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| <p style="text-align: center;">SEMIDE Système Euro-Méditerranéen d'Information sur les savoir faire dans le Domaine de l'Eau www.semide.org</p> |  | <p style="text-align: center;">EMWIS Euro-Mediterranean Information System on the know-how in the Water sector www.emwis.org</p> |
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**SEMINAR OF INFORMATION AND TRAINING FOR THE DATA MANAGERS OF THE NATIONAL FOCAL
POINTS OF THE EMWIS
MADRID, OCTOBER, 2002**

CONCLUSIONS

(2002-10-10)

The 7th information and training seminar organized within the framework of the EMWIS was intended for the data managers of the National Focal Points (NFP). It took place in Madrid from September 30 till October 3, 2002.

This seminar aims at:

- Presenting et validating a guide to set-up an EMWIS NFP, including 2 sub-sections: one targeted to decision makers and the other one more detailed for the organization in charge of setting up the NFP
- Analyzing the main legal issues related to information diffusion on the Internet and proposing some models of partnership agreements with third parties
- Presenting how to use the online application of the EMWIS Thematic Directory (consultation and update) and discussing its exploitation by each NFP (especially the updating process and the potential installation on the NFP servers)
- Presenting some methods for quality control of web sites identified by the NFP and some approach to improve the content of NFP web sites according to user needs
- Presenting and validating the set-up of a multilingual and multi-base documentary search engine for EMWIS (today, 5 documentary databases have been identified by NFP: Algeria, France, Jordan, Morocco and Spain)
- Discussing the future content and services to be offered by EMWIS

13 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership were represented (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Spain, France, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey).

The seminar was opened with welcome's message of the Manageress of the CETA (CEDEX), Mrs. Milagros Couchoud. The first presentation of the seminar (Presentation of the seminar objectives and overview of EMWIS progress so far) allowed making sure that all the participants had a sufficient level of knowledge to benefit from following sessions.

The guide to set-up a NFP, which is in the course of development by the CEDEX under the aegis of the Technical Unit (TU), was presented. The first section of this document is a synthesis bound for the decision-makers, its vocation is to motivate a country that still has no NFP to created one and make it operational. For this synthesis intended for the decision-makers, it was notably noticed that:

- A summary of one or two pages should be added to the document;
- No acronym should be used;
- The President of the Steering Committee (SC) had not only to send this document to the Directors of the Water and Ministers of countries without operational NFP, but also, in agreement with the NFP, to the Ministers of the countries who already

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have a NFP to strengthen its institutional status. The related letters should be personalized to announce the level of development of the concerned NFP.

For the detailed version of the guide, discussions focused on:

- The necessity of detailing the action plan proposed in the guide of synthesis for the implementation and the functioning of a NFP,
- The contents of the various sections proposed for the sites of NFP

Session on the **legal aspects** raised awareness among the data managers on two essential aspects related to the functioning of a NFP:

- Procedures and models for the preparation of agreements of partnership with third parties notably for publishing contents produced by them. As such, a model of transfer of rights of author was given to the NFP.
- The collection and the publication of information on the Internet notably for the personal data protection and the intellectual property rights. In this framework, some texts for the legal mentions were proposed to NFP in order to limit their responsibility in the publication of their website (general conditions of uses: disclaimer, privacy policy, links, intellectual property and copyright).

The various models proposed during this session could be used by the legal services of NFP to elaborate final texts which will take into account the current legislation in their country.

The various **tools for publication and search** provided by the Technical Unit gave place to a detailed presentation, which was completed by a practical session:

- The electronic forums and the publication of news. These two tools are based on freeware applications. On demand of a NFP, specific resources can be set-up on the server of the Technical Unit or directly installed on the server of the NFP.
- A tool for indexation and simultaneous search on all the websites of NFP (software based on open source license running on Linux operating system). The Technical Unit can supply the necessary assistance to integrate an access to this tool on the website of individual NFP.
- A multilingual engine allowing indexation and retrieval on distributed documentary databases (using the standardized protocol Z3950 V2). Today, this tool gives access to two French bibliographical databases (EauDoc and JURIEauDoc), a Spanish database (national water legislation) and a test database from the Technical Unit. This tool integrates a multilingual specialized thesaurus (with entries for French, English, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese), which can be enriched by NFP. The Technical Unit can also supply the necessary assistance to integrate an access to this tool on the website of individual NFP.
- The interfaces of consultation and update of the thematic directory. The principles of functioning in distributed mode and in centralized mode were presented. Today the French and Tunisian Focal Points chose this distributed mode (i.e. installation and management of their own thematic directory on their server). It is necessary to note that within the framework of the implementation on the Tunisian server, the integration of the Arabic language is being analysed. The participants also obtained a username and a password allowing them to administer all the recordings relative to their country.

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NFP will send written comments to the Technical Unit for the improvement of these tools by email or on the EMWIS private forum.

The exploitation of the thematic directory and more particularly update and control quality gave place to an animated discussion around the procedures for periodic update and the overlap in the fields of competence of the International Focal Point and the National Focal Points. It has been agreed that the Technical Unit will propose to the NFP updating procedures for each case (periodic updating campaigns, insertions of information by the TU or directly by an organisation) integrating a data validation phase by the NFP, when required.

The **quality of the contents** of websites published by EMWIS is essential, various subjects gave place to exhaustive presentations or to discussions:

- Usability (also called ergonomics) of Web sites. This notion contains at the same time the performance of looking for information on a website, the satisfaction of surfing the site and the ease with which one learns to use it.
- To put in evidence the expectations of the users, the analysis of usual methods shows that the best solutions are based on the statistics of consultation of web pages and the analysis of demands received (usually by email). It was suggested using a common approach (typology of the users, type of demands, etc.) to analyse the demands (on the basis of the data base used with the Spanish Focal Point). On the other hand, experiences led by the Spanish and French Focal Point show that the rate of answer to on-line surveys is very often not significant (lower than 10 % of the users). However questionnaires used with these two Focal Points will be given to all the NFP on the EMWIS private forum.
- The use of the metadata of Dublin Core to create simple descriptive notes for accessible information sources available on the Internet (for example Web sites or electronic documents). This metadata can be notably defined by using the Resource description Format (RDF) written with the eXtensible Markup Language (XML). Discussion showed that the advantages of the using these tools must be further analysed, notably for the Information Source part of the thematic directory.
- The definition of common keywords for the web pages of the NFP's sites has been agreed. The keywords already used by NFP will be collected on the forum in order to define a common set which will be used for the referencing of all the sites on a set of search engines by the TU.

The eXtensible Markup Language (XML), which is used in the new generations of Internet applications, was briefly introduced to the data managers. This language and its potential use within the framework of EMWIS have been presented in details) during the IT managers seminar held in Rome in June, 2002 (to see [conclusions](#)).

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Finally the last session allowed to discuss the main activities planned for the second phase of the EMWIS (2003-2005) on the basis of the strategic plan validated by water directors in November 2001 and the comments received from the technical evaluators and from the monitoring mission appointed by the European Commission. On the basis of NFP's expectations, the following issues were discussed:

- Introduction of the Arabic language to allow access to the information supplied by the EMWIS. It was reminded that the Algerian Focal Point already proposes an access in Arabic, in French and in English to its website and an analysis is currently undertaken for the thematic directory with the Tunisian Focal Point.
- The revision of the technical architecture which will be based on an analysis of national needs and international exchanges with a progressive introduction of XML's usage mainly for information exchanges, distributed applications and the management of Web sites.
- The definition of verifiable indicators to estimate progress realized by EMWIS and its NFP.
- The need of cooperation with water-facilitators appointed for the MEDA-Water program in countries Euro-Med.
- As regards the support of EMWIS for the development of National Water Information Systems, it was confirmed that this type of activity would be carried out only at request of a NFP. The participants pointed out as well that an extension of the competence of the EMWIS had to obtain the approval of the political decision-makers. So the accent will be put on the exchange of know-how concerning the implementation and operation of National Water Information Systems.

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