

Minutes of the 1st meeting of ALADIN Local Team Managers (LTMs)
23–24/10/2006 Bratislava, Slovakia
(M. Derkova)

1. Opening, Organizational matters

M. Derkova, SHMU (ALADIN–2 officer for the networking aspects) welcomed the participants and opened the meeting. She gave the organizational information as well.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

New items added to the Agenda were a report from the EWGLAM/SRNWP meeting (item 3.2), a clarification of the financial rules of the ALADIN Programme (item 4.5) and the ALADIN work plan for 2007 (item 6). Otherwise the Agenda was adopted as proposed.

3. Introduction

J.-F. Geleyn, ALADIN Programme Manager (PM), explained why this meeting is organized. In the past the ALADIN project was running on the “good will applications of untold rules”. Now, under the 3rd MoU, the position of LTM was established. On their 1st meeting the practical details how to organize the work shall be discussed together with items coming out from the 2nd PAC meeting.

PM reported on the last EWGLAM/SRNWP meetings held in Zurich (Oct. 2006), with the emphasis on the SRNWP part. The new shape of SRNWP Programme was discussed (still under EUMETNET). The SRNWP Programme will be reinforced with increased managerial position, and will work through subprojects like some other EUMETNET Programmes. Three subprojects were identified to start with (interoperability, LAM EPS and verification). Small working groups will be formed to work out more detailed proposals. Moreover, the former SRNWP Lead Centers were replaced by Working Groups. An Advisory Committee consisting of the Head of Consortia + one advisor per Consortium will assist the SRNWP Coordinator. Full minutes from the EWGLAM/SRNWP meetings written by J. Quiby are available.

M. Derkova reported on the informal ALADIN meeting held along with the EWGLAM/SRNWP. Main items of LTMs interest are the forthcoming SURFACE/SURFEX workshop (11–13/12/2006, Toulouse), the ALADIN workshop organized in parallel with the HIRLAM All Staff Meeting (23–27/4/2007, Oslo) and the ALARO training (26–30/3/2007, Radostovice, CZ). The ALARO training aims at enlarging the group of ALADINists able to contribute to ALARO scientific maintenance. The program will encompass general scientific talks, finalization of the algorithmic–technical documentation and practical exercises. Full minutes from the informal ALADIN meeting written by P. Pottier are available.

4. The role of the Local Team Managers

As explained by PM, the LTMs are the adequate contact points to PM in new ALADIN hierarchical structure.

4.1. LTMs Terms of References

The LTMs Terms of References (ToR) were drafted by PM, based on three sources: the 3rd MoU, the LTMs answers on the PM’s questionnaire and the own PM experiences.

T. Haiden pointed out that according the ToR draft LTMs have many responsibilities (especially for the execution of the Work Plan (WP)) but almost no rights. Therefore it was agreed that LTMs would be part of the

iterative process of WP creation, in the chain of CSSI+PM-LTMs-PM-CSSI-PM. Both the preamble and the list of the tasks will be reformulated.

Other discussed issue was the need to have separate LTMs meeting, as they are supposed to attend the ALADIN workshop as well. This point was treated later. Few other changes of wording were proposed, that would be taken into account in the next version of the LTMs ToR.

PM will update the document and send it to LTMs for their approval. Then he will submit it to PAC for their comments (by 27/10/2006). Final version of the LTMs ToR shall be presented at GA.

4.2. LTMs "power": decision making and commitments/work plan fulfillment

LTMs have many responsibilities (c.f. ToR) therefore they need to have some "power" at their NMS to fulfill their duties. However, it was recognized that many local specificities exists, which have to be taken into account in the application of the ToR. This message shall be carried out to GA => ***PM shall prepare a document for GA with the explanations + LTMs ToR as an appendix.***

4.3. LTMs role in the verification and information stream (reporting on new cycles validations/verifications and on local parallel suites)

The information of the local parallel suites and local porting/validation/verification of new cycles is of high interest for Partners (and Meteo-France doesn't wish to receive only complains in case of problems). However, such huge amount of information cannot be collected by PM. Therefore LTMs are encouraged to provide this information mainly through the ALADIN Newsletter, optionally via dedicated e-mails. If local web site describing the e-suites exists (in English), it should be widely advertised. The last two posters on local operational applications (from ALADIN WS and EWGLAM meeting) will be placed on the ALADIN web site.

4.4. LTMs role in the execution of the Programme objectives and priorities

There were no comments to presented document (understood as a road map).

4.5. Financial rules for the Programme budget

The composition of ALADIN budget was explained by PM. The budget consists of the flat-rate contribution + voluntarily contributions + in-kind components. A document elaborated by PM, French LTM and P. Pottier for the bulk estimate of the missions' costs was distributed to all directors (except LACE - ***PM shall send it to LACE directors as well for information***). The rule is that each service shall pay the missions of their staff. If a mission is planned but not executed (e.g. participation to EWGLAM or to LTMs meeting), the unused money will have to be paid to the ALADIN budget in the ensuing year. The royalties (if any) may potentially lower the flat-rate contributions. The equivalent part of royalties paid to LACE budget can be used by LACE as they wish. The overcome of ALADIN budget paid to LACE budget shall be spent for the benefit of the ALADIN project. Idem for Meteo-France via its maintenance and 'KIT' budgets.

5. Other matters of LTMs interests

5.1. Phasing vs. cycles testing

As it was explained, there is often confusion between phasing and porting/testing of new cycles. This is an issue mainly for the locally developed code pieces. Partners usually do not have the newest code version available; sometimes they develop on very old cycles. Then it is a problem to phase it to the up-to-date code

release, which is the only clear and hopefully bug-free way in which other Partners can benefit from the said development. To potentially avoid such problems, the whole process shall be anticipated on the local level: for example, new code pieces shall be modularized. This can be achieved via training and communication (think-tank to sort out important issues); and it could be advertised as a part of technical information on the LTMs web page. There is obviously no ideal solution. However, it has to be recognized that although Partners do not have the same facilities/environment for the code processing as in Meteo-France, phasing of locally developed software is not at all solely Meteo-France business.

Another solution is to have a person going regularly to phasings (as LACE ASC does) to have the possibility to follow continuously the code evolution. In current practices when there are always different persons at the phasing, they cannot have as good overview of the code evolution as Meteo-France people have. Therefore if such position of the non-LACE ASC is established, his/her stay shall be one-two weeks longer to write specific technical report from phasing.

5.2. Support to operations

The table of the ten tasks identified as necessary to improve the support to operations was discussed. Three tasks (namelist choices and versioning of the high level options; validation of diversified export versions; targeted information exchange) are sufficiently covered and are progressing well. One item (general purpose interfacing) will be treated in frame of HARMONIE and SRNWP. Three others (“anti-ALADIN/France” configuration; verification and monitoring [with the exception of the high-resolution verification]; ODB) are on more-or-less on a good track. Three worrying ones are training for operational tasks; operational documentation; test-type pre-operational porting of newly released cycles.

- Training for operational tasks: Hu and Fr still ready to coordinate; however the locally developed specific tools might not be suitable for every local application. In fact people are lacking more in installing new cycles, therefore some training for porting might be needed. It was pointed out that there is sometimes not enough support for local machine-dependent switches in the common code. It was suggested that there should be targeted information exchange grouped by HPC platforms. The first attempt can be organized in Oslo in the frame of the working group discussions. These should involve HIRLAM people as well, possibly also representatives of vendors (but the code specialists, not the salesmen!). The training for the newly created tools is obviously needed.
- Documentation: Fr is doing by default; another Partner to support Fr is needed. It should take an active approach and check what documentation is missing. ***PM will make a call at GA.***
- Test-type pre-operational porting of newly released cycles: this is usually a technical problem. Sometimes it is difficult to explain why different norms are obtained due to the lack of clear phasing documentation, namely of features breaking the upward compatibility. Such documentation shall be produced by the non-LACE ASC (c.f. item 5.1). Another option is to create a (back-phased) dead branch on the previous cycle with switches allowing to obtain norms identical with the newly built cycle. But then it will be tempting to install this dead branch for operational purposes by some Partners and this avenue was hence left as ‘last chance one’. However, the French LTM is against this idea.
- It was suggested to release basically only one export version per cycle, with incremental bugfixes if needed. The preoperational validation could be shared between Toulouse (3DVAR) and Prague (ALARO).
- It is understood by default that the team submitting big code changes shall appoint/send specific person responsible for phasing of this new code. It is also understood that any person creating an involuntary clash of configurations that would find its way to the main library is responsible, as soon as feasible, for its cleaning/correction both in the main code trunk and in the export version.

5.3. ARPEGE switches issues

C. Fischer explained the preparatory document. The only controversial issue was the need for simultaneous switches. Meteo-France is strongly against it, however many Partners, especially those running cycled applications, require it to avoid cold start. It was agreed that the issue will be reopened with Meteo-France, under the conditions that (i) there is an impact expected on surface (it was shown that atmospheric fields find its equilibrium within 24hours, however for surface fields it might take weeks); (ii) the need has to be expressed by Partner who runs cycled application; (iii) the said Partner has to have ability to run E-suite for about 3 weeks parallel to Arpege.

5.4. Shape of ALADIN workshops

The success of the last EWGLAM workshop, where the program was reorganized by thematic topics, with strictly keeping the timings of presentations, thus allowing enough time for discussion, shall be an inspiration for ALADIN WS as well. Namely, as agreed in Sofia (where the talks' timing was not kept thus the original idea of individually visiting/exchanging the sessions according to the participant's interest was not always possible), next year the common ALADIN/HIRLAM meeting shall have more parallel sessions grouped according to thematic topics as well. Therefore the program shall be carefully designed, including the chairpersons able to keep the timing. ***A. Horanyi (ALADIN representative at HAC) shall informally pre-discuss the issue at forthcoming HAC.***

For this year PM volunteered to act as a contact point towards HIRLAM and Oslo meeting organizers.

The next common ALADIN/HIRLAM meeting shall be held in 2008 probably in Belgium.

5.5. Overall Programme organization, calendar of ALADIN events, annual LTMs meeting

The 1st LTMs meeting was intentionally scheduled between PAC and GA. Is such arrangement suitable in future? Or is it better to schedule LTMs meeting after GA, to be able to react to GA outcomes/requirements? As already agreed (c.f. item 4.1) LTMs will meet in Oslo (but for shorter meeting than full day). They'll decide there whether another meeting is necessary by the end of the year. The implied budget implications will be solved accordingly.

6. ALADIN work plan for 2007

PM distributed a skeleton of the work plan (WP), prepared according to inputs received from LTMs and from LACE WGLs. Topics were grouped according to the currently envisaged CSSI new staffing, marked with priorities, expected man-month effort and PM remarks. LTMs were asked to comment and correct the presented tables. ***PM will distribute the updated document by e-mail, asking each team to fill in the manpower they will devote to each task. Final version will be presented at the GA.***

PM presented another table illustrating the evolution of big masses intermobility, comparing mid 2000 to mid 2003 with mid 2003 to mid 2006. The worrying trend of the stays is that non-MF/non-LACE Partners tend to increase their links with M-F to the expense of those with LACE. There is hence a real risk of decoupling between two asymmetric entities, i.e. a set of bilateral agreements with M-F and a more networked but more isolated RC-LACE.

7. Link between ALADIN and other (European) projects

7.1. OPERA

PAC expressed the opinion that it is a pity that the OPERA Programme has no link with NWP, therefore asked LTMs to consider the issue. LTMs were of the opinion that if there is an interest this should be solved on the national level by contacts with those people who participate (usually observation people). In the later stage link between OPERA and NWP can be treated by SRNWP.

7.2. EURRA

An input document was submitted by PM (inspired by F. Bouttier), claiming that despite the EURRA being discussed at several occasions, there was no firm commitment of ALADIN Partners to participate. ***Therefore PM shall send an official request to LTMs to express the interest of their NMS to participate, with the deadline for answers by the end of 11/2006. The minutes from the initial meeting held at ECMWF shall be distributed as well.***

Portugal already several times announced its plans to participate at EURRA. A possible official commitment to coordination shall be known before the GA. Another potentially interested country is Slovenia.

7.3. ECMWF special project for LBC

The special ALADIN project at ECMWF for coupling ALADIN with ECMWF data was discussed. Although many countries applied for participation, only three of them are really active (Hu, Be, Fr). ECMWF already noticed that allocated CPU resources are not being spent and shortened them accordingly. C. Fischer reminded ***all the concerned NMS*** (apart from those who are active) ***to send him their plans and other feedbacks.***

8. AOB, date and venue of the next LTMs meeting

- C. Fischer informed on the next Arpege e-suite, that should – apart other items – contain the semi-envelope orography. It was supposed that this e-suite will have no “technical” impact on the Partners applications, as the so-called “telecom” domains are with the mean orography. However, this turned up not to be true after the last update of the LBC/CLIM files (the first half of 2006). ***Therefore some coordination steps will be necessary.***
- C. Fischer informed about his visit (together with B. Chapnik, Meteo-France) in Alger. Apart from the personal impressions he informed that in Alger they are in process of building new technological environment with planned ITT for supercomputer in 2007. Then they plan to install full ALADIN operational suite including 3DVAR.
- PM expressed his worries about the current status of the code coordination with ECMWF, especially with respect to NH dynamics and VFE. Although the newly officialised working group exists, Meteo-France acts as the single Partner towards ECMWF. Despite the promising progress on VFE (now it is probably mature enough to be phased to CY33), the new HIRLAM WG Leader for dynamics might have different opinion on how to treat the VFE topic. Given his professional background he can contact on his side ECMWF directly, with the possible consequence of the ALADIN work not being known in fair enough conditions! A. Horanyi mentioned that the VFE topic was discussed at LSC as well, where the worries were expressed that the recent changes of the tasks priorities at SHMU (the main contributor to the VFE topic) induced a risk that this high-priority and strategic work doesn't receive enough work force for a timely completion.

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List of participants

<i>name</i>	<i>country</i>
Thomas Haiden	Austria
Tomislav Kovacic	Croatia
Martin Janousek	Czech Rep.
Claude Fischer	France
Andras Horanyi	Hungary
Marek Jerczynski	Poland
Maria Monteiro	Portugal
Cornel Soci	Romania
Neva Pristov	Slovenia
Martin Benko	Slovakia
Jean-Francois Geleyn	ALADIN PM
Maria Derkova	ALADIN-2