

Global Change Observation Missions

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ABSTRACT: ADEOSII was launched on Dec., 2002. However, after about 10 months operation, it has lost most of its power due to the solar paddle failure. As a follow on of ADEOS II mission, JAXA is now planning GCOM mission which is composed of a series of satellites. They are now called GCOM-W and GCOM-C satellites. Both satellites are composed of 3 satellites with 5 year lifetime. Hence, 13 years of continuous observation can be assured with 1 year overlaps. The first satellite of GCOM-W will be launched in fiscal 2011 while the first one of GCOM-C will be launched in fiscal 2013. GCOM-W will carry AMSR 2. AMSR 2 will be very similar to AMSR on ADEOSII and AMSR-E on EOS-Aqua with some modifications. GCOM-C will carry GLI F/O (SGLI). The SGLI will be rather different from GLI. The main targets of SGLI are atmospheric aerosols, coastal zone and land. In order to measure aerosols over both ocean and land, it will have a near ultra violet channel, as well as polarization and bi-directional observation capability. For, coastal zone and land observation, the IFOV of SGLI for these targets will be around 250m. The instrument will be composed of several components. The shorter wavelength region will adopt push broom scanners, while long wave region will use a conventional whisk broom scanner. There are several options on the orbit. Tentative orbit for GCOM-W is 700km afternoon orbit and that for GCOM-C is 800km morning orbit.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the late 20th century, it has been pointed out that changes of the global environment could alter the living environment for human being. Such global environmental changes include, but not limited to, climate warming, the sea level rise, decrease of tropical forests, desertification, destruction of the ozone layer, acid rain and the decrease of bio-diversity. What makes global changes different from conventional natural fluctuations is that many of them have been taking place due to anthropogenic causes. Although these changes have not yet reached the stage of directly affecting the life of humankind, there is a possibility that they will have major impacts in the latter half of 21st century.

For the protection and survival of humankind's future generations, it is essential to predict the future courses of these global changes so that efforts can be made to mitigate the adverse impacts of these changes. It must be said, however, that the prediction of global changes is extremely difficult. In the case of the notion of global warming caused by an increase of the atmospheric greenhouse gases like CO₂, while most scientists agree with the general concept, there is no commonly agreed quantitative prediction of how and when this phenomenon will manifest itself.

The reasons for this lack of a common prediction lie with the extreme diversity of the factors determining the global climate and the complicated interaction of these factors on which little scientific knowledge has yet been established. Any adequate understanding of global changes must be based on an approach which regards the earth as a single system within which various global geophysical parameters, processes affecting each parameter and the interaction between parameters are understood.

The establishment of various global geophysical parameters using conventional observation and measurement methods primarily based on field campaigns, however, has been found to be extremely difficult if not impossible. Satellite observation is essential for any attempt to solve global environmental problems.

2. GCOM MISSION CONCEPT

2.1 Subjects of GCOM

The GCOM aims at continuing and improving the observation conducted by the ADEOS and ADEOSII with a view to accumulating the scientific knowledge necessary to elucidate global environmental problems.

In regard to global warming, the GCOM intends the measurement of most factors involved in the energy and water cycle and material cycle, which are the main mechanisms determining climate change, and also analysis of the relevant processes. While the measurable geophysical parameters are detailed in 2.2, the parameters directly related to the energy and water cycle are temperature, water vapor, precipitation, clouds, aerosols, albedo, heat radiation from the atmosphere and estimated air-sea energy flux, etc.

Within the material cycle, measurement of the carbon cycle is a key subject. In this particular field, the GCOM aims at estimating the primary production as well as carbon flux based on measurement data on land vegetation and phytoplankton.

In regard to changes of the land environment, the measuring subjects are tropical forests and the global distribution of vegetation and its changes. In regard to the cryosphere, the sea ice concentration and snow coverage are measured and their interaction with the climate is analyzed.

2.2 Expected Achievements of GCOM

As a succeeding satellite in the ADEOS series beginning with the launch of the first ADEOS in 1996, the GCOM is expected to make the following achievements by the end of its mission (around 2020).

1) Global Warming

- Understanding of the global warming by global and long-term measurement data on various parameters.
- Separation between natural variability and trends using the data set covering the 20 year period from the launch of the ADEOS or the 15 year period from the launch of the ADEOSII.

2) Change of Land Environment

- Understanding of global forest dynamics
- Understanding of snow and ice changes

3) Clarification of sink and source of greenhouse gases.

2.3 Geophysical Parameters which will be Continuously Measured by GCOM

GCOM is a mission which continuously measures the following geophysical parameters more than 13 years.

1) Atmosphere

PAR, cloud amount, cloud type, cloud top height, optical thickness of cloud, cloud water equivalent, horizontal distribution of column water vapor, horizontal distribution of precipitation, optical thickness of aerosol, size distribution of aerosol, aerosol type

2) Ocean

chlorophyll-a, extinction coefficients, suspended solids (SS), colored dissolved organic matter (C-DOM), sea surface winds, sea surface temperature

3) Land

vegetation distribution, APAR (absorbed photosynthetic active radiation), LAI (leaf area index), Biomass, land cover, land surface reflectance, land surface temperature and emissivity, surface soil moisture over non vegetated area

4) Cryosphere

sea ice concentration, snow cover, discrimination of wet and dry snow over non vegetated area, dry snow water equivalence over non vegetated area, ice cover

2.4 Possible Contribution to Understanding of Global Changes

1) Global Warming

(a) Understanding of the reality of the phenomenon: global and long-term measurement data on various parameters which significantly affect global warming except for some parameters (evapotranspiration, etc.) related to the water cycle, can be retrieved.

(b) Separation between natural fluctuations and trends: using the data set covering the 15 year period from the launch of the ADEOS or the 10 year period from the launch of the ADEOSII covering one sun spot cycle and two or three ENSO cycles, it will be possible to separate the natural fluctuation components of the climate and trends.

(c) Understanding of the sinks/sources of GHGs

2) Change of Land Environment

(a) Understanding of global forest dynamism

(b) Understanding of snow and ice changes

2.5 Contribution to Operational Applications

GCOM satellites contribute not only to global change researches, but also several operational applications. Typical applications are listed below.

1) Accuracy improvements of numerical weather prediction

2) Accuracy improvements of extreme weather prediction

3) Ship navigation

4) Fisheries

5) Coastal management

- 6) Crop yield estimation
- 7) Volcanic eruptions
- 8) Air quality assessment including dust aerosols
- 9) Wild fires

3. GCOM FIRST GENERATION SATELLITES

3.1 GCOM Satellites

After the failure of ADEOSII, JAXA is now planning to launch small satellites rather than large ones. According to this strategy, ADEOSII follow on is now divided into two missions, i.e. GCOM-W and GCOM-C. The continuous observation required to GCOM mission poses these two missions to be composed of series of satellites, i.e., 3 satellites with 5 year life time for each mission, hence provides at least 13 years of continuous data.

GCOM-W and GCOM-C will have sun-synchronous orbit, but their local times are different. Equator crossing local time of GCOM-W will be around 13:30 at ascending node, while that of GCOM-C will be around 10:30 at descending node. These satellites will focus on energy cycle and carbon cycle. The tentative specifications of the satellites are as follows.

GCOM-W
orbit : altitude : 700km
mass : 1.9 ton
power : 4kW

GCOM-C
orbit : altitude : 800km
mass : 2.0 ton
power : 4kW

3.2 Details of GCOM-W Sensors

GCOM-W1 will carry single instruments, i.e., AMSR-2 (Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer 2). The AMSR-2 will be the follow on of the AMSR on board the ADEOS2 and will aim at achieving the measurement of the same geophysical parameters. AMSR-2 is a total power microwave radiometer with two points calibration, i.e. deep space using cold sky mirror and on-board hot load [1]. For the absolute calibration, deep space observation by main mirror will be conducted [2].

There are several improvements from AMSR and AMSR-E. The first one is the improvement of hot load. As well known, the hot loads on board AMSR and AMSR-E had a large temperature gradient. This gradient was mainly caused by the low thermal conductivity of the hot load material and also the reflection from the surrounds by MLI over the hot load. To avoid this phenomenon, JAXA decided to add a temperature controlled reflector over the hot load.

Another problem of AMSR and AMSR-E was electromagnetic interference from the ground to C band data [3]. JAXA decided to add 7.3 GHz experimental band to AMSR-2. This frequency is rather free from interference from the preliminary study over Japan and US.

AMSR-2 is a conical scanning microwave radiometer with 2 m (TBR) aperture parabolic antenna. The incidence angle is 55° and the swath width is more than 1,420 km (TBR) in the case of 700km altitude orbit.

Tentative specifications of AMSR-2 are shown in Table 2.

Table 1 Tentative specifications of AMSR-2.

- a : central frequency (GHz)
- b : ground resolution (km)
- c : bandwidth (MHz)
- d : NEdT
- e : quantization bits

3.3 Products from GCOM-W [4]

Standard products from GCOM-W are listed below.

- 1) brightness temperature
- 2) total water vapor
- 3) total cloud liquid water
- 4) precipitation
- 5) sea surface temperature
- 6) sea surface wind speed
- 7) sea ice concentration
- 8) snow amount
- 9) soil moisture

3.4 Details of GCOM-C Sensor

GCOM-C will carry only one instrument, i.e. SGLI (Second Generation Global Imager). The SGLI sensor will be a multi-purpose visual infrared imager and an advanced version of the GLI. It will be capable of measuring ocean color, land cover and vegetation, snow and ice, clouds, aerosols and water vapor, etc. The different characteristics with GLI are as follows.

- a) The largest target of SGLI is to retrieve global aerosol distributions. In order to achieve this target, SGLI will have 2 polarization channels with 3 directions.
- b) SGLI is mainly focused to land and coastal areas. There are 11 250m IFOV channels compared to 6 250 channels in GLI.
- c) VNR component of SGLI is a push broom scanner.

The components of the SGLI are as follows.

- (a) Visible and Near-Infrared (VNR): 11 channel visible and near infrared push broom scanner.
- (b) Polarization : 2 visible channels 3 directions push broom scanner
- (c) Shortwave and Thermal Infrared (SWI & TMI): 5 channel shortwave and thermal infrared optical mechanical scanner

The details of tentative radiometric specifications of VNR are shown in Table 2(a).

The details of tentative specifications of polarization channels are shown in Table 2(b).

a	b	c	d	e
6.9	50	350	0.3	12
7.3	50	350	0.3	12
10.65	50	100	0.6	12
18.7	25	200	0.6	12
23.8	25	400	0.5	12
36.5	15	1000	0.5	12
89.0	5	3000	1.0	12

The swath widths of both VNR and polarization channels are 1050km.

The details of tentative specifications of IRS (SWI & TMI) are shown in Table 2(c).

Ch.	a	b	c	d	e	S/N
VN1	380	250	10	60	210	250
VN2	412	250	10	75	250	400
VN3	443	250	10	64	400	300
VN4	490	250	10	53	120	400
VN5	530	250	20	41	350	250
VN6	565	250	20	33	90	400
VN7	670	250	10	23	62	400
VN8	670	250	20	25	210	250
VN9	865	250	20	8	30	400
VN10	763	1000	40	350	350	400
VN11	865	250	20	30	300	200

Ch.	a	b	c	f	g	h
1	1.05	1000	0.02	57	248	300
2	1.38	1000	0.02	8	103	150
3	1.64	250	0.2	3	50	57
4	2.21	1000	0.05	1.9	20	211
5	10.8	500	0.7	300	340	0.2
6	12.0	500	0.7	300	340	0.2

Ch.	a	b	c	d	e	S/N
670-P1	670	1000	20	25	250	250
670-P2	670	1000	20	25	250	250
670-P3	670	1000	20	25	250	250
865-P1	865	1000	20	30	300	250
865-P2	865	1000	20	30	300	250
865-P3	865	1000	20	30	300	250

Table 2(b) specifications of polarization channels

Table 2 (a) specifications of VNR

a : center wavelength
b : IFOV
c : channel width
d : standard radiance to define S/N
e : maximum radiance

Table 2(c) Specifications of IRS

f : standard radiance to define S/N or standard temperature
g : maximum radiance or maximum temperature
h : S/N or NEΔT

3.5 Products of GCOM-C [4]

Standard products from GCOM-C are listed below

Land

1) radiance, 2) surface reflectance, 3) vegetation index, 4) vegetation roughness index, 5) shadow index, 6) land surface temperature, 7) FAPAR, 8) LAI, 9) above ground biomass

Atmosphere

1) cloud flag, 2) cloud amount, 3) cloud top height & temperature, 4) water cloud optical depth & size, 5) cirrus droplet size, 6) aerosol over ocean, 7) aerosol over land (near UV), 8) aerosol over land (polarization)

Ocean

1) normalized water leaving radiance, 2) atmospheric correction parameter, 3) PAR, 4) Chlorophyll-a, 5) suspended solids, 6) CDOM, 7) SST

Cryosphere

1) snow & sea ice distribution, 2) ice distribution over Okhotsk sea, 3) snow & ice surface temperature, 4) shallow snow particle size

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