

SSEC McIDAS Users' Group Policy Document January 2025

I. Purpose of the McIDAS Users' Group

The McIDAS Users' Group (MUG) provides a McIDAS community mechanism for maintaining and upgrading McIDAS software and documentation, and other activities appropriate to a users' group. The MUG was created on 1 January 1989.

II. Introduction

This document delineates the policies, fees, conditions and benefits associated with participating in the MUG. For additional information or clarification please consult [Becky Schaffer](#) (608-263-6141) or [Dave Santek](#) (608-263-7410).

The MUG exists to test and distribute research results, new software and techniques developed by SSEC and others, to maintain and upgrade the system software and documentation, to provide help desk support to its members, and to conduct other functions of a users' group on a pooled subscription basis. The MUG provides SSEC with the financial support necessary to furnish these services to the users of McIDAS systems at each McIDAS site.

A McIDAS site is defined as the group of McIDAS-X Users at one geographic location working in one office or national center, with one McIDAS Site Coordinator, who is the point of contact for software downloads and for questions to the McIDAS Help Desk. Large sites with many users may name multiple site coordinators. Large sites with multiple geographical locations should obtain separate McIDAS licenses. Large sites with different missions (e.g. research vs. operations) should be different sites.

MUG activities are limited to those that are of general McIDAS community interest. Organization-specific enhancements to McIDAS software will continue to be funded directly by the organization requesting the research, new capability or upgraded performance.

All Participants (McIDAS sites) are strongly encouraged to make their software, research results, improved algorithms, new technology, and new or improved McIDAS capabilities known and available to SSEC for possible distribution through the MUG.

All Participants are encouraged to frequent the [McIDAS Website](#), join the [McIDAS-V Support Forums](#), and to subscribe to the [mcidas-users email list](#). The McIDAS Website is used for the distribution of McIDAS software and documentation, as well as information transfer to users. The McIDAS-V Support Forums are a primary source for McIDAS-V

announcements, information and user support (questions and answers, feature requests, bug reports, tips, etc). The mcidas-users email list is a forum for discussions with other users and a vehicle for McIDAS User Services to ask users for input and/or to poll users for McIDAS software improvements and enhancements.

III. Participation Categories

Each participation category requires that the user's system be acceptably configured to SSEC's standards. The three categories of MUG Participants are:

- [McIDAS-X](#) for access to and support of the McIDAS-X, McIDAS-XRD and McIDAS-V packages that are used for visualization and manipulation of geophysical data, including geostationary and polar orbiting meteorological satellites, NEXRAD radar, surface and upper-air observations, gridded numerical forecasts, NOAAPORT text products, and data from special observing networks
- [McIDAS-XCD](#) for access to and support of the McIDAS-XCD package that is used for receiving and processing of data from the NWSTG/NCEP channel of the National Weather Service NOAAPORT broadcast
- [SSEC Data Ingestor](#) (SDI) for access to and support of the SDI package that is used for direct ingest of research-quality data from geostationary satellites such as GOES, and polar-orbiting satellites such as POES

IV. Annual Maintenance and Upgrade Participation Benefits, Responsibilities and Fees

MUG membership in any of the three participation categories includes a McIDAS software license and entitles the Participant to access the corresponding McIDAS-X, -XCD or SDI software upgrades and supporting upgrade documentation from our McIDAS Website.

The Participant may reproduce these upgrades only for backup or other safeguarding purposes, and to produce sufficient copies to support the Participant's internal needs within the category of MUG support to which the Participant has subscribed. The software and documentation are copyrighted and may only be reproduced for use within the Participant's organization, with the exception of Sponsors and Commercial Resellers as defined in the *McIDAS Software Acquisition and Distribution Policies* [[current edition](#)]. Each copy of McIDAS-X, -XCD or SDI software so reproduced shall be labeled "All rights to the software on this media belong to the Space Science and Engineering Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Its use, reproduction or disclosure is subject to restrictions set forth in US Government contract F08606-84-C-007 and specific participation agreements. Contact (608) 262-2455 (McIDAS User Services) if clarification is needed."

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in the hope that it will be useful, but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the GNU Lesser Public License for more details.

Software and documentation upgrades are produced at irregular intervals by SSEC. Also included in the annual membership fee is access to the [McIDAS Help Desk](#) to assist Participants with their site-specific problems.

Each Participant, whether McIDAS-X, -XCD, SDI or combined, shall designate a site coordinator who will be the focal point within their organization for mailings and other communications with SSEC, for internal coordination of McIDAS matters relating to maintenance of software and documentation, and for taking an active role in coordinating the flow of information back to SSEC to improve the software, documentation and general usefulness of the MUG.

Each McIDAS location is responsible for negotiating an agreement with each datasource site to which it wishes to connect. Subjects to consider in such an agreement may include: responsible individual at each McIDAS site; training; hours and conditions of support; and costs (possibly including a portion of the MUG base and extended fees). McIDAS sites that are not independent MUG members are cautioned that SSEC expects them to use their datasource site coordinator as the normal conduit for questions, training needs, suggestions, and other interaction needs. McIDAS sites who join the MUG and connect to datasource sites other than SSEC should understand that SSEC has very limited understanding of other datasource site operations, and assumes all questions relating to interaction with other datasource sites will be handled by the site coordinator at that datasource site.

Datasource sites are similarly advised to carefully consider the impact of any workstations for which they choose to provide datasource support. While SSEC may or may not choose to support these locations with training and other assistance, such training and assistance is considered to be outside the MUG and contingent upon separate negotiations and agreement. Each datasource site coordinator is thus the point of first contact for McIDAS sites connected to that system.

SSEC does not wish to appear unresponsive to the needs of McIDAS sites, but has assumed strong support from datasource site coordinators to keep the McIDAS fees as low as possible. The MUG as configured in this Policy Document will function only with site coordinators who embrace its rules and establish clear lines of responsibility. These factors should considerably reduce the burden on the MUG and the cost required to support it.

The cost of each type of MUG membership (which is dependent on the participation category and software license) is listed in the *McIDAS Standard Product Charges* [\[current edition\]](#). Participants are normally expected to work through their datasource connection site for distribution of upgrades and information. McIDAS sites which are "stand alone" or which cannot work through their datasource connection site coordinator

may join as individual sites; however, SSEC's ability to provide help to sites not using the SSEC datasource is severely limited due to lack of knowledge of the specifics of each datasource site's individualized software and procedures.

Sites with a McIDAS-X SX software license will meet these criteria:

- Run McIDAS-X on no more than two workstations or virtual machines at a time
- Not use McIDAS-X or ADDE servers in a local area network or cloud environment for the purpose of acquiring data from or disseminating data to other McIDAS-based software or for the purpose of running McIDAS applications

Installation of McIDAS-X in the cloud requires an MX license and all users to follow the definition of a single McIDAS site (one geographical location, one mission type, etc.). If the users do not follow the definition of a single McIDAS site, please contact McIDAS Management at mcinfo@ssec.wisc.edu to discuss cloud computing site licenses.

Sites with a McIDAS-X DX software license may run three, four or five McIDAS workstations at a time. Sites with a McIDAS-X MX software license may run six or more McIDAS workstations at a time.

SSEC updates and distributes McIDAS-X and -XCD software upgrades at irregular intervals. In May 2009, SSEC began distributing McIDAS-X and -XCD updates as fully supported Fastrack releases. This means that the software is fully supported by SSEC, and that each change to the software has been tested on all of the supported system configurations [[current edition](#)]. Full system testing occurs at least once on each platform during each calendar year. SDI software is updated as needed to maintain compatibility with new satellites, satellite or data stream changes, and operating system security patches.

Participants incur the obligation of installing and maintaining the McIDAS-X and/or -XCD software on their workstations in order to acquire support or assistance from SSEC. SSEC will provide full support to Participants running the current version. SSEC will provide *limited* support to Participants that are running a version from the previous year (e.g., running 2020.1 when 2021.1 is the current version). SSEC will not be able to assist Participants that are more than one year behind the current version, or are running the -X or -XCD software on a hardware or software configuration that is not listed as compatible with the -X or -XCD upgrade.

Participation in the MUG is based on the calendar year. Participants whose participation has lapsed will be subject to a reinstatement fee not to exceed the cumulative cost of membership fees for the lapsed period. Annual MUG membership fees are due at the beginning of the calendar year and must be paid to receive access to software updates and help desk support. Special arrangements will be considered on request.

SSEC will consult with Participants for ideas, suggestions and other advice as to how the resources resulting from participation shall be applied. However, SSEC reserves the right to determine the priority and application of these participation fees.

V. Conditions

The following conditions apply to all categories of participation in the MUG.

External use or resale

Receipt of McIDAS software and documentation through the MUG does not permit their commercial resale or authorize them, in whole or in part, to be relocated for use outside the Participant's organization with the exception of Sponsored Users and Commercial Resellers as defined in the *McIDAS Software Acquisition and Distribution Policies* [[current edition](#)]. Such agreements will be negotiated with SSEC outside the MUG forum.

Termination

Participants may terminate their participation in the MUG at any time. All copyright and reproduction rights as associated with McIDAS software are perpetual and survive any participation or lack thereof in the MUG.

Derivative works and enhancements

Participants have the right to modify, add to or otherwise alter the software as provided. Maintenance of any altered software is solely the responsibility of the Participant. Any software developed solely by a Participant and which is later integrated into the core McIDAS will be subject to separate agreement between the author and SSEC concerning its ownership and use.

Protection of copyright interests

It is the responsibility of the Participant to protect SSEC's copyrights in accordance with normal commercial and industry practices.

Hold harmless

SSEC produces the McIDAS software packages (e.g., McIDAS-X, -XCD, -XRD, and -V), SDI, and all related software using good science and programming techniques. However, the Participant accepts the software and documentation as is, and accepts liability for any use which the Participant makes of them. SSEC has made a good-faith effort to make the software conform to the documentation delivered to the Participant, but disavows any liability for differences between the two.

Assignment

Without the prior written consent of SSEC, the Participant shall not assign, convey, or otherwise transfer any of SSEC's rights to the McIDAS software or documentation or any part thereof, or the use of the software or documentation to any third party with the exception of Sponsored Users and Commercial Resellers as defined in the *McIDAS Software Acquisition and Distribution Policies* [[current edition](#)].

Applicable law

This policy and any agreement derived from it shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

Arbitration

Notwithstanding the foregoing provision, any dispute or controversy arising from this proposal or any agreement arising therefrom, or the terms thereof which cannot be timely resolved by the parties shall be determined and settled by arbitration at Madison, Wisconsin, subject to the provisions of Chapter 788 Wisconsin statutes.

Changes, rights and fee structure

SSEC reserves the right to modify the participation categories, rights, benefits and fees at any time.