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Observing the Earth: A Catalog of Capabilities

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Complex observational field campaigns are increasing becoming a prominent part of atmospheric sciences. Building on decades of observations and billions of dollars invested in acquiring observational capabilities, these multifaceted experiments are now being designed and executed using a plethora of instruments types, platforms capabilities, and complex cyberinfrastructure to turn data bits into new knowledge. But how does the community stay abreast of evolving instrument and platform availability and capabilities across a wide spectrum of centers, universities, Federal agencies, and the international science community? Policies, practices, and lack of omni-knowledge about the full spectrum of observing capabilities, can tended to reduce the productivity of scientists and perhaps limit the effectiveness of field campaigns to achieve their stated science objectives. Overcoming these barriers, real or perceived, is a constant challenge for the observational community. To assist in this challenge, NSF working with the community funded this study, to develop a catalog of observing capabilities that offers, in a consistent format, information on instruments, observing systems, and platforms.