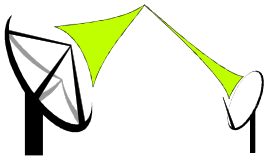
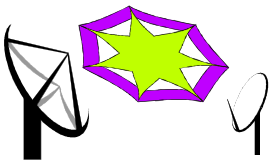
1.1.1. AIS Engineering

Systems & Facilities:

Star:	iDirect Infiniti
Mesh:	Comtech Vipersat, iDirect Infiniti
SCPC:	Comtech EF Data, Paradise Datacom
Frequency:	C and Ku-band
Other:	Fibre, Microwave and Wireless

Hubs:	Fuchsstadt (Germany), Riverside (Nuevo), CA and Mountainside (Hagerstown), MD
Satellites Used:	Intelsat (IS-17, IS-904, IS-903, IS-906, IS-701 and G-23)
Service Area:	Regional and International
Install, S&M:	AIS Engineering and Subcontractors

Commercial Factors:

Growth:	5% (2010)
Staff:	30
Capacity:	~85 MHz
Revenue:	~US$12.5 million

Business:

AIS Engineering, a privately held SBA Certified company, was founded and incorporated in Maryland in 1994 by Abe and Hilda Sylla, the current President of the company. Abe Sylla previously worked at Voice of America where he gained his experience in satellite communications and the majority of the company's employees also have backgrounds in the satellite communications industry. As business grew, the company employed IT/IP networking experts as the RF and IP worlds mated. AIS employs 30 people in its Maryland, Texas and Florida offices, together with additional staff as required on a per project basis. In 2010, the company added a large facility in Florida so have supplemented integration facility capabilities to its repertoire. AIS Engineering has full access to Tier 1 carrier services, its business falling into four main categories: IT, Ground Segment, Teleports and Satellite Network Engineering.

AIS manages five iDirect and two Vipersat hubs at Intelsat's teleport facilities in Germany (Fuchsstadt) and the United States (Nuevo in California and Mountainside, Maryland) as well as hosting equipment at Arqiva in the UK and Newsat in Adelaide. Its iDirect services were launched in 2003, with its Vipersat solution following in 2004. AIS's primary operations centre is in Silver Spring, Maryland with additional centres in Melbourne Florida and Andrews, Texas - all of which are 24/7 secure network operations centres from which it manages network services for both commercial and government interests. AIS recently branched into the provision of technical staff to manage NOC services for third parties as well as installation services for non-AIS contracts such as its work for SES World Skies for the Trojan Project/Program at Fort Bragg and Fort Belvoir.

AIS provides research, hardware and software design, integration, component and systems analysis, implementation, as well as operations and maintenance services, specializing in

turnkey customized private networks for government as well as commercial clients, although COMSYS understands that it is the former that make up the vast majority of its business. Major government customers include the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC), USSOUTHCOM and the Air Force Rapid Capability Office and the company also manages a large number of sites in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the commercial sector over the years its client base has included Arrowhead, Caterpillar, Senelec, Marathon Oil, MCI, Qwest, Gabtel, OPT, IBM and Honeywell, LMCO (Lockheed Martin), 3Di Technologies, Stratos, CapRock, Intelsat General Corporation (IGC), Chugach and Future Technologies. In order to provision a complete end to end service, as well as satellite communications, the company covers a variety of technologies and services using fibre and other terrestrial circuits together with wireless LAN networks. AIS can also provide roving terminal service (quick deploy and self-acquiring antennas from AVL, GigaSat, GCS and SWE-DISH) in Afghanistan, Iraq, the USA and various regions of Africa.

Currently we understand AIS has deployed over 225 iDirect units together with several Vipersats – these operate at both Ku-band and C-band, with several customer sites requiring two terminals to ensure backup and redundancy. Generally installations tend to be 2.4 and 3.8 metre, whilst the 1.8 metre installations tend to be in the research establishments the company serves in the US as well as the Middle East, the Stans and central Asia (in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia). It has also rolled out installations in many African countries as well as in several countries in South America. Overall, AIS's presence is very much global as it operates a VSAT network that mirrors that operated by the CTBTO, which is in the majority of countries worldwide with a hybrid network of VSAT, Frame and MPLS. In Africa, AIS is interested in providing and improving communications facilities for the general public as well as supplying inter-related government communications between the countries themselves in the continent and internationally and the company has already rolled out networks in Nigeria and operates terminals in several other African countries including Guinea, South Africa and the Ivory Coast. Its experience and expertise in dealing with installations in even the most inhospitable of places is significant and the reason why the company was called in by IGC to provided project / installation management and supervision of 11 sites across Africa for the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) project.

AIS Engineering's main space segment of choice is Intelsat but it also uses several different satellites, including NSS and Telesat, as the need arises. The company is also in SES World Skies' Mediaport in Bristow, VA and conducts its own Tier 1, 2 and 3 maintenance and repair using its own secure network operations centres in Texas, Maryland and Florida with 24/7 support. Installation is carried out either by the company's own staff or by local subcontractors. AIS has contacts and partnerships with most of the large international telcos like BT, Belgacom and Deutsche Telekom but also, as a company, sells iDirect services to Intelsat. The company believes that it is the quality of its employees and its solid, long-term relationships with its suppliers which result in a steady stream of customer referrals although we understand that one of AIS's key strengths is also its size – being small but nimble allows it to react quickly when dealing with customer requirements, a vital ingredient when dealing with both a commercial and government client base.

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