

Data managers seminar Madrid – 13-15 November 2006

CONCLUSIONS

(2006-11-20)

The 15th seminar of EMWIS National Focal Points (NFP) was organised for the data managers of the National Focal Points. It took place in Madrid from 13 November till 15 November 2006. This was the 4th meeting of the data managers since the operational launch of the Initiative at the end of 1999 (the last meeting of the data managers took place in November 2004).

The meeting was attended by 12 National Focal Points - NFP - (Algeria, Egypt, France, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey). The Cypriot and the Lebanese NFPs were unable to attend the meeting (justified absence). This seminar was also attended by Mr. Bernd Schrikkema (Monday and Tuesday morning), the expert mandated by the European Commission for the evaluation of the EMWIS phase II and by 2 additional Jordanian representatives who aimed to prepare an exchange of experience focused on Water Information Systems with the Spanish experts.

The seminar was opened by a welcome message from Mr. Antonio SANCHEZ TRUJILLANO, CETA -Centre of Applied Techniques and Studies- Director (CEDEX).

The first presentation reminded the participants of the seminar objectives, of the progress so far of the EMWIS 2nd phase and the main conclusions of the Euromed Water Directors meeting held in Athens, 6-7 November 2006. This was followed by 2 very interesting presentations of water information systems developed by the Hydrographical studies Centre of the CEDEX, and by a presentation of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO).

The new international EMWIS portal was briefly presented and participants had the opportunity to use it and access the private sections during a practical session on Tuesday afternoon to illustrate the various presentations.

Each section of the NFP's websites has been reviewed and discussed. The participants noticed the important efforts provided by the NFP teams and the valuable information already available on their websites. After discussion, the following recommendations were agreed to improve the website content.

The “**Institutions**” section should describe, if possible with an organigram, the role and competences of the public organisations with responsibilities on inland water or sanitation (from the national to the local level). Public utilities companies should also be included. When the NFP wishes to provide a broader description of the organisations working on this sector in the country (e.g. associations, private companies), it was felt that the “**Institutions**” section should be included in a section called “**Stakeholders**”/”**Actors**” with sub-sections (e.g. “**Institutions**”, “**Associations**”, “**private companies**”)



For the “**Education & training**” section, it was recommended to create 2 sub-sections focusing on:

- Educational curricula for student:
 - o List of the universities or schools (with contact details) providing courses classified by topics
 - o When possible details about the courses (e.g. duration, certificates required to attend the course, etc.)
 - o Link to [the MEDA-Tempus program](#) for exchange between universities with a brief explanation of this program and the national contact for further information (check http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/countries/index_en.html for information on your country involvement in TEMPUS)
- Vocational training for workers who want to update their skills or obtain new knowledge
 - o List of the centres providing courses classified by topics
 - o When possible details about the courses (e.g. duration, knowledge required to attend the course, etc.)
 - o For the international courses opened to foreigners: syndication of the training news published by the Technical Unit (url and connection details to be provided by the Technical Unit)

For the “**Research and Development**” (R&D) section, the focus should be more on development activities or applied research rather than on basic research. This section should include:

- List of the main research centres involved in water and sanitation with a description of their field of competences
- List of the public organisations managing R&D programs (e.g. national administrations, basin organisations, local/regional authorities) with their R&D planning (e.g. priorities, investment plans)
- List of international projects involving the country extracted from the Technical Unit database using an XML syndication and a filter
- List of national projects (at least the on-going projects) using the common EMWIS metadata. Alternatively, these projects could be included in the [EMWIS database](#) and displayed on the NFP web site together with the international projects involving the country using an XML syndication and a filter
- List of organisations financing R&D projects (e.g. international organisations) with a brief description of the type of projects financed

The “**Data management**” section should provide a list of the official water data providers labelled by themes including for each theme

- Contact details
- Direct web access if existing

It was reminded that the national statistics offices should be listed in this section as they are producing relevant indicators (developed through [the MedStat programme](#) of the European Commission). A more comprehensive catalogue of data source could be developed in the framework of the Mediterranean Water Information Partnership currently analysed by EMWIS following the decision of the Water Directors in Athens (6-7 November 2006).



For the “**legislation**” section, it was noticed that the main interest of end-users was more on understanding the structure of the water law rather than on the text itself (usually used by experts or lawyers). Therefore, this section should include:

- At least:
 - A statement identifying the competent authority that can provide the official legislation and the official language(s)
 - The list of relevant national laws with title, date of publication and a brief summary or commentary. The translation should focus on this part rather than on the full text
- An analysis of the coverage of the water law with a description of its organisation and a thematic classification of the texts could be developed with the support of a specialised layer
- Links to the full text legislation when available
- List of international conventions covering (even partly) inland water (e.g. [RAMSAR convention](#), [Mediterranean Action Plan](#)) involving the country. For each convention:
 - the contact details of the Ministry in charge of its follow-up
 - a link (provided by the Technical Unit) to a more detailed description of the convention

The possibility to include “court cases” was also discussed as very interesting for the end-users. But according to the experiences of the Spanish and French NFPs, running such a service is very costly (access charges to legal databases, specialised competences) and sensitive at the political level.

The discussion on the “**documentation**” section was introduced by a presentation of the virtual library set-up by the Tunisian NFP (using the open source solution [greenstone](#)) and the Open Archive Protocol set-up by the Spanish NFP for metadata harvesting the Technical Unit to facilitate searches among the online documentation systems. This section should include:

- A list of public/university libraries or documentation centres with significant resources focusing on inland water.
- Key national strategy documents (e.g. master plan)
- When existing, direct access to the documentation system of NFP or of its partners (e.g. through agreements with libraries) with metadata exposure and full text access if possible (i.e. for public documents)

The building and use of the [multilingual EMWIS thesaurus](#) based on an aggregation of existing water glossaries and thesaurus (e.g. GEMET from the European Environment Agency, the International Hydrology Glossary from UNESCO, French Water Thesaurus) were presented. Today the thesaurus is available in 3 languages (Arabic, English and French), Spanish will be added in December 2006 and Italian in early 2007. In order to update this thesaurus (e.g. proposing new terms), it was suggested to create one working group for each language using wiki tools or e-forum to reach consensus on new terms, their definition, relevant sources, and relations with the other terms of the thesaurus. These terms will then be added by the Technical Unit that will release a new online version.

The Palestinian NFP presented an interesting approach of coordination between the Palestinian Water Authority and the NGOs for implementing water projects funded by international donors. Such approach could be transferred to other countries willing to improve the efficiency of water sector funding.



The Jordanian NFP presented 2 ways of assessing the user needs and requirements. The 1st one is based on an online questionnaire, convenient a quick evaluation of an existing service. The 2nd one is based on a survey requiring more time and resources, but also allowing to increase the awareness of the stakeholders on EMWIS and to prepare potential partnership agreement for content development. Interested NFPs can reuse the questionnaires proposed to develop their own assessment material.

Finally, the French and the Spanish NFPs presented the evolutions planned for their services, respectively:

- Diffusion of all the publicly funded reports and studies plus the development of thematic websites with subscription requested to access some sections; and
- Technology watch and analysis focusing on key themes contributing to the national water priorities (e.g. desalination). These analyses are covering research (projects), innovation (patents), legislation and business issues.

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