

WMO RA VI HYDROLOGY INFORMATION LETTER NOVEMBER 2010

PART 1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

Selected items discussed at the Strategic Coordination Group meeting, 10-11 November 2010

Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources

The European Commission (EC) is planning a blueprint on water resources for the year 2012. According to the plan, 2012 would also be a Year of Water, and the main results of the assessment will be presented in the 3rd European Water Conference. The blueprint will be based on an evaluation of EU water policy, and focus on three aspects: (1) implementation of the WFD, and especially the River Basin Management Plans, (2) success of the water scarcity and drought policy, and (3) vulnerability and adaptation of water resources to climate change. EC is planning a large communication and consultation campaign during the process to involve different groups of interest. EC will also launch contracts to carry out parts of the work, e.g. some pilot studies. The three selected focus areas can give a lot of visibility to hydrology, especially if the hydrological community will actively contribute to the process.

Study on WFD and hydropower

This is also an EC activity and according to the current plans, it will focus on three topics: (1) benefits and potential – link with renewable energy action plans, (2) environmental impacts – also energy losses due to environmental requirements, and (3) policy integration. All scales of hydro power will be considered. Norway and Switzerland are prepared to contribute at this stage.

Call for evidence: water scarcity and drought (WSD) measures in the EU

EC is collecting information, studies and reports on the magnitude of WSD problems, pressures and impacts of WSD, existing measures to prevent, manage or mitigate problems, gaps to deal with WSD, and feasibility of measures. The call has been sent to all Member States (Strategic Coordination Group representatives) and all stakeholders that are represented in the Strategic Coordination Group. The call is open until the end of 2010. The information is also available on http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/quantity/call_evidence.htm

Working Group on Ecological Status

The main activity has been inter-calibration: similar criteria between Member States for the classification of ecological status. The work has been continued for some 10 years, and during the process, some new and useful scientific results have been achieved. Satisfactory criteria for classification have been developed for a number of combinations of Biological Quality Elements, regions, and water body types. However, this has not been the case for all combinations – especially in the coastal environment. The group will work till 2012, but it seems that after that date, the activity will not be continued – even if common criteria for good ecological status will not be available for all cases.

Working Group on Groundwater

The group is planning an ad hoc task on Groundwater and Climate Change. The background is that EC/DG/ENV has published a guidance document (no. 40) on "River Basin Management in a Changing Climate", which covered the groundwater aspect poorly. The task on Groundwater and Climate Change will be based on two workshops, planned for 2011 and 2012 (see upcoming meetings below).

Working Group on Floods

During 2010, a reporting drafting group has been working, and two thematic workshops have been arranged. The drafting group has made progress on Reporting sheets for “Flood hazard maps and flood risk maps” and “Flood risk management Plans”. The group also contributed to the development of reporting schemas for the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment. Progress on INSPIRE developments of the technical specifications for the Annex III (theme Natural Risk Zones) was followed closely and flood risk maps was chosen as a case study. The 1st workshop was “Flash Floods & Pluvial Floods”, 26-28.5.2010, Cagliari, IT. Key issues raised were how to improve early warning systems and awareness of the public, to increase preparedness and reduce damage of both flash floods and pluvial floods. The 2nd workshop was “Floods and Economics”, Ghent, BE, 25-26.10.2010. Key issues raised were related to valuation of flood damage, methods to identify flood management priorities and the role of flood insurance. The outputs will feed into the report/resource document on the same topic. At least one workshop is planned for 2011 (see upcoming meetings).

The main topic of discussion was 2014 reporting on flood risk maps and flood hazard maps. During this 1st reporting cycle, Member States can also use existing maps that have been produced by 2010, if these maps provide a sufficient level of information. This is expected to be a key question of implementation during the next two years. Another topic of interest seems to be the relationship between WFD and the Floods Directive. Especially the application of flood information in the River Basin Management Plans will call for good integration.

Expert group on Climate Change and Water

The group had its 1st meeting in October 2010, and the 2nd one is scheduled for March 2011. During its 1st year of operation, the group has focused on information exchange (climate change and river basin management) and follow-up of the EC White Paper on Climate Change Adaptation. The themes identified for 2011 are (1) water, adaptation and agriculture, and (2) impacts on water quality and water related ecosystems.

Expert Group on Water Scarcity and Droughts (WSD)

The group has collected European case / pilot studies in order to use this information for the development of water scarcity and drought indicators (separate indicators for WS and D). This is the main point of the group's agenda for 2010-2012. The current status is that there are clear difficulties to define good indicators, and this was the main topic of discussion at the SCG meeting. The Expert Group is also planning contributions to the European Drought Observatory coordinated by JRC.

Expert Group on Agriculture and Water

This group is planning a Guideline on water use in the farm advisory system (2012), assessments on water pricing (2010) and saving (2011), and some other reports on water and agriculture. The group is also planning a conference in 2011 (see upcoming meetings). A River Basin Network on Agriculture has been established to exchange experiences on good practices. Currently this network covers 15 Member States and 20 river basins.

Ad hoc activity on Science Policy Interface

This activity has three main objectives: (1) inventory of research needs, (2) assessment of research gaps, and (3) improved use of research outputs. The 1st science - policy forum took place on 30 September, and it was focusing on nine thematic areas (e.g. extreme hydrological events, and integrated river basin management plans). The 2nd forum is planned for autumn 2011.

Upcoming meetings (note: at this stage only tentative names, dates to be confirmed)

- High level conference on water and climate change, Budapest 23-25 March 2011, and Workshop on hydrological extremes, Budapest 29/30-31 March 2011 (jointly with a meeting of Expert Group on Water Scarcity and Drought)
- 1st workshop on Groundwater and Climate Change, Budapest, April 2010: Establishing a knowledge base.
- Special Session on Groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems, at Conference "[Hydro ECO](#)" in May 2011 in Vienna
- Conference on hydrological forecasting and water resources management in the Danube, Hungary 16-17 June 2011
- Conference on Water and Agriculture, Warsaw, 2011
- Workshop on hydropower, Germany (date and venue open at the moment)
- Possible workshop on public participation and floods, end 2011 / early 2012, Romania

PART 2 RA VI WORKING GROUP ON CLIMATE AND HYDROLOGY

The Working Group on Climate and Hydrology had its first meeting in Offenbach 29 - 30 October. Currently the group is planning to carry out the following Tasks:

- Regional Climate Centres (climate community coordinated Task Team)
- Drought Management (climate community coordinated Task Team)
- Data Rescue (climate community coordinated Task Team)
- Regional Climate Outlook Forums (climate community coordinated Task Team)
- Agrometeorology (climate community coordinated Task Team)
- Input to WIS and WIGOS (climate community coordinated Task)
- Climate change research findings and adaptation needs in connection with the evolving Global Framework of Climate Services (climate community coordinated Task)
- Climate Watch (climate community coordinated Task)

- Hydrometry (hydrology community coordinated Task Team)
- Water Scarcity and Drought (hydrology community coordinated Task Team)
- Potential Extreme Floods (hydrology community coordinated Task Team)
- Flood Forecasting and Warning – methods approach (hydrology community coordinated Task Team)
- Hydro-meteorological Early Warning systems - operational systems approach (hydrology community coordinated Task Team)
- Task Climate and Water (hydrology community coordinated Task)

The meeting agreed that new versions of Task Team Work Plans will be finalised by 15 January. As a number of linkages could be identified between various Task Teams within the Working Group, it was decided that the main links will be mentioned in the Work Plans. The fact that many internal links could be found will probably lead into good integration between the climate and hydrology communities.

Hydrological activities have also important links with the other two RA VI Working Groups. Examples are network design (the WIGOS programme) with the Working Group on Technology Development and Implementation, and forecasting and warning services with the Working Group on Service Delivery and Partnership.