

Coordination Committee Seminar Nice – 09 / 10 June 2009

CONCLUSIONS

(2009-06-18)

The 9th meeting of EMWIS Coordination Committee took place in Nice (France) on 9-10 June 2009. The meeting was attended by 10 National Focal Points –NFP- (Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Cyprus, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey). The Algerian, Italian, and French NFPs were unable to attend the meeting (justified absence). This seminar was organised back to back with the expert workshop on metadata management and geographical reference data sets.

After a brief seminar introduction highlighting that EMWIS NFP have been operating for 10 years and that water information remains a crucial issue for the Mediterranean area with more focus on accurate data and indicators while the transfer of know-how remains necessary to ensure quicker implementation of good practices. The participants were informed about the organisation of a Ministerial meeting on Sustainable Development of the Union for the Mediterranean to be held in Paris on 25 June 2009 with 4 technical sessions in the morning (water, transport, energy and urban sustainable development) and a plenary political session in the afternoon. Invitations have been signed by Egypt and France, Union for the Mediterranean –UfM- co-Presidency. An informal meeting focused on water issues will also be organised on 24 June afternoon.

The main conclusions of the last EMWIS Steering Committee meeting that was held on 12 May in Monaco were reminded by the Vice Presidency of the EMWIS Coordination Committee, represented by M. Nicholas CHRISTOFIDES from the Water Development Department in Cyprus. During the discussion, it was suggested that in the future, Steering Committee and Coordination Committee meetings should be organised back-to-back allowing more synergy between water directors and NFPs..

The achievements of EMWIS Phase II activities (between December 2003 and June 2008, period covered by a contract with the European Commission DG Europe Aid) were briefly presented; it is worth mentioning: 16 national institutional websites on water, over 15 000 subscribers to the monthly news flash, a water thesaurus in 7 languages, the launch and funding of national water data management systems, or regional studies. This was followed by an introduction on activities supported by the European Commission DG Environment under the Programme ENRTP. These activities have 2 main objectives i) supporting the development of water information systems in the Med area (both national and Mediterranean ones) compatible with WISE (Water Information System for Europe) and ii) supporting the “water monitoring” and “water scarcity and drought” working groups of Med Joint process.

Draft technical guidelines for interoperability with WISE were presented based on the latest WISE (e.g. GIS guidance document) and WISE DS (Distributed System) developments as well as the specificities of non EU Med countries. The level interoperability can be assessed on a simplified ISO model using 4 layers:

1. Networking
2. Procedure and data exchanges
3. Format and feature definitions
4. Data model and semantics

The interoperability for the 3 first layers can be achieved by using appropriate international standards while the last layer has an impact on data structures to be managed by National Water Information



Systems –NWIS- in the Med Partner Countries –MPC- and by a future Mediterranean Water Information System –MedWIS-

A data model structure was also proposed for geographical reference datasets and even beyond. As the MPC are not concerned by the EU Water Framework Directive –WFD-, the scope of NWIS in MPC might be different the scope of WISE (focus on water quantity rather than water quality issues).

Drat reports on “interoperability guidelines” and “generic data model” for NWIS and MedWIS will result will be circulated to NFP staff and NWIS experts in MPC at the end of June for comments. These reports will includes results from the discussions on metadata (Expert workshop, 8-9 June) as well as the data model proposed will be mapped with WISE datasets to identify the common areas.

The NFP coordinators stated that this information is useful for countries to set-up or improves their own system but that it will be necessary to involve the right experts in their country for technical feed-back. Therefore it was suggested to look for the organisation of technical training/workshops with data managers (or/and specialised staff from the Ministries) to analyse the mapping of the data model proposed with the datasets used at the national level in the MPC.

Six of national workshops focused on data/information management will be planned between September 2009 and April 2010. In addition to these 6 workshops, data harmonisation pilot exercises should be conducted in Tunisia and Lebanon. These workshops will focus on:

- Presenting NWIS & Med-WIS approach¹
- Presenting the results from EMWIS previous works and status of NWIS
- Promoting the use of metadata catalogue and data/metadata collection
- Presenting the technical guidelines on interoperability and the data model proposed
- Discussing practical steps for further development of the NWIS

The first test on the preparation of a Mediterranean map server for interactive consultation of water related maps allowed identifying the main constraints on such exercise: e.g. compatibility of projection and coordinates systems, conversion of scales. The first test is based on a small survey geographical data sets availability and formats as well as sample data set made available by countries or international organisations. NFP were reminded that their replies to the GIS survey are necessary to define the requirements for the Mediterranean map server and pre-processing tools. For example, the review of the different scales used by all the countries will allow defining the most relevant one for the Mediterranean level (for instance in Tunisia 3 scales are used: 1:25000, 1:50000 and 1:100 000 in the South). Therefore, reminders will be sent to Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Turkey.

The current status of the Med Joint Process working groups on “water monitoring” and “water scarcity and drought” were presented. The Water Directors will be asked (letter from EMWIS Steering Committee President) to renew their representatives in these 2 working groups to ensure sufficient input from government officials and to reflect recent activities in the countries.

For “water monitoring”, the first objective is to assess the current monitoring practices in MPC, to this end a survey has been launched mid-April, most of the countries have replied expect Egypt and Palestine, while for others complementary information might be requires. It has been agreed that:

- a last reminder will be sent to Egyptian and Palestinian NFPs to provide a minimum set of information, at least the 1st part related to the institutional arrangements (18 June)
- replies received will be consolidated to form one document per country (26 June)

¹ See concept note on “[strengthening water information and monitoring in the Med area](#)” (a proposal for pilot action under the Union for Mediterranean)



- for each country, the consolidated document will be sent to all the organisations identified as having responsibility in water monitoring, with clarification requests when necessary and giving a last opportunity to all the stake-holder to provide their inputs (6 July)
- The regional analysis will be made on the latest inputs from the countries (15 September)
- A workshop will be organised to present and discuss the regional analysis and prepare recommendations for further activities, probably during the INBO/MENO meetings in Beirut 4-6 October

The main conclusions of the working group's report on "water scarcity and drought" issued in June 2008 were reminded. One of the main recommendations was to improve the availability of accurate data to allow a better assessment of the situation. At the same time, EU member states under the coordination of the European Environment Agency have also carried out some joint activities on water quantities indicators. This has resulted in the report "[Water Resources across Europe – confronting Water Scarcity and Drought](#)" presented at the latest World Water Forum in Istanbul. Some Mediterranean countries such as Palestine and Israel also prepared national management plans that include indicators. After, renewing the membership of this working group, the following steps were proposed:

- Collecting cases studies from countries/basin organisations on water scarcity and drought management, e.g. crisis management plans – July 2009
- Survey on indicators availability (based on EU questionnaire used to prepare the report on water resources across Europe) – August 2009
- Organisation of a workshop to present the case studies, discuss indicators and the preparation of publication – November 2009, in Spain –to be confirmed- (to be organised with MENBO co-chairing this working group)

The concept note on "[strengthening water information and monitoring in the Med area](#)" validated by the Steering Committee was presented. It was reminded that the action proposed is based on 2 steps:

- First national activities with pilot countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Spain, France and Italy) while involving all the countries for regional activities that will include exchange of experiences. The possible involvement of additional countries will be validated after letters from Steering Committee President will be sent to the Ministers in charge of water in the different countries
- Deployment to more countries on case by case basis

In response to Steering Committee request to launch pilot activities as soon as possible and to present some preliminary results by the end of the year, it was agreed to start the preliminary process taking into account the budget constraints:

- Definition of Terms of References by pilot countries to carry out Organisational and institutional actions up to the drafting terms of reference for technical development and training. These ToR will be based on the proposed generic national activity plan and will include a detailed budget. They will also include some key data that could be used at the Mediterranean level for the pilot exercise (e.g. evaluation of water resources and withdrawal by sector)
- Fund raising for the national activities based on the ToR defined
- Organisation of a regional workshop with international initiative for the harmonisation of data collection processes, possibly by the end of 2009 (to be confirmed, based on funds available)

The status of NFP and their websites was presented by the Technical Unit. This quick benchmarking exercise allows the NFP to review their strengths and weaknesses before making new activity plans for the future. In this context, at the end of June simple templates will be circulated allowing NFP to define their own action plan based on EMWIS activities, i.e. working groups, NWIS and water tariffs. Based on NFP requirements and budget available, the Technical Unit might provide some limited financial support to carry out national activities.



EMWIS Technical Unit has registered uniform domain names for each country based on the following principle: www.semide-xx.org and www.emwis-xx.org (xx being the 2 letters code of country). Recently the Technical Unit has moved all the domain names to a new provider giving more management options. The NFP hosting their websites should make sure their web server accept being called www.semide-xx.org and www.emwis-xx.org (the so-called virtual host of the web server configuration needs to be amended). The NFP concerned are: Spain, France, Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Tunisia and Turkey. Each of them will be contacted individually.

Following the request of the EMWIS Steering Committee to publish information water tariffs, a introduction on the role of tariffs and potential information that could be published was introduced. Each NFP presented briefly the tariff structure of its country. It has been agreed that the national existing information will be sent to the Technical Unit to prepare a first regional overview and suggest a coherent approach for presentation at the national level on NFP web sites.

Finally, a brief discussion took place on the opportunity for the NFP and the Technical Unit to take part in project proposals and support the participation of local actors in call for proposals such as the ENPI Cross Boarder Cooperation programme, LIFE Environment, FP7, etc. It has been agreed that as far as possible the NFP will announce these calls on the websites with links to the relevant sections on EMWIS international website. Some NFP proposed some ideas for new joint projects such as:

- Training trainers to deliver water courses in primary schools (Concept note provided by Algeria in French)
- Participative management
- Water saving measures (Concept note to be provided by Cyprus)
- Education (Concept note to be provided by Palestine)
- Governance (Concept note to be provided by Palestine)

The EMWIS NFP suggested that in future water related programmes in the Med area, National Water Authorities should be involved in the selection of projects in order to ensure a better transfer of results.

Eric MINO, EMWIS coordinator, ended the seminar by thanking all the participants for their proactive involvement.

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