Obtaining a program

5.1.1 Filling out an SUA form and ID number request form

The SUA (System Use Agreement) form

Argos is a location and data collection system designed for studying and protecting the environment. Use of the Argos system is subject to approval from the Operations Committee made up of representatives from the:

- [French Space Agency \(CNES\)](#),
- [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#),
- [European Organization for Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites \(Eumetsat\)](#).

The objective of an Argos program must comply with the rules of use defined by the Operations Committee as referred to [in the SUA](#), which can be downloaded from https://www.argos-system.org/html/userarea/forms_en.html.

To open an Argos program simply fill out an SUA and send it duly signed to the CLS [regional correspondent](#) (office or branch) or, for North American users, to CLS America, who will submit it to the Operations Committee for approval.

Once the SUA is approved by the Operations Committee, the corresponding Argos program can be opened.

This agreement has a time limit and must be renewed periodically as specified in Article 4 of the SUA form.

Platform identification number request form (ID number)

All SUA forms must be accompanied by an ID number request form. This form is also used to request any extra ID numbers.

Platform characteristics and the required message processing are also specified on this form.

Platform messages are processed and decoded in compliance with the information supplied for declaration in the system. For standard platforms,

models predefined in cooperation with manufacturers are applied. Users encountering any difficulty in filling out this form may contact the platform manufacturer and obtain the information required for processing.

For a non-standard platform model (generating specific messages requiring an interpretation method unknown to CLS), the user must ask the manufacturer to contact User Services to provide the definition of the associated processing.

5.1.2 Choosing the services (price list)

The various "basic" or "value added" Argos services and the applicable prices are described in the price list.

The price list is updated annually.

5.1.3 Filling out the service contract/order form

Once the SUA is confirmed, the User Services sends a service contract/order form with the applicable price list. This contractual document recapitulates the subscribed services for processing and invoicing. It must be filled out and signed by the user then sent to the User Services so that the program can be created and the ID numbers assigned.

Any modification to the service contract/order form must be expressed in writing and sent to User Services for acknowledgement.

5.1.4 Receiving confirmation of program creation

Once the signed order form has been received, User Services sends a **Program Overview** informing users about their program, data access codes and the ID numbers assigned to their platforms. Upon user request, the ID numbers can also be sent to the platform manufacturer so that they can be programmed as early as possible.

Users with several Argos programs may ask to keep the same data access codes (username/password pair) for all their programs or, if necessary, ask for separate access codes.

5.2 Managing a program

5.2.1 Testing and deploying platforms

Before deploying the platforms, it is important to test them under conditions as similar as possible to those of their operating environment to check that they operate correctly.

It is also recommended to check that the following information has been sent to User Services:

- Description of Argos message processing, (especially for non-standard platforms),
- Coordinates and date of deployment,
- Programmed transmitter frequency,
- Mean altitude of the platform for users who do not want the Digital Elevation Model to be applied (see [Chapter 3.2](#)).

The various types of processing are explained in Chapter 3.

5.2.2 Accessing data

The user can access data in various ways:

- by connecting via the secure dedicated website ArgosWeb (<https://www.argos-system.org>), or remote querying of TELNET data servers. Data for the last 9 days plus the current day are available on line.
- by subscribing to the ArgosDirect Service to receive data automatically.

ArgosWeb ArgosWeb (<https://www.argos-system.org>) proposes advanced functions such as position display on maps (land, maritime or polar), export to Google Earth and data downloads in various tabular formats that can be personalized. (see [Chapter 6.2](#))

ArgosServer Users can also access recent data via a **TELNET** TCP/IP terminal by using specific commands to query the CLS servers. (See [Chapter 6.3](#))

ArgosDirect In addition to the ArgosWeb and ArgosServer data access methods, users can opt for the ArgosDirect value-added service to receive data automatically from the selected platforms.

ArgosDirect offers the following data reception modes:

- Electronic mail (either in the body of the message or as an attached file)
- FTP
- CD-ROM (monthly dispatches)

Data are sent to users at the frequency they choose:

- at each satellite pass
- at a set period (4 days maximum)
- every month

5.2.3 Choosing value-added services

ArgosShare Argos users can share data in various ways:

- by authorizing "on copy" service, so data are available to other users who are able to access the corresponding data (via ArgosWeb or Telnet) (see [Chapter 6.5](#), ArgosShare),
- by requesting User Service to send the data to various addresses (see ArgosDirect) (see [Chapter 6.4](#), ArgosDirect),
- by requesting User Service to send meteorological data via the Global Telecommunication System (GTS), a public network run by WMO (World Meteorological Organization) for worldwide weather centers

(see [Chapter 6.5](#), ArgosShare)

ArgosMonitor ArgosMonitor is a range of services developed to monitor performance, platform positions and collected data values. If a predefined event is detected during monitoring, a warning is automatically sent to the user by fax, SMS or e-mail.

Argos DataBank Data can be sent on a monthly basis (CD-ROM, ftp or e-mail). All Argos data are stored for 12 months. On request, User Services can send stored data to users.

5.2.4 Settling invoices

Argos services are billed monthly. The invoice is based on:

- requested and supplied services,
- the price list that applies.

5.3 Modifying program parameters

Examples:

- Changing data access codes
- Requesting creation of subprograms: if required, users can create subprograms for easier management of their platforms in subgroups
- Requesting new ID number

User Services is the dedicated point of contact for any modification to programs, platforms or services. Modifications can only be taken into account if confirmed in writing.

Modifying platform technical parameters

Platform technical parameters, such as message format or maximum speed of movement, allow the corresponding processing to be optimized.

Turning in Identification Numbers

If a platform is no longer used, its ID number must be turned in for recycling and reassignment to a future program. This simply requires informing User Services once it is certain that the platform is permanently out of use and will no longer transmit.

Modification of services

Examples:

- Subscribing to ArgosDirect, ArgosShare, ArgosMonitor
- Activating the "location plus"/ "auxiliary location processing (ALP)" service
- Transmit meteorological data on the GTS (Global Telecommunication System)

5.4 Terminating a program

To terminate a program, users must be certain that the platforms will no longer transmit and must turn in the corresponding ID numbers. They must then request permanent deletion by writing to their User Services.

However, if users wish to keep the program for a future project, the corresponding SUA must be renewed upon its expiration date, if necessary redefining the program objective.

User Services is the dedicated point of contact for terminating a program. Termination can only be taken into account if confirmed in writing.

6. How to access Argos data

6.1 Overview

Here are several ways to access Argos data:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ArgosWeb | ArgosWeb, www.argos-system.org , is a secure website that allows users to consult their locations in map format or download all collected data. |
| ArgosServer | ArgosServer allows users to remotely access their Argos data with TELNET. |
| ArgosDirect | ArgosDirect automatically delivers data to users by e-mail, FTP or CD-ROM. |
| ArgosShare | ArgosShare allows users to share data with their colleagues and collaborators. |
| ArgosMonitor | ArgosMonitor monitors platform state, position, and sensor data values, alerting users of any change in state by e-mail, SMS or fax. |

6.2 ArgosWeb

6.2.1 Why use ArgosWeb

Argos users can access their data via the Internet, by logging on to a secure [website](https://www.argos-system.org) (<https://www.argos-system.org>) with their username and password (assigned to them by User Services). A detailed description of ArgosWeb's functions and capabilities is provided by online [help](https://www.argos-system.org/cwihelp/en/globalhelp.html) (<https://www.argos-system.org/cwihelp/en/globalhelp.html>) pages.

ArgosWeb gives users secure and easy access to Argos data via an attractive and user-friendly website. With ArgosWeb, users can view platform trajectories on land and marine maps. Users can also personalize data download formats (table or map format). Users have immediate access to information on their Argos account, as well as platform and program settings.

6.2.2 Capabilities of ArgosWeb

| View Argos locations on a map | |
|---|--------------------|
| View locations on a map | Consultation / Map |
| Use map functions | Consultation / Map |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">View point information (exact location) | |

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View sensor data and trajectory information |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoom in |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoom out |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change a map view, center map view around a new point |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure distance |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove or add map layers (latitude and longitude lines, night shadow, scale, platform trajectories) |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save a view or zoom |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open a saved view or zoom |  |
| Change trajectory view and platform information | Preferences / Map |
| Change type of map: Mercator marine, Mercator land or orthographic land | Preferences / Map |
| Export data with Google Earth | Consultation / Data table  / Export () Consultation / Data download / Download  |

| | |
|--|---|
| Access data | |
| View data on-screen before downloading or exporting | Consultation / Data table |
| Download data directly without viewing on screen | Consultation / Data download / Download  |
| Download data in COM/PRV/DIAG | Consultation / Download |

| | |
|---|---|
| formats | COM/PRV/DIAG / Download  |
| View most recent data (Locations and/or sensor data) | Consultation / Most recent data |
| Add diagnostic data by using the  icon and clicking on Diagnostic data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic data | Consultation / Data table /  Consultation / Most recent data /  Consultation / Data download / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic data |
| Personalize visible table columns and options for data viewing with the  icon | Consultation / Data table Consultation / Most recent data Consultation / Data download |
| Display the parameters of the ellipse of error for location Class 0,1,2,3 (see also Add diagnostic data) | Consultation / Data table /  Consultation / Data download / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic data |

Manage program and platform settings

| | |
|--|---|
| View platform settings (location parameters, sensor parameters, or platform manufacturer) | Settings / Platforms |
| View and download a list of user platforms | Settings / Platforms / Export () |
| View and modify contact information for a program manager | Settings / User parameters |

Other functions

| | |
|--|---|
| Create a template for search criteria | Users can save search criteria (Platforms or program numbers, time frame, location class....) by creating a template with the  . |
|--|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>This icon  should be used to open a template and perform a search using saved search criteria on Map, Data table or Data download screens.</p> |
| <p>Track a platform by its name</p> | <p>To track a platform by its name, users must go to Settings / Platforms and Platform name.</p> <p>For this name to appear on maps, users must go to Preferences / Map and choose Name as a characteristic of a point.</p> |
| <p>Share data from a program or platform with another Argos user (ArgosShare)</p> | <p>Sharing data with Argos users is easy. While connected to ArgosWeb (Settings / Platforms or Settings / Programs), users can "Add an account on copy" by typing a colleague's user name and establishing a start (and end) date for ArgosShare.</p> |
| <p>Predict satellite passes over a platform, reception antenna or latitude/longitude</p> | <p>In the left menu bar, click on Satellite pass predictions.</p> |
| <p>Online help</p> | <p>Users can access online help from the left menu bar (click on Online help) or by clicking on the icon  in the top right-hand corner of each screen.</p> |

6.3 ArgosServer

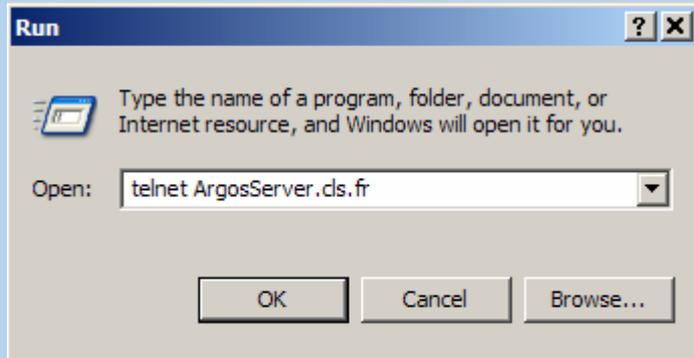
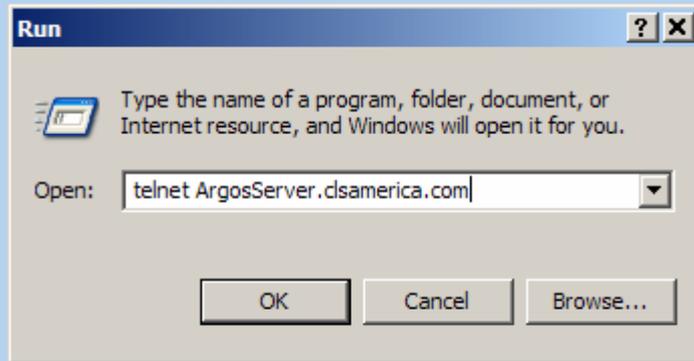
6.3.1 Accessing Argos data via Telnet

With this service, users can logon to Argos Processing Centers and access their data via TELNET. **TELEcommunication NETWORK** is a network protocol used by all TCP/IP compatible networks. A Telnet session with CLS's servers can be opened by typing the "Telnet" command on most operating systems (Windows, Unix...).

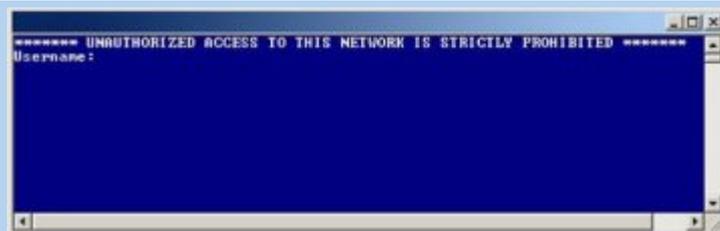
- [ArgosServer.cls.fr](#)
- [ArgosServer.clsamerica.com](#) (for North American users)

Here is the basic procedure for starting a Telnet session:

The user connects to the Argos processing center: ArgosServer.cls.fr or ArgosServer.clsamerica.com with Telnet.



The user types in his/her user name and password



After the connection with the Argos center has been established via Telnet, the message ARGOS READY followed by a carriage return will automatically appear on the screen. Above this text, the user will see a string of numbers corresponding to the calendar day as well as the UTC time that the connection was made, followed by the calendar day and UTC time of the user's last access.

Example:

```
LOGIN AT 046/1256 LAST ACCESS AT 046/1103 UTC  
ARGOS READY  
/
```

The user will be able to access their data as long as the user's platforms have been declared correctly in the Argos system, and are transmitting properly.

The user types in the appropriate commands for consulting their data.

```

ARGOS READY
/con,3,,111

Prog 00003

00111 25.000S 27.707E 3 061/1503Z-061/1457
(25) 00 55 AA FF

ARGOS READY
/logout

```

The user ends the session with the LOGOUT command.

6.3.2 Data formats

Argos data can be distributed in the following formats (users must specify their preferred format when declaring their Platform with User Services):

- **decimal: ex. 158**
- **hexadecimal: ex. 9E**
- **scientific: ex. 0.158E+3**

6.3.3 List of commands

Basic commands

| Command | Abbreviation | Data/Results | For more information |
|---------------|--------------|---|-------------------------------|
| COM | C | For most recent data | Chapter 6.3.4 |
| PRV | P | For the current day's and previous nine days' results | Chapter 6.3.5 |
| DIAG or PRV/A | DIA | For rejected locations and diagnostic information | Chapter 6.3.6 |

Options

| Options | Syntax | Description | For more information |
|---------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| DS | PRV,,DS | For all messages received by the satellite. | Chapter 6.3.5.1 |
| TX | PRV,,TX | For the most significant message per satellite pass (message received from the transmitter the most times, consecutively, in identical form) | Chapter 6.3.5.2 |
| /C | COM/C PRV/C DIAG/C | For results in compressed format: a single space between each location or value to reduce data volume. | Chapter 6.3.7 |

ALL or A **COM,,,ALL** For the most recent results for all the user's platforms or all the platforms in a program.
COM,,,A

Basic command syntax

Each command line the user enters will usually consist of:

- the **name of the basic command** to use, followed by a comma (example: **COM**)
- the **program number**, followed by a comma (example: **#prg**)
- the platform ID numbers with results to display (example: **#ptf**)
- the **time period**, between commas. For example, the current day since 9:00 AM, (example: **,09,)**
- a **Carriage Return** to validate.

Some rules

The maximum number of characters per command (in capital or lower case letters) is 80. Only results for the current day and previous nine days are available.

Queries should be made using the calendar day and UTC time, if necessary (for example: to obtain results from February 6, the user would enter the corresponding calendar day (037) in command syntax). Only the current day's results will be available if no calendar day is indicated.

To interrupt access to results at any time, users should enter **Control-S** (no need for a Carriage Return) and **Control-Q** to resume.

If a platform stops transmitting, its last message will be saved for one year. Users can access this result with the **COM** command.

If a session is inactive for three minutes, the session will automatically be disconnected.

All Argos data from the current month and the 12 previous months are archived. **Argos Data Bank** service makes archived results available to users. (for more information, please see [Chapter 6.4.2](#))

6.3.4 View most recent results: COM command

For locations and data collected during the most recent satellite pass

| COM/C, #prg, #ptf | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>/C</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>To download compressed results (with a single space between each location or value)</p> | <p>#prg (Program #)</p> <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To download results for all the transmitters in one program • To access data for which a user is on copy (ArgosShare) | <p>#ptf</p> <p>Choose between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argos platform ID number <i>-or-</i> • ALL, to access data from all platforms in a program, <i>-or-</i> • a series of platforms from the same program, separated by a dash, <i>-or-</i> • list of platforms in the same program, separated by a |

| | | |
|--|--|-------|
| | | comma |
|--|--|-------|

Examples:

COM,,,ALL (to view results for all platforms that belong to this user)

COM,3,, (to view results for all platforms in Program #3)

COM,,,111 (to view results for Platform #111)

```

ARGOS READY
/com,3,,111

Prog 00003

00111 25.888S 27.707E 3 061/1503Z-061/1457
(25) 00 55 AA FF

ARGOS READY

```

Interpreting COM results

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Prog 00003 | <i>Program number</i> |
| 00111 | <i>Platform number</i> |
| 25.888S | <i>Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of a degree</i> |
| 27.707E | <i>Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of a degree</i> |
| 3 | <i>Location class (see table of location classes Chapter 1.2.3)</i> |
| 061/1503Z | <i>Calendar day and UTC time (in hours and minutes) of most recent data collection</i> |
| -061/1457 | <i>Calendar day and UTC time (in hours and minutes) of most recent location</i> |
| (25) | <i>Compression index: number of identical messages received during satellite pass</i> |
| 00 | <i>Value for sensor 1</i> |
| 55 | <i>Value for sensor 2</i> |
| AA | <i>Value for sensor 3</i> |
| FF | <i>Value for sensor 4</i> |

6.3.5 View results from the current day and the past 9 days: PRV command

The PRV command allows users to show results for the current day and previous nine days for one or several platforms in the same program. The user can also enter a time frame for data display, by typing a Start date (optional) and End date (optional).

Two possibilities for this command are available:

PRV with DS: To view all messages received by all satellites

PRV with TX: To view the most significant message per pass

If the user has signed up for Location Service Plus/Auxiliary Location Processing (see Chapter 6.2.6), he/she will receive [class A and B locations](#) (see Chapter 3.3) as well as standard Argos locations (0,1,2,3).

The command syntax for the **PRV with DS or TX** is identical.

6.3.5.1 PRV,,DS command: all messages received by the satellite

| PRV/C, #prg, DS, start date/time-end date/time, #ptf | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| /C | #prg (Program #) | start date/time-end date/time | #ptf |
| Optional: | Optional: | Optional: | Choose between: |
| To download compressed results (with a single space between each location or value) | Mandatory in order to access results from one program only (results from all user programs will be displayed by default) | Sets a time frame for results. Start date and end date, separated by a dash, each date can be followed by a slash (/) and a time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argos platform ID number <i>-or-</i> ALL, to access data from all platforms in a program, <i>-or-</i> a series of platforms from the same program, separated by a dash, <i>-or-</i> list of platforms in the same program, separated by a comma |

Examples:

PRV,3,DS,,ALL (PRV DS on platforms from Program 3 on the current day)

PRV,,DS,51, ALL (if today is calendar day 60 and the user wants to retrieve data from the previous 9 days from all platforms associated with their account)

PRV,,DS,61/12-61/14,111 (PRV DS data for platform #111 in program 3, received on calendar day 61 between 12:00-14:00 UTC).

```

ARGOS READY
/prv,3,ds,61/12-61/14,111
00003 00111 2 4 N 3 2007-03-02 12:43:58 -25.887 27.710 1.561 401650009
2007-03-02 12:51:03 28 00 55 AA FF
00003 00111 2 4 L 3 2007-03-02 13:42:21 -25.888 27.707 1.561 401650008
2007-03-02 13:50:11 29 00 55 AA FF
ARGOS READY
    
```

Interpreting PRV,DS results

The above results include data collected by two satellites. The first two fields after the command represent the data collected from the first satellite pass during the designated time frame:

| | |
|------------|---|
| 00003 | Program number |
| 00111 | Platform number |
| 2 | Number of lines of data per satellite pass |
| 4 | Number of sensors |
| N | Satellite identifier, in this case, NOAA-N |
| 3 | Location class |
| 2007-03-02 | Date (Year, Month, Day) for locations calculated during the satellite pass |
| 12:43:58 | UTC time of the location calculation in Hours, Minutes, Seconds, |
| -25.887 | Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees Northern latitudes are positive, Southern latitudes are negative |
| 27.710 | Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees, starting from the East (255.452 = 104.548° W) |
| 1.561 | Platform altitude in km (provided by the user) |
| 401650009 | Calculated frequency |
| 2007-03-02 | Date (Year, Month, Day) that data was collected |
| 12:51:03 | Time-stamp in UTC (Hour, Minute, Seconds) that data was collected |
| 28 | Number of identical messages received |
| 00 | Value of sensor n°1 |
| 55 | Value of sensor n°2 |
| AA | Value of sensor n°3 |
| FF | Value of sensor n°4 |

The third and fourth lines are the results from the second satellite pass.

6.3.5.2 PRV with TX: the most significant message per satellite pass

| PRV/C,#prg,TX, start date/time-End date/time,#ptf | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--|
| /C | #prg (Program #) | start date/time-end date/time | #ptf |
| Optional: | Optional: | Optional: | Choose between: |
| To obtain compressed results (only one space | Mandatory in order to access results from one | Sets a time frame for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argos platform |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| between fields) | program only (results from all user programs will be displayed by default) | results. Start date and end date, separated by a dash, each date can be followed by a slash (/) and a time | ID number <i>-or-</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALL, to access data from all platforms in a program, <i>-or-</i> a series of platforms from the same program, separated by a dash, <i>-or-</i> list of platforms in the same program, separated by a comma |
|-----------------|--|--|--|

The most significant message per satellite pass refers to the message that is received the greatest number of times during the satellite pass (highest compression index).

Examples:

PRV,3,TX,,ALL (PRV TX for all platforms in program 3 for the current day)

PRV,,TX,51,ALL (If today is calendar day 60 and the user wishes to get data from the past 9 days for all of the platforms in their account)

PRV,,TX,61/12-61/14,111 (PRV TW data for platform #111 in program 3, received on calendar day 61 between 12:00-14:00 UTC).



Interpreting PRV TX data

The first two lines after the program number represent the results of the most significant message for the first satellite pass in the period.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Prog 00003 | <i>Program number</i> |
| 00111 | <i>Platform number</i> |
| 25.887S | <i>Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| 27.710E | <i>Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| 3 | <i>Location class (See Chapter 1.2.3)</i> |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| 061/1251Z | <i>Date (calendar day) and UTC time (Hours and Minutes) of data collection</i> |
| -061/1243 | <i>Date (calendar day) and UTC time (Hours and Minutes) of location</i> |
| (28) | <i>Message compression index: number of identical messages received during satellite pass</i> |
| 00 | <i>Value for sensor 1</i> |
| 55 | <i>Value for sensor 2</i> |
| AA | <i>Value for sensor 3</i> |
| FF | <i>Value for sensor 4</i> |

The third and fourth lines are the results from the second satellite pass in the period. The location and sensor data have been updated: a new location was calculated based on the second satellite pass.

6.3.6 Get diagnostic results: DIAG and PRV/A commands

To use DIAG and PRV/A commands, users must subscribe to Location Service Plus (Auxiliary Location Processing) (see [Chapter 3.2](#)).

DIAG and **PRV/A** commands give users:

Locations

- in classes 3, 2, 1, 0, A, B as well as sensor data, also available using the **PRV** and **COM** commands

Extra information

- locations rejected during the calculation, called Class Z results,
- the other possible location or "mirror image" solution: the Argos system calculates two locations for transmitters and supplies the more probable of the two via the COM and PRV commands. This is called Solution 1. **DIAG** and **PRV/A** also give users Solution 2 (the mirror image of Solution 1 in the satellite ground track),
- residual error on the frequency calculation, and transmitter oscillator frequency drift between two satellite passes. These two diagnostic indicators produce an indicator called IQ,
- transmission frequency,
- the best signal strength received by the satellite,
- the number of messages received by the satellite.

DIAG

DIAG gives you the most significant message received during each satellite pass (message received from your transmitter the most times, consecutively, in identical form) for the previous nine days and the current day. This command allows users to sort by date and time. The extra information (see above) appears in the last four lines of the results.

Unlike PRV/A, **DIAG** tells users how many location plausibility checks (0-4) gave a positive result. This is called NOPC, or Number Of Plausibility Checks. If NOPC is greater than or equal to 2, Solution 1 will be available with COM and PRV commands. **DIAG** also gives users the satellite pass duration in seconds. **DIAG** results are displayed in a specific format.

PRV/A

The **PRV/A** command allows users to consult results from the previous nine days and the current day from one or more platforms, as well as the extra information listed in the table above. Users can sort by date and time.

6.3.6.1 DIAG command

Locations and sensor data + Transmitter diagnostic information

| DIAG/C, #prg, start date/time-end date/time, #ptf | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| /C | #prg (Program #) | start date/time-end date/time | #ptf |
| Optional: | Optional: | Optional: | Choose between: |
| For compressed results (only one space between fields) | Mandatory in order to access results from one program only. | Sets a time frame for results. Start date and end date, separated by a dash, each date can be followed by a slash (/) and a time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argos platform ID number <i>-or-</i> ALL, to access data from all platforms in a program, <i>-or-</i> a series of platforms from the same program, separated by a dash, <i>-or-</i> list of platforms in the same program, separated by a comma |

Examples:

DIAG,3,,ALL (DIAG for all platforms in program 3 for the current day)

DIAG,,51,ALL (DIAG if today is calendar day 60 and the user wishes to get data from the past 9 days for all of the platforms in their account)

DIAG,,61/12-61/14,111 (DIAG data for platform #111 in program 3, received on calendar day 61 between 12:00-14:00 UTC).

```

ARGOS READY
/diag,1,60/13-60/14,1

Prog 00001

00001 Date : 01.03.07 13:15:00 LC : 3 IQ : 68
Lat1 : 43.549N Lon1 : 1.485E Lat2 : 41.979N Lon2 : 6.356W
Nb mes : 025 Nb mes>-120dB : 015 Best level : -113 dB
Pass duration : 900s NOPC : 4
Calcul freq : 401 650000.3 Hz Altitude : 213 m
              60          13          22          00

00001 Date : 01.03.07 13:47:15 LC : 0 IQ : 68
Lat1 : 43.570N Lon1 : 1.463E Lat2 : 58.555N Lon2 : 85.179E
Nb mes : 004 Nb mes>-120dB : 001 Best level : -120 dB
Pass duration : 090s NOPC : 3
Calcul freq : 401 649991.0 Hz Altitude : 213 m
              60          13          47          03

ARGOS READY

```

Interpreting DIAG results

For the time frame in the example, 2 satellite passes occurred. Here are the details concerning the first satellite pass:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Prog 00001 | <i>Program number</i> |
| 00001 | <i>Platform number</i> |
| Date : 01.03.07 | <i>Location date</i> |
| 13:15:00 | <i>UTC Time (Hours, Minutes, Seconds) for the location</i> |
| LC : 3 | <i>Location class: 3, 2, 1, 0, A, B, Z (see Chapter 3.4)</i> |
| IQ : 68 | <p><i>IQ = Quality indicator. This indicator gives information on the transmitter in terms of X and Y.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>X indicates residual error on the frequency calculation (see table of X, Y values). Here, X = 6</i> <i>Y indicates transmitter oscillator frequency drift between two satellite passes. Here, Y = 8</i> <p><i>See Section 6.3.6.3 for X, Y values</i></p> |
| Lat1:43.549N | <i>Solution 1. Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| Lon1:1.485E | <i>Solution 1. Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| Lat2:41.979N | <i>Solution 2. Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| Lon2 6.356W | <i>Solution 2. Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| Nb mes : 025 | <i>Number of messages received</i> |
| Nb mes>-120 dB: 015 | <i>Number of messages received by the satellite at a signal strength greater than -120 decibels</i> |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Best level : -113 dB | <i>Best signal strength, units are dB</i> |
| Pass duration : 900s | <i>Time elapsed between the first and last message received by the satellite</i> |
| NOPC = 4 | <i>Number Of Plausibility Checks successful (from 0-4)</i> |
| Calcul Freq : 401 650000.3 | <i>Calculated frequency</i> |
| Altitude : 213 m | <i>Altitude used for location calculation</i> |
| 60 | <i>Value of sensor n° 1</i> |
| 13 | <i>Value of sensor n° 2</i> |
| 22 | <i>Value of sensor n° 3</i> |
| 00 | <i>Value of sensor n° 4</i> |

6.3.6.2 PRV/A Command

Locations and sensor data + transmitter diagnostic information

| PRV/A/C, #prg, DS or TX, start date/time-end date/time, #ptf | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| /C | #prg (Program #) | DS, TX, | start date/time-end date/time | #ptf |
| Optional: | Optional: | Choose between: | Optional: | Choose between: |
| For compressed results (only one space between fields) | Mandatory in order to access results from one program only. | DS, For all messages received during a satellite pass TX, For the most significant message per sat pass | Sets a time frame for results. Start date and end date, separated by a dash, each date can be followed by a slash (/) and a time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argos platform ID number - <i>or</i>- ALL, to access data from all platforms in a program, - <i>or</i>- a series of platforms from the same program, separated by a dash, - <i>or</i>- list of platforms in the same |

program,
separated
by a
comma

Interpreting PRV/A results

Examples: PRV/A, 3, DS, 60/13-60/14, 111 (PRV/A,,DS for platform 111 in program 3 for calendar day 60 between 13:00 and 14:00 UTC).

```
ARGOS READY
/prv/A,3,ds,60/13-60/14,111
00003 00111 6 4 N 3 2007-03-01 12:54:02 -25.888 27.708 1.561 401650009
2007-03-01 13:01:06 26 00 55 AA FF
026 msgs 019>-120dB Best: -112 Freq: 650008.6 IQ : 68
Lat1: 25.888S Lon1: 27.708E Lat2: 30.940S Lon2: 4.489E
ARGOS READY
/
```

Interpreting PRV/A results

| | |
|------------|---|
| 00003 | Program number |
| 00111 | Platform number |
| 6 | Number of lines |
| 4 | Number of sensors |
| N | Satellite name, in this case, NOAA-N |
| 3 | Location class : 3, 2, 1, 0, A, B, Z (see location class table, Chapter 3.4) |
| 2007-03-01 | Location date |
| 12:54:02 | Location time |
| -25.888 | Solution 1. Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees |
| 27.708 | Solution 1. Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees |
| 1.561 | Altitude (in km) |
| 401650009 | Frequency |
| 2007-03-01 | Date of the last data collection |
| 13:01:06 | Time of data collection |
| 26 | Number of identical messages received |
| 00 | Value for sensor n° 1 |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 55 | <i>Value for sensor n° 2</i> |
| AA | <i>Value for sensor n° 3</i> |
| FF | <i>Value for sensor n° 4</i> |
| 026 msgs | <i>Number of messages received by the satellite</i> |
| 019>-120 dB | <i>Number of messages received by the satellite with a signal strength greater than -120 decibels</i> |
| Best: -112 dB | <i>Best signal strength, Units are dB</i> |
| Freq: 650008.6 | <i>Calculated frequency 401 650008.6 Hz</i> |
| IQ : 68 | <p><i>IQ = Quality indicator. This indicator gives information on the transmitter in terms of X and Y.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>X indicates residual error on the frequency calculation (see table of X, Y values, Section 6.3.6.3). Here, X = 6</i> <i>Y indicates transmitter oscillator frequency drift between two satellite passes. Here, Y = 8</i> |
| Lat 1: 25.888S | <i>Solution 1. Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| Lon 1: 27.708E | <i>Solution 1. Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| Lat 2: 30.940S | <i>Solution 2. Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| Lon 2: 4.489E | <i>Solution 2. Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |

6.3.6.3 Interpreting diagnostic information in DIAG and PRV/A results

The IQ transmission diagnostic indicators appear in the form XY. The meanings are:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| X = 0 | No calculation of residual frequency error (fewer than four messages received) |
| X = 1, 2, 3 | Unsatisfactory convergence of calculation |
| X = 4 | Residual frequency error > 1.5 Hz |
| X = 5 | 0.15 Hz < residual frequency error < 1.5 Hz |
| X = 6 | Residual frequency error < 0.15 Hz |
| Y = 0 | No check on transmit frequency drift, as the two results are more than 12 hours apart. |
| Y = 1 | Frequency discrepancy > 400 Hz Probably due to transmit frequency discrepancy, change of oscillator, etc. |

| | |
|-------|--|
| Y = 2 | Previous location is less than 1/2 hour old. Frequency discrepancy > 30 Hz, i.e. F/F (over 10 min) >2.5 E-8 |
| Y = 3 | Frequency drift > 4 Hz/minute, i.e. F/F (10 min) > 1.10-7 |
| Y = 4 | Frequency drift < 4 Hz/minute, i.e. F/F (10 min) < 1.10-7 |
| Y = 5 | Frequency drift < 2 Hz/minute, i.e. F/F (10 min) < 5.10-8 |
| Y = 6 | Frequency drift < 1 Hz/minute, i.e. F/F (10 min) < 2.5 . 10-8 |
| Y = 7 | Frequency drift < 0.4 Hz/minute, i.e. F/F (10 min) < 1.10-8 |
| Y = 8 | Frequency drift < 0.2 Hz/minute, i.e. F/F (10 min) < 5.10-9 |

6.3.7 Get compressed results: /C

When /C is added after the first word in a command (ex: COM/C, DIAG/C, PRV/C), data will be expressed in compressed format (only one space between each field) to reduce data volume.

Interpreting compressed results is very similar to interpreting non-compressed results (as explained in preceding chapters).

Example:

COM/C,3,,111

Results:

```

ARGOS READY
/COM/C,3,,111
Prog 00003
00111 25.888S 27.706E 3 064/0827Z-064/0442
<30> 00 55 AA FF
ARGOS READY

```

Interpreting /C results

| | |
|------------|---|
| Prog 00003 | <i>Program number</i> |
| 00111 | <i>Platform number</i> |
| 25.888S | <i>Platform latitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| 27.706E | <i>Platform longitude in degrees and thousandths of degrees</i> |
| 3 | <i>Location class (see location class table Chapter 1.2.3)</i> |
| 064/0827Z | <i>Date (calendar day) and UTC time (Hours and Minutes) of the last data collection</i> |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| -064/0442 | <i>Date (calendar day) and UTC time (Hours and Minutes) of the last location</i> |
| (30) | <i>Message compression index: number of identical messages received during a satellite pass</i> |
| 00 | <i>Value of sensor n° 1</i> |
| 55 | <i>Value of sensor n° 2</i> |
| AA | <i>Value of sensor n° 3</i> |
| FF | <i>Value of sensor n° 4</i> |

6.3.8 Secure SSH connection

SSH (Secure Shell) refers to a network protocol as well as a group of programs using this protocol. SSH allows users to establish a secure connection and transfer files between a remote and a local computer.

SSH provides confidentiality and integrity of data exchange, as the connection is encrypted. Furthermore, SSH uses a double client/server message authentication code to prevent non-authorized users from accessing the server.

To take advantage of the SSH TELNET connection with Argos centers, users must contact User Services.

6.4 ArgosDirect

6.4.1 Why use ArgosDirect

ArgosDirect automatically sends data to users by e-mail, FTP or CD-ROM. ArgosDirect allows users to receive their data in table format or in the same formats as ArgosServer (see [Chapter 6.3](#)).

ArgosDirect is a flexible service, designed to meet your needs. Subscribing to this service is easy. To do so, a program manager merely needs to fill in the [ArgosDirect form](#), which can be downloaded from our website: https://www.argos-system.org/html/userarea/forms_en.html. For any additional information or advice, please contact your local User Services.

6.4.2 Delivery frequency and options

Data can be sent at the following frequencies:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Every satellite pass | Users can request that their data be sent as soon as received and processed by the Argos center. This regular delivery service ensures that data is sent to the user almost immediately after each new location or message is processed. |
| Pre-defined period | Establishing a pre-defined period for data allows data to be collected over time, minimizing the number of individual files |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| | or e-mails to be sent to the user. (from one to four days maximum) |
| Several times per day | Data can be sent several times per day (every x hours). |
| Every month | Argos data can be sent to users once a month. |

Argos DataBank: All Argos data is kept in our archives for 12 months. Users can request that their archived data be sent to them, subject to charges. Please contact the local User Services to request an invoice and use this service.

Data can be sent in the following manners:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| FTP | Data will be transferred to a predefined folder on the user's server via the Internet. |
| E-mail | User's data will be sent to their email inbox (either as an attachment or in the text body). |
| Postal service | For archived data on CD-ROM (sent by Argos DataBank). |

6.4.3 Data formats

Data is sent in the same formats as for ArgosServer. Data can also be sent to users in table format, in a .CSV file.

For messages received during a satellite pass (See [Chapter 6.3.6.2](#))

```
00009 00001 10 4 D 1 2007-03-23 08:16:30 43.552 1.483 0.213
401650001
2007-03-23 08:14:00 1 082 08 14 00
2007-03-23 08:15:00 1 082 08 15 00
2007-03-23 08:15:30 1 082 08 15 03
2007-03-23 08:16:00 1 082 08 16 00
2007-03-23 08:17:00 1 082 08 17 00
2007-03-23 08:17:30 1 082 08 17 03
2007-03-23 08:18:00 1 082 08 18 00
2007-03-23 08:18:30 1 082 08 18 03
2007-03-23 08:19:00 1 082 08 19 00
```

For the best or most significant message per satellite pass (See [Chapter 6.3.6.2](#))

```
Prog 00009
00001 43.552N 1.483E 1 082/0818Z-082/0816
```

| | | | | |
|------|-----|----|----|----|
| (1) | 082 | 08 | 18 | 03 |
|------|-----|----|----|----|

Diagnostic data (See [Chapter 6.3.6.1](#))

| |
|--|
| Prog 00009 00001 Date : 23.03.07 08:16:30 LC : 1 IQ : 68 Lat1 : 43.552N Lon1 : 1.483E Lat2 : 57.258N Lon2 : 73.021W Nb mes : 009 Nb mes>-120dB : 001 Best level : -120 dB Pass duration : 300s NOPC : 4 Calcul freq : 401 650000.6 Hz Altitude : 213 m 082 08 18 03 |
|--|

All messages per satellite pass + Transmitter diagnostic information (See [Chapter 6.3.6.2](#))

| |
|---|
| 00009 00001 10 4 D 1 2007-03-23 08:16:30 43.552 1.483 0.213 401650001 2007-03-23 08:14:00 1 082 08 14 00 2007-03-23 08:15:00 1 082 08 15 00 2007-03-23 08:15:30 1 082 08 15 03 2007-03-23 08:16:00 1 082 08 16 00 2007-03-23 08:17:00 1 082 08 17 00 2007-03-23 08:17:30 1 082 08 17 03 2007-03-23 08:18:00 1 082 08 18 00 2007-03-23 08:18:30 1 082 08 18 03 2007-03-23 08:19:00 1 082 08 19 00 009 msgs 001>-120dB Best: -120 Freq: 650000.6 IQ : 68 Lat1: 43.552N Lon1: 1.483E Lat2: 57.258N Lon2: 73.021W |
|---|

6.4.4 Security options

Users may request that their data be encoded for all email or FTP deliveries, at no additional cost. The user should contact User Services to request encoding. User Services will send a guide to explain the encoding process.

6.5 ArgosShare

6.5.1 Why use ArgosShare

Argos users can share their data in the following ways:

- by authorizing "Accounts on copy" so other users can access their data via ArgosWeb or TELNET
- by asking User Services to send data to different addresses

- by requesting meteorological data to be posted on the Global Telecommunications System (GTS), a public network run by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) for worldwide weather centers

6.5.2 Criteria for sharing data

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Data selection | <p>By program: Data from one or more program(s) can be shared.</p> <p>By platform: Access to data can be restricted to one or several designated platforms.</p> |
| Options | <p>By date: For each platform or program in ArgosShare, the user chooses a Start Date and End Date. By default, the Start Date is the day the service was requested, but the Start Date can also be programmed in advance. The Start Date cannot be retroactive. The End Date is optional. If it is left blank, ArgosShare will be effective as long as the platform is active.</p> <p>By geographic zone: ArgosShare can be linked to a particular geographic zone. Users on copy will only have access to data when the platform is in the particular zone. If the platform leaves the zone, the data it transmits will not be shared. The geographic zone can either be a polygon (defined by latitude and longitude), a circle (defined by its center point and radius), or any combination of several polygons and circles.</p>  |

The above options also apply when sharing data with Argos users (or non-users) via **ArgosDirect**.

6.5.3 How to set up ArgosShare

The user can easily set up ArgosShare by contacting User Services.

It is also possible to set up ArgosShare on ArgosWeb. The user just needs to [logon](#) and click on Settings → Program or Settings → Platform in the left menu. Online help pages explain the process in detail.



6.6 ArgosMonitor

6.6.1 Why use ArgosMonitor

ArgosMonitor is a value-added service that allows users to monitor their platforms remotely. ArgosMonitor reports on the position and the activity of your platforms, as well as their current state. As soon as ArgosMonitor detects an anomaly in a platform's behavior, ArgosMonitor will alert the user by email, fax, or sms.

6.6.2 Alert services

This service alerts users when an "event" that they have identified with the User Services occurs. For example, ArgosMonitor sends an alert if:

- a sensor changes state
- a platform that is meant to be stationary suddenly moves significantly (for example, your moored buoy starts to float away...)
- a platform enters/exits a pre-defined zone (a bird returning to its nest...), etc.
- a platform stops transmitting for an abnormally long period of time

All alert messages are sent by email, fax, or sms, according to the user's preference.



ArgosMonitor service for biologists



ArgosMonitor service for meteorologists and oceanographers

6.6.3 How to set up ArgosMonitor

To subscribe to this service, please download the [ArgosMonitor form](#), fill it in and send it back to User Services. This form is available: https://www.argos-system.org/html/userarea/forms_en.html

6.7 GTS

6.7.1 About GTS distribution service

The Global Telecommunication System (GTS), is a network run by the [World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#), to facilitate data exchange between national weather centers. Data from a number of Argos programs are important for the GTS, namely because they can be fed into national weather centers' real-time weather forecasting models.

Argos users can contribute by authorizing the distribution of their meteorological and oceanographic data to the GTS processing system, free of charge.

Data are automatically quality-controlled and put into WMO formats in order to be posted on GTS.

Nevertheless, posting data onto the GTS does not impact the structure or content of the initial Argos data. Therefore, users may request other formats than GTS formats for the data they receive. For example, the Argos processing center can apply different types of processing and calibration curves according to whether the data is to go onto the GTS or to the Principal Investigator (PI). The PI can receive the raw data. Similarly, file updates on GTS requirements/specifications (e.g. removing a transmitter, or removing or recalibrating a sensor) have no impact on a user's Argos requirements/specifications.

6.7.2 How to set up GTS distribution service

Users can request that their data be distributed on the GTS by contacting User Services and filling out a [GTS technical file](#). The user must also contact the [DBC](#) in order to [obtain a WMO number](#), essential for transmitting data via GTS.

To suspend or cancel authorization at any time, the user must contact User Services.

Glossary

A

- Account:** An Argos account is set up for every user. Each account is assigned a user name and password used to access data. A user may have more than one account.
- Argos:** Satellite-based location and data collection system dedicated to studying the environment, developed as a result of French-American cooperation between CNES and NOAA.
- Argos message processing:** Decoding the binary sequences that form Argos messages. This processing converts raw data into physical values.
- Argos processing system:** A set of software used to process and distribute Argos data.
- ArgosDirect:** Automatic data distribution service that uses email, FTP, CD-ROM or Fax.
- ArgosFlash:** Publication featuring all the latest technical news about using and operating the system together with all the new services available.
- ArgosForum:** Publication in which users can present their projects and the results they have achieved using the Argos system.
- ArgosServer:** The Argos data access service available by connecting to one of the two CLS servers using TELNET protocol: - ArgosServer.cls.fr, - ArgosServer.clsamerica.com (for users in North America).
- ArgosWeb:** Data access service that uses a secure network interface accessible via the website www.argos-system.org. Several other functions are also available via this service: display or download data in different formats (maps and tables), change parameters, forecast satellite passes, etc.

B

- Beacon:** An alternative term for an Argos platform or transmitter.
- Binary sequence:** A sequence of binary values that forms a message, made up of 0's and 1's.
- Bit:** Binary unit. This is the basic digital communication character, which has a value of 0 or 1.
- Block (binary element):** A block is a sequence of standard elements repeated several times in the same Argos message. This type of element is used to declare sets of measurements (e.g.: the Temperature, Salinity, Pressure triplet) that are repeated several times in an Argos message.
- Bps:** Bits per second. The unit used to measure data transmission speed. It is usually used in terms of multiples: Kbps (thousands of bits per second).
- Byte:** String of 8 bits.

C

- Calendar day:** The number of the day counted since the beginning of the year. For example, February 10 is Day 41.
- Calibration curve:** Set of values or coefficients used to describe the transfer function used by the Argos processing system to convert binary data from sensors into physical values.
- Certification:** Every type of Argos transmitter or transmitter/receiver has to be tested and certified by CLS to ensure compliance with the Argos system. A list of certified transmitter manufacturers can be found via on the Argos website, www.argos-system.org.
- Checksum:** Part of the transmitted message used to check data integrity. Using a coding algorithm, the platform computes a sum and encodes it in the message. Argos processing uses the same algorithm to decode this sum and check it.

CLS: CLS, (Collection, Location, Satellites), is the name of the company set up to operate the Argos system.

CNES: CNES (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales), French Space Agency. Project Manager for the manufacture and development of Argos instruments carried on board satellites. This agency is CLS's main shareholder.

Compression (Index): All identical Argos messages received from the same transmitter during a satellite pass are presented as a single message. This message is signaled by a "Compression index", indicating the number of messages received and transmitted.

D

Databank: ArgosDirect sends the databank to users every month, on CD-ROM or by email.

DBCP: Data Buoy Cooperation Panel. <http://www.jcommops.org/dbcp/>

Digital elevation model (DEM): Topographic representation based on standard grids.

Doppler Effect: The Doppler Effect is the change in frequency of a sound wave or electromagnetic wave occurring when the source of vibration and observer are in motion relative to each other.

Drifter: Drifting measuring instrument used in Oceanography, Glaciology and Maritime Meteorology. Thousands of drifters fitted with various kinds of sensors (temperature, salinity, pressure, wave direction, etc.) and Argos transmitters are deployed throughout the world's oceans.

Duty Cycle: Argos platforms may either transmit at all times or according to a duty cycle adapted to each application. Examples of duty cycles: - 12 hours transmission ON, 8 hours transmission OFF, - 10 hours every two day.

E

EUMETSAT: EUropean organisation for the exploitation of METeorological SATellites. <http://www.eumetsat.int/Home/index.htm>

F

Frequency: Frequency is the number of times that an event has been or is observable over a given period of time. Frequency is thus the inverse (in mathematical terms) of the period. $f = 1 / t$. If the unit of time chosen is the second, then frequency is measured in hertz (Hz), named after the physicist Heinrich Hertz. • Argos transmission frequency: Frequency at which the platform transmits. It should be between 401.620 MHz and 401.680 MHz. • Receive Frequency: Frequency measured by the Argos receiver on board the satellite. This is the transmission frequency distorted by the Doppler Effect. • Computed frequency: Since the actual transmission frequency is not known, it has to be computed and updated after every location calculation.

FTP: File Transfer Protocol. Communication protocol dedicated to electronic file transfer over a TCP/IP network. It is used for sending files between computers.

G

Gaussian: Said of a result distribution, or a related phenomenon, when its graphic transposition gives a Gauss curve.

GDOP: Geometric Dilution of Precision (GDOP) is a measure of the effect of the geometry of the satellite-beacon configuration on location accuracy. The actual Argos location accuracy depends on both the GDOP value and the quality of the transmitter (frequency stability). As a general rule, a smaller GDOP value yields a more accurate position.

GPS (Global Positioning System): GPS is a satellite-based positioning system.

GTS: Global Telecommunication System: Data interchange network for the meteorological offices of all the countries involved in the World Weather Watch (WWW).

H

Hexadecimal: The hexadecimal system is a numeral system with a radix, or base, of 16.

I

Identification (Number) - ID: Every Argos transmitter is programmed with a unique ID number made up of 20 or 28 bits. CLS is the only organization authorized to allocate Argos ID numbers.

IFREMER: Institut Français pour la Recherche et l'Exploitation de la Mer - French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea. <http://www.ifremer.fr/anglais/> One of CLS's main shareholders.

L

Least squares method: The least squares method, independently developed by Gauss and Legendre, is used to compare experimental data, generally subject to measurement error with a mathematical model assumed to describe these data. This model may take various forms. It may involve energy conservation laws with which the quantities measured must comply. The least squares method therefore serves to minimize the impact of measurement error by "adding information" in the measurement process. Usually, the model is a family of functions $f(x, \hat{a})$ of one or more dummy variables (x), indexed according to one or more unknown parameters (\hat{a}). The least squares method is used to select the function that reproduces the experimental data most closely. We also talk of adjusting according to the least squares method. If the parameters have a physical significance, the adjustment procedure also gives an indirect statistical estimate of the value of these parameters.

Location class: The location class is a rating allocated to every location computed depending on the error estimation. The error estimation depends on the geometrical conditions of the satellite pass at the time of receiving messages and on the stability of transmitter frequency.

Location Service Plus/Auxiliary Location Processing: This value-added service provides additional information concerning transmitter performance and non-standard locations, for example, locations calculated using less than four messages (Class A, B and Z locations). Location Service Plus/Auxiliary Location Processing is activated by default for some applications, such as wildlife monitoring.

M

Message: Series of bits transmitted by an Argos transmitter. A message may vary in length from 32 to 248 (or 256) bits.

MetOp: A series of meteorological satellites developed by Eumetsat, (<http://www.eumetsat.int/Home/index.htm>) as part of the European Space Agency's (ESA) meteorological missions (<http://www.esa.int/esaLP/LPmetop.html>).

MHz: Megahertz. (1 million hertz) Hertz is the unit of measurement for frequency.

N

NASA: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (United States). Project Manager for the integration and launch of NOAA satellites.

NESDIS: National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service. A department of NOAA, the NESDIS manages satellites in orbit and ground stations, collects remote measurement dataflow, deals with demultiplexing and relays satellite data to the Argos global processing centers located in Maryland, USA and Toulouse, France.

NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. <http://www.noaa.gov/> By extension, the name given to satellites launched by NOAA, for example, NOAA-K.

O

Operations Committee (OPSCOM): International committee that supervises operation and use of the Argos system. It includes members from CNES, NOAA and Eumetsat. The Operations Committee examines and approves applications to use the system (System Use Agreements, or SUA).

Orbitography beacon: An Argos beacon fitted with a highly stable transmitter whose geographical position is known precisely. The network of orbitography beacons is used to determine the exact orbits of Argos system satellites, essential for Argos location calculations.

Oscillator: Component of an Argos transmitter that controls transmission frequency. The more stable the oscillator, the more accurate the location calculations.

P

Platform: Equipment used for measurement (a set of sensors) and communication (certified transmitter/receiver). Synonym: beacon.

Platform model: The name of the equipment sold by the manufacturer.

POES: Polar Orbiting Environmental Satellite. Name of the series of NOAA satellites carrying Argos instruments onboard.

Polar orbit: The orbit of a satellite that passes over or close to the Earth's poles.

Processing Center: Processing centers receive raw satellite telemetry data, using it to calculate locations and process messages to send data to users. Two processing centers, one in Maryland in the United States and the other in Toulouse, France, ensure continuity of service.

Program: A program includes all Argos platforms used for the same project, belonging to a user and for which a System Use Agreement (SUA) has been approved. Every program is allocated a unique number by CLS.

PTT: Platform Transmitter Terminal. One-way transmitting platform. See "Platform"

Purchase Order: Contract between CLS and the user defining the services ordered by the user.

R

Raw telemetry data: Messages received and stored on board the satellite, which are then transmitted to the ground for processing.

Real time/deferred time: See Receiving antenna

Receiving antenna: Ground antennas that receive Argos data from satellites. There are two types of receiving antennas: • Global receiving antenna: There are three main antennas, also known as global receiving stations, in the world. Two of these are NOAA stations on Wallops Island and at Gilmore Creek/Fairbanks in the United States. They are used to send commands to satellites and especially to "dump" data stored on onboard recorders. The third is a station operated by EUMETSAT in Svalbard. • Regional receiving antenna: Regional receiving stations receive data in real time, when a satellite passes through their area of visibility. Thus, all the data from platforms is received when simultaneously within the area of visibility of the antenna and the satellite. These antennas are also known as "real-time" stations.

Repetition period: The interval between two consecutive message transmissions from the same transmitter. It is related to the ID number that CLS allocates to every transmitter.

S

Satellite pass: Period of time during which a satellite receives messages from a platform. A pass generally lasts for ten minutes.

Sensor: An electronic measurement instrument that converts physical values (pressure, temperature, wind strength or direction, etc.) into digital signals.

Sigma: Standard deviation of a Gauss curve. See "Gaussian"

Significant (most significant message): The most frequently-received message from a platform, from a series of identical consecutive messages, during one satellite pass.

SSH: Encryption protocol for data transfer. Connection to the ArgosServer can be SSH-secured upon request to CLS.

Standard element: A standard element is a sequence of bits which, once decoded, provides a value (integer or real) or character chain.

Sun-synchronous orbit: A geocentric orbit where the satellite's orbit period is commensurate with the period of the Earth's orbit around the Sun.

System Use Agreement (SUA): The agreement covering use of the Argos system. A form that all future users must fill in to use the Argos system. The SUA must be approved by the Operations Committee for the creation of new programs and renewal of existing programs.

T

TELNET: TELEcommunication NETwork is a network protocol used on any network that supports TCP/IP protocol. A Telnet session can be opened on a CLS server by entering "Telnet" on the command prompt using most operating systems (Windows, Unix, etc.).

Transfer function: Algorithm used at Argos processing centers to convert the raw data contained in messages from a platform into physical values. A transfer function describes all the mathematical operations that define the relation between system input and system output.

Transmitter: Argos platform transmission electronics, also known as a Platform Transmitter Terminal (PTT). Must comply with the specifications furnished by CNES if it is to be certified by CLS.

U

User Services: User Services is the users' contact point for managing their Argos programs. There are User Services Groups in various countries.

UTC: Universal Time Coordinates, or Greenwich Mean Time 0°. Also called Zulu Time (Z).

V

Visibility (Circle of): Each satellite sees, simultaneously and constantly, all the platforms within a circle 5,000 km in diameter, known as the circle of visibility.

W

WGS 84: World Geodetic System 1984: latest revision of 1984. Argos locations are computed in this reference frame.

WMO: World Meteorological Organization www.wmo.int