

6th Assembly of ALADIN Partners

Casablanca

January 14, 2002

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Opening and Adoption of the Agenda

The 6th assembly of ALADIN partners held at Casablanca in Morocco, opened at 09:00 on January 14th. It was chaired by M. Azzedine Diouri, the Director of the Moroccan Meteorology Direction (DMN). The chairman welcomed the participants including the ECMWF representative invited as an observer, on behalf of DMN. M. Diouri reminded the NWP development plan followed by DMN and the efforts deployed since 1999 to implement and maintain a NWP activity component in Casablanca. He stressed the importance for Morocco to participate in such an ambitious program and the high regard that DMN have for Albachir products. Then, the draft agenda was discussed and a suggestion from France concerning the introduction of an item related to cooperation with the African countries, was introduced under the AOB topics. The agenda and a list of participants are annexed to this report.

Assessment of the 1999-2001 research plan

A presentation of ALADIN scientific activities according to the 1999-2001 research plan, was given by Dominique Giard. It concerned all the items that had been planned during the last two years and the proportion of success of each item among : "Maintenance and improvement of the operational versions", "High resolution modelling", "Data assimilation" and "Means". A summary of this presentation (Second medium-term 1999-2001 research plan for ALADIN : Objectives versus progress) is annexed to this report.

During the discussions about this presentation, M. Jean-François Geleyn stressed the poor interest given by almost all partners to the observation part (data in general) of the project. He judged unsuccessful the so called transversal efforts related to maintenance and project management. M. Beysson considered that more efforts had to be deployed to improve some scientific components of ALADIN, especially physics and data assimilation.

Presentation of the 2002-2004 research plan

The chairman thanked Dominique Giard for her paper concerning the Third Medium Term Research Plan (2002-2004) that had been received by each partner one week before the meeting. He thanked also all those who had taken part in the working groups and spent their precious efforts to help in providing this interesting document to the Assembly. The presentation covered the following individual topics : Training, Maintenance, Operations, Applications, Verification, Coupling, Dynamics, Physics, Data assimilation (Methods, Observations, Surface), Predictability and Organisation of research. The discussion aimed especially the verification point. All the partners found it abnormal that verification, important component for both research and operations, is still at the same level than in 1999 : no improvement had been done since this date. The several reasons behind this fact are :

1. Lack of manpower dedicated to this subject.
2. Portability problems between partners : absence of unified procedure.
3. No local databases implemented.
4. No data exchange,
5. No parallel suites for the model (this could push people to take care of observations).
6. Considering this subject as local and specific to each country.

The possible solutions suggested by the different participants could be :

1. To consider verification as a great part of the project.
2. To encourage people to build local observation data bases.
3. To exchange results (and if possible data and procedures): use of "verifala" mailing list.
4. Verification must be done by an independent team at each level.
5. New approach of community organisation based on a reasonable coordination scheme.

The chairman decided to suspend this discussion and resume it during the AOB item of the agenda.

About the other topics of this futur research plan, M. Mersich mentioned the (too ?) high number of topics with a high "priority". M. Beysson was surprised to see that a high priority was not assigned to satellite observations. Jean-François Geleyn answered that variational data assimilation as implemented for ARPEGE/IFS could not be adapted to ALADIN LAM model without taking into account some very important LAM specificities related to coupling, high resolution, frequency of data, ...etc. He added that for the time being, making an assimilation in ALADIN with the context and observations as in ARPEGE is equivalent to redoing an ARPEGE analysis on a limited area. Dominique Giard underlined that the definition of "priorities" included the time-range necessary to reach them. For example, IASI data, to be really useful within ALADIN, were to be used over land, not only over sea as is done in ARPEGE. This requires significant developments and thus cannot be considered as a "high priority/short term" action.

The chairman suggested to distinguish between the so-called "transversal priorities" and the other less general priorities ; this had been taken into account later by the creation of a new working group (cf. 7.2) having as a charge to take care of this kind of management tasks.

Assessment of the 2001 commitments and presentation of 2002 commitments including maintenance efforts.

Jean-François Geleyn introduced this assessment and commented that thanks to ALATNET efforts, the shape of total participation curve is kept ascendant (about 600 man.year for 2001).

About advanced training courses, he considered that the Radostovice school was more successful than the Gourdon one. During the later the participants had already a significant knowledge about data assimilation. He advised that some maintenance tasks must be done more and more locally, at least the documentation part. He noticed that due to a lack of communication, some operational implementations present some wrong or uncoherent namelist initializations.

About 2002 commitments, the partners decided to keep an amount of manpower at least of the same magnitude of the average 600 man.year. The new 2002 commitments per partner are then :

France	118
Morocco	54
Czech Republic	64
Slovakia	49
Hungary	42
Belgium	36
Poland	30
Croatia	34
Portugal	35
Romania	40
Austria	31
Tunisia	25
Bulgaria	
Slovenia	

Technical overview of the project at the end of 2001 and 2002 perspectives

M. Emmanuel Legrand from Météo-France presented some operational statistics about scores collected into ALADIN-France and ARPEGE following the use of different physics packages (different CYCORA suites), and showed the positive impact of CYCORA_ter and of the increase of ARPEGE resolution. He advised partners to make efforts in implementing local verification procedures and to subscribe and use "verifala" mailing list to exchange results.

Raising scientific issues

A second presentation of Emmanuel Legrand concerned the AROME project at Météo-France and the ALADIN involvement in this project. AROME (Application of Research to Operations at MESoscale) was launched late 2001 at Météo-France with the aim to prepare a list of objectives, needed research tasks and planification steps for a target around 2009. Up to now, the work has been organised/planned in the following way : internal open debates, guidelines for further discussions, working groups on selected topics, feasibility studies, strategic decisions (2002-2003), effective work on the project. This project could concern a merge of ALADIN and Meso-NH bests to create a new configuration taking advantage of the two models especially at high resolution. This could have obviously heavy consequences on all ALADIN project components : manpower, computational power,...etc. Jean-François Geleyn explained the different preliminary scientific scenarii of this long term project, and M. Beysson suggested to invite ALADIN partners at Météo-France own meetings about this project. The ECMWF representative didn't consider the connection to ECMWF as a constraint to this project. Some participants asked for documentation on the Meso-NH model. Some is available at : <http://www.aero.obs-mip.fr/mesonh/>

Raising management issues

The decrease of fundings

Concerning fundings, Jean-François Geleyn reported that the ALADIN community will have to face a decrease of centralization-like fundings : MAE (French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères : Morocco and Tunisia are not concerned), LACE. Météo-France will continue financing all tasks related to maintenance (Toulouse part), ALATNET will also continue but laboriously with regular justification work to European Union. As an example for reducing some useless charges, Jean-François Geleyn suggested to partners to buy at home the travel tickets for their experts when travelling to Toulouse. They will be reimbursed and are likely to be less expensive than when bought in Toulouse. This would allow for more stays. All the partners were aware that money must be spent in a way to get interest from it. Nowadays, more and more deported work is needed, but at the same time, heavy supervising work (PHD, training, ...etc) is also needed. 3D-Var coordination by Claude Fischer, is a good example.

Practical project coordination

The assembly adopted a new practical coordination management structure. A group of coordinators for Scientific and Strategic issues was established :

1. To dynamically supervise the priorities of the scientific plan and of other related actions.
2. To precise and supervise cooperation with HIRLAM, UM (Unified Model) and COSMO groups, underlining a percentage of transversality of the different actions of the above mentioned plan.
3. To foster candidacies, select coordinators and organise their network for a better efficiency of specific transversal actions at a time of diminishing mobility financing around the ALADIN project.
4. To follow the first steps of the AROME project and to help harmonizing whenever necessary the ALADIN and AROME plans during the period of AROME feasibility studies.
5. To report to the assembly on the progress of the scientific plan, in particular on changes of priorities arising from the above specific items.

The working group has a permanent core of six (6) Partners : Belgium (Luc Gérard), Czech Republic (Radmila Brozkova), France (Dominique Giard), Hungary (Andras Horanyi), Morocco (Abdallah Mokssit), Romania (Doina Banciu). But all other Partners are free to join the meeting on a case to case basis.

Aladin Workshops

The Assembly Decided that instead of organizing two Aladin Workshops per year, one for Scientific issues and the other for operations, it will be better, for some management reasons, to merge the two workshops into one enlarged workshop in term of time and participations. The assembly suggested also that the country hosting the mentioned workshop take care of reporting it to the Assembly.

TCSC: left aside

As mentioned in 7.2 and will be mentioned in 8.1, new working groups were created by the assembly ; the Technical Cooperation Standing Committee (TCSC) established by the second ALADIN memorandum is then temporarily considered as a Technical Cooperation "Sleeping" Committee.

AOB

Cooperation with ACMAD : African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development

The assembly received a letter from ACMAD dated on January 9th, 2002. By this letter ACMAD stressed its wish to be somehow associated to the ALADIN consortium. Such a partnership would help African countries benefit from numerical weather forecasting. Such an help to Africa was considered positively by the ALADIN assembly. But it still raises political and technical issues. Technical questions include the possible use of scientific ALADIN choices in the vicinity of cyclons, the possibility of running larger ALADIN models covering parts of Africa, the transmission of results into the various countries, etc. Political questions include the extension to Africa of the agreement with the ECMWF, the political "visibility" of the ALADIN consortium, and the adequation to the new MoU. To study these questions and report to the assembly, a small working group is created to work on questions of cooperation between the ALADIN Consortium and non-member African NMSs. The main task of this group will be :

1. To examine the ACMAD official request that led to its creation,
2. To define an acceptable philosophy for all ALADIN Members in view of possible cooperation with the relevant African partners,
3. To study which directions of change for the MoU and which contacts with ECMWF would be necessary for an implementation of the ensuing strategy,
4. To see, in particular in coordination with the African ALADIN Full-Members, which steps would be most likely to concretise the intentions born out of points 1, 2, 3 above.

The Working Group comprises representatives from Morocco, France, Belgium, Croatia and Romania.

Internet competition

Some partners raised the problem of the existence on the Internet of numerical weather forecast products as rich as those produced by ALADIN. The assembly decided that the best way to face this universal problem is to be more competitive by increasing ALADIN products quality.

Date and location of the next assembly

Romania invited all partners to participate to the 7th assembly which will be held in Bucharest on October 17th, 2002. The 8th assembly will take place in Cracow in Poland by the end of 2003.

Closing

The 6th general assembly of ALADIN partners was closed at 17:00, January 14th, 2002.