

## **Minutes from the extraordinary ALADIN General Assembly 22-23/02/2006, Brussels**

### **1. Welcome and opening of the meeting**

H. Malcorps, director general of the RMI and Chairman of ALADIN General Assembly (GA), welcomed all participants, especially those attending GA for the first time, and opened the meeting.

### **2. Adoption of the draft agenda**

J.-F. Geleyn, ALADIN Programme Manager (PM), explained the Agenda items. Then, Agenda was adopted as proposed.

### **3. Report of PAC Chairman**

F. Neuwirth, the Chairman of PAC (Policy Advisory Committee), informed GA on the PAC meeting held on 26/01/2006 in Vienna. Two items were pointed out from the minutes.

Concerning the terms of office of the PAC Members, PAC opinion is to be pragmatic: if the replacement of PAC member is needed, GA will be asked to solve it. GA supports this approach, with noting that stabilized PAC membership is needed.

Concerning issues possibly rising between the PAC/GA meetings, either an extraordinary PAC meeting is called, or a small bureau comprising GA Chairpersons, PAC Chairpersons, PM and Chair of CSSI can decide on it.

### **4. Approval of Terms of Reference of PAC**

PAC Chairman introduced the proposal for the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the PAC. Two items were explained: the possibility of the replacement of a Member by its deputy in exceptional cases; and the possibility to invite observers and experts to the PAC meetings. Few more wording improvements were suggested.

GA decision: the PAC ToR with all proposed modifications were approved.

Tunisia explained that they have difficulties to understand all details in the preparatory documents and requested to have two working languages as in WMO - English and French. It was answered that this is not affordable in our community, both from financial and timepoint of view (especially not in day-to-day project life). But, Meteo-France offered to provide help for some important documents, and to clarify all details possibly not understood by francophonic Partners.

### **5. Report of Programme Manager**

PM reported on his activities between 10th GA and this one (contacts with the Local Team Managers (LTM); preparation of PAC meeting, Membership issues, preparation of this extraordinary GA). These resulted to particulars items in the Agenda.

PM proposed to have the gap between PAC and GA meetings longer than one month. D. Klaric demanded to have PAC preparatory documents, especially the outcome of the LTM questionnaire, public. PM answered that these are confidential, but the Synthesis of the questionnaire can be sent to those interested in on their request to PM.

The ALADIN Governance map (document 5a) was approved with slight modifications. The "ALADIN planning: events and expected outcomes" document (5b) was noted, with HAC meeting and ECMWF Council (important for software agreement) added. The novelty of joined ALADIN-

HIRLAM meeting was stressed, with the remark that GA decisions will determine the content of the next ALADIN workshop. The formulation "EURO-NWPmeeting may add some extra constraints" was felt as too negative by ECMWF. PM answered that the initiative indeed happens six months too early for new ALADIN governance.

## 6. Recall of the ALADIN past and present achievements

The main issues and challenges in front of new governance were presented: C. Fischer & A. Horanyi in data assimilation and predictability (DA&P), R. Brozkova in dynamics (DYN), L. Gerard in physics (PHYS), E. Legrand in operations and J.-F. Geleyn in political aspects (POL).

The following questions were answered and comments made:

- DA&P: why HIRLAM is more exploring 4DVAR than ALADIN? There is manpower missing to tackle important issues as simplified physics and solutions for cheaper 4DVAR (ALADIN cannot reach at the same time AROME and full VAR); and also there is a reliance on HIRLAM.
- DA&P: how the improvement brought by EPS downscaling is explained? Probably by better surface representation and bigger intrinsic variability in the target weather elements with increased resolution. Although conclusions are based on 3 cases only, they are encouraging (and confirmed by experiences of COSMO and ECMWF as well).
- DA&P: whether the 3DVAR improvements and deficiencies are of the same order in HIRLAM and ALADIN, thus an improvement can be expected with the convergence? Although the convergence already has started (dedicated workshop), for the start, differences and equivalents need to be identified.
- DYN: why it was claimed that in current situation the new development (like ALADIN NH) would not be approved? Because today some of the decision process (what concerns dynamics and physics) is too remote from the project.
- DYN: what would be today similar challenge to NH dynamics? Physics-dynamics interface.
- PHYS: the aggregation of L. Gerard long-term work and new ideas of J.-M. Piriou (and other colleagues) shall create a model version suitable for resolutions around 4km, thus making jump to AROME easier for Partners.
- POL: what is the ECMWF opinion about HARMONIE (the acronym proposed by P. Lynch reading Hirlam Aladin Research (towards) Meso-scale Operational NWP In Euromed)? The Strategy recently adopted by the ECMWF Council is to support LAM activities of Members. Moreover ECMWF is currently testing ALADIN NH core, which in case of success would save a lot of effort (example of two-ways cooperation). HIRLAM also hopes to cooperate in HARMONIOUS way.
- POL: What are the contacts with other Consortia? Many opportunities exist (SRNWP, multiEPS, THORPEX), cross-participation on workshops. But it is important to preserve some diversity and not to want a Euro unicity.

## 7. ALADIN Strategy and Planning

PM introduced three issues for discussion: EUMETNET/UKMO "NWP vision in Europe" initiative (7a\_1), EURRA project proposal (7a\_2) and Long term strategy and planning (7b).

- 7a\_1: PAC opinion is that ALADIN shall have common position to the "NWP vision" paper, and non-european countries should not be forgotten. In the following discussion participants commented, that the EUMETNET/UKMO paper started on good ideas (THORPEX), but existing working cooperation (like SRNWP) and research shall not be damaged now. Also, the regional components (importance of high impact weather, link with environments/chemistry) are missing. There was general agreement that the common view is

useful, but the draft "answer" discussed at PAC is too reactive, some reformulations are needed to have more proactive view. The question, whether HIRLAM already has a HARMONIEzed position, was answered: many comments are similar to those of ALADIN. Therefore common HIRLAM-ALADIN position would be helpful. A small team was designated (J.-F. Geleyn, J. Onvlee, A. Horanyi, D. Klaric, F. Neuwirth, A. Ratier) to meet during dinner and discuss/identify main items of this common proactive position paper.

- 7a\_2 : PM introduced the EURRA (European Regional Reanalysis) project proposal, stressing that in case of common ALADIN plan issued, it cannot contradict individual Partners initiatives. PAC commented that in the proposal the Mediterranean domain shall be considered; and that Portugal already decided to participate individually. D. Marbouty explained, that EURRA is a project of EEA (European Environmental Agency), not of EC. ECMWF could lead the preparation and coordination (if EEA finances it), but will not run regional models. However, they recognize that potential of such skills exists in Europe, and possible joint ALADIN-HIRLAM proposal in frame of EURRA could be a strong one. A. Horanyi reminded, that EURRA comprises three areas: 2D surface analysis (interesting for surface data assimilation), 3D analysis (where HIRLAM is already very strong) and downscaling. Moreover, the scientific content is not yet sure. J. Onvlee commented, that HIRLAM is definitively interested in (10km 4Dvar, ocean-sea-chemistry coupling), preferably on consortium level activities (with ALADIN).

GA decision: Common initiative with HIRLAM is supported. The contact persons have been identified for each area: F. Bouttier, J. Onvlee and A. Horanyi. It is too early to answer the question of countries ready to coordinate (but Meteo-France surely not). The EURRA status will be revised at the next GA.

- 7b: The presented document was commented, mentioning that the strategic goal is missing, and ongoing RC LACE Review results should be taken into account. Then nominations for the task force to draft the strategic plan, representing different groupings inside ALADIN, were made: F. Bouttier, P. Termonia, E. Legrand, R. Brozkova, M. Zagar, C. Soci, A. Mokssit.

## 8. Working schedules

PM presented the diagrams/schemes explaining working schedules, way of information circulation, links with HIRLAM and ECMWF, working practises. It was heavily commented, and improved according to these remarks (still subject of PAC consideration). The links with HIRLAM already work well (cross-participations at HAC & LSC meetings, joined HMG/CSSI session, observers at GAs and Councils). For the link with ECMWF, it is desirable to extend the participation on IFS/Arpege coordination meetings. ECMWF and Météo-France will consider it. Also, ODB is still an issue (answer: true, but there is funding missing at ECMWF to reinforce ODB team). The relations with ECMWF were judged as not-symmetric: if items (e.g. RMDCN) are to be raised at ECMWF TAC, some Partners can represent us. For challenges  $\Leftrightarrow$  resources, the importance of PM and his links with LTMs (having close links with their directors) were stressed.

## 9. Signing of the final version of the III. MoU

The final version of the III. ALADIN MoU, including the HIRLAM-ALADIN cooperation Agreement as the Annex, was signed.

## 10. Resource Matters

### 10a : Manpower issues

- 10a\_i) PM explained the outcome of a questionnaire sent to LTMs in order to promote the transversal support to operations. This was identified by PAC as a most problematic area, where more coordination could save time of some people. This is contrary to rather good coordination in maintenance and scientific work. The LTMs answers were summarized in a table. In the vivid discussion the clarification of some themes was required, namely 3&5 by French participants. However, in the view of recent experiences (problems with cpl/clim switch; export code version without bugfixes coming outside Toulouse) and forthcoming challenges (ALARO-0, convergence with AROME) this task cannot be postponed till the next GA! It is very important to validate configurations which typically do not correspond to ALADIN/France version (identical with ARPEGE and converging to ARPEGE/CLIMAT), for example ALARO-0 (also in the grey zone). GA decision: PM and LTMs will explore and evaluate possibility/feasibility of transversal coordination of operational activities (meeting at ALADIN workshop), and report at the next GA.
- 10a\_ii-iii) PM explained, that under new governance, LTM are the key point of success; and that worrying decreasing trends in mobility were noticed (due to diminishing Partners contributions)

### 10b : Budgetary issues

PM presented the proposal of ALADIN budget accounting and monitoring rules. The following discussion showed big diversity of ALADIN Partners concerning the legal possibilities to send/receive/transfer money and handle invoices. Therefore a tour of the table was organised to answer 2 questions:

- possibility to send/transfer money?

- possibility to receive) money and then use them(in an agreed way)?

HU: yes (through LACE)// yes

FR: yes // yes

CZ: yes // yes

HR: yes // yes

BG: probably yes // yes

BE: yes // yes

DZ: yes // yes

AU: yes // yes

TN: yes (starting from next year) // yes

SI: yes // yes

SK: yes // no (too complicated procedure)

RO: yes (invoice needed) // yes

PT: yes // yes

PL: yes (invoice from legal entity and governmental approval needed)// yes

TR: do not know now, try to find some way // yes

MK: not (ministry approval needed)// yes

MA: will find the solution // yes

Poland explained that, legally speaking, they could transfer funds for ALADIN, and receive funds for spending in Poland, according to ALADIN plans. However, prior governmental approval is a prerequisite to the transfer of funds, which is subject to availability of invoices. Transfer of funds can

only be implemented with a legal entity, i.e. an NMHS.

After discussion, the General Assembly decided that the only practical approach for implementing the annual budget in a situation where ALADIN has no legal personality, is that some designated NMHS collect the flat rate contributions from the ALADIN Members and acceding Members and redistribute the agreed funds to Members for spending in accordance with the plans proposed by the Programme Manager and agreed by the General Assembly.

In practice, considering that the mobility expenditures will actually be covered by both the flat rate contributions and part of the voluntary contributions from LACE and Météo-France, and that no other Member was in a position to collect funds, the General Assembly agreed that this responsibility should be shared between one NMHS representing LACE and Météo-France, with the understanding that flat rate (and part of the voluntary) contributions from LACE countries would be collected by the NMHS representing LACE, in an unchanged way with respect to present practice at least at the beginning.

Hence, for LACE countries, the LACE mechanisms would continue to apply, with the understanding that LACE would identify an ALADIN-mobility sub-budget isolated from the part of the LACE budget dedicated to LACE-specific activities.

For non-LACE countries, the collection of flat rate contributions would be based on a procedure comparable to those used in the context of EUMETNET, i.e. based on an annual standard convention between NMHSs, referring to the MOU and the decisions from the General Assembly, i.e. on the budget, consortium level activity/mobility plans and the annual level of flat rate contributions. For these non-LACE countries, the transfer of mobility funds to the spending Members would be also based on a standard convention making explicit reference to the missions/tasks to be carried out, in accordance with the mission/mobility plans agreed by the General Assembly and detailed by the Programme Manager.

Météo-France will check with its administrative authorities and confirm to the General Assembly whether they can take the above responsibilities in accordance with the proposed approach. Should feasibility be confirmed, Météo-France would prepare draft standard conventions for collection and distribution of funds, in English and French language, and circulate these to the Members for confirmation that it is a valid legal basis at national level.

The execution of the budget, and the reporting procedure would require close coordination between LACE, Météo-France, the receiving members and the Programme Manager and its support team, and would be based on the following:

- The receiving member would report through the Local Team Manager to the ALADIN Programme Manager and the Météo-France or LACE about actual spending and its purpose;
- Spending for a purpose different from the initially intended purpose would require explicit agreement from the Programme Manager;
- The Programme Manager would establish an annual report on the budget execution based on the consolidation of the elements available from Météo-France and LACE, taking into account all elements of the budget, including an analysis of the departures between budget and actual expenditures, and proposals for carry-forward to the next budget.
- In this report the mobility budget would be subject to a separate, detailed analysis.

It is important to note that the receiving member should make sure that ALADIN money it receives and that cannot be spent in the year for the intended ALADIN purpose can be carried forward or

made available to ALADIN in the next year under its national budget.

Regarding costing rules for missions and per diem, it is acknowledged that LACE has established internal rules, e.g. for mission per diem (e.g. to Toulouse). However, it is also acknowledged that in many countries, applying LACE rules on per diem for national personnel on mission may simply be impossible under applicable labour laws. Therefore, in practice, it may be necessary for establishing the relevant conventions to quote the costs of the planned missions (flight tickets, often cheaper in the originating country, and per diem) based on official/verifiable information provided by the receiving member, e.g. elements for calculation. In case no applicable legal basis exists nationally for per diem, the LACE rules (e.g. ceiling for per diem) may apply, as a measure of fairness and for the sake of simplicity.

PM protested against the work overhead that this would mean for PM and support team and it was agreed that PM and Support Team should prepare a fair but fixed cost-table and that the fund transfers would be done on the basis of this scale and of the above mentioned work programme

The General Assembly noted that Tunisia planned to initiate a process to obtain governmental authorisation to contribute to ALADIN and transfer their flat contribution accordingly, but that this could only be possible from 2007 onwards. Morocco explained that transfer of money outside their country was not possible for a public administration without going through a complex governmental procedure. Both countries were keen to contribute their flat rate contributions to ALADIN but were in a comparable administrative situation preventing them to do so in 2006. Tunisia stated that they need the draft conventions referred to in the previous discussion before May 2006, to feed their national governmental process, and noted that the flat rate contributions could vary from year to year. Météo-France proposed to explore with Morocco and Tunisia possibilities for France to fund their flat rate contributions in 2006, subject to cost compensation under bilateral cooperation agreements.

Should there be no other possibility and considering the exceptional circumstances, the General Assembly agreed by consensus, in line with article 6, item 60 i) that the flat rate contribution from Morocco and Tunisia could be waived for 2006.

The General Assembly agreed by consensus that the annual flat rate contribution would be 6 k€ for 2006. For acceding members it is minimum 3 k€.

For Bulgaria it was agreed to exceptionally decrease the sum by 2.5 k€ due to unforeseen expenses needed to organize HIRLAM all staff meeting joint with ALADIN workshop.

The document 10b\_iii\_a shall be revised by PM and support team in light of the interfering GA decisions.

### **10c : Membership and cooperation matters**

Candidacy of two NMS for acceding membership (National Meteorological Service of R. Macedonia (MK) and Turkish State Meteorological Service (TR)) were to be considered, and collaboration with State Hydrometeorological Service of Republic of Moldova (MOL) had to be solved.

- MK: V. Spiridonov, director of NMS, presented the status of their NMS and motivations to join ALADIN Consortium. GA was informed on the visit of M. Derkova at their NMS. Then PM evaluated MK candidacy according to MoU rules and in the view of already known problems (budget limitations => question on ALADIN flat-rate contribution; questionable facilities and firm plans for operational exploitation of ALADIN; the use of UN recognised

names at ECMWF (FYROM) - although unanimity decision not needed for software agreement to access the code). Representatives of Croatia and Bulgaria supported the MK acceding membership and offered them various help: provide ALADIN products (with understanding they cannot commercialise them), training & education...

GA decision: GA is in favour of MK NMS to join ALADIN, but due to unsolved problem the cooperation status is proposed (signing Agreement with Croatia and Bulgaria). The issue will be rediscussed at next GA in autumn.

- TR: F. Buyukkasabasi, Head of NWP division, presented NWP activities at their NMS and their motivations and objectives to join ALADIN Consortium. Due to too short time before GA, all contacts were performed via e-mail exchange. PM evaluated their candidacy according to MoU rules there is no obstacle. They are ECMWF member, thus no problem to access the source code.

GA decision: Turkish State Meteorological Service is accepted as ALADIN acceding member. The length of acceding membership is to be discussed later. For the calendar and trainings M. Derkova and C. Fischer are responsible. However, a formal ratification procedure is needed in Turkey, which can start immediately upon receiving official information of their acceptance to ALADIN consortium by GA.

- MOL: C. Soci presented the draft Agreement between National Meteorological Administration of Romania and State Hydrometeorological Service of Republic of Moldova on cooperation in NWP. Few reformulations, mainly about code access rights, were requested, otherwise the document was found to be fully compliant with ALADIN rules, and can serve as a framework for future cases (MK), bearing in mind the fact that Moldova owns some past ALADIN rights that a newcomer would not have.

## **10d : Legal and financial matters**

Three documents, pre-discussed by PAC, were submitted for GA approval: on royalties (10d\_i), research and education licences (10d\_ii\_a) and commercialisation (10d\_ii\_b). The GA accepted that the value 40% of the royalty fee is appropriate. However, A. Ratier insists that the reference to the wording of the 2<sup>nd</sup> MoU was inadequate. He stressed that every thing is already written in ARTICLE 10 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> MoU, which compliance with ECOMET rules has been checked. PAC recommends that revenue of royalties shall be used in ALADIN budget.

GA decision: The royalty fee mentioned in the 3<sup>rd</sup> MoU (ARTICLE 10, item 86 ii) is fixed at 40%. Wording of document 10d\_ii\_a was slightly reformulated.

GA decision: Document 10d\_ii\_a with its revisions approved, subject to legal check. Although document 10d\_ii\_b reflects rules already stated in HIRLAM-ALADIN cooperation Agreement (Annex of III. MoU), PAC recommends to accept it. GA noted that more guidelines for non-ECOMET members are needed.

GA decision: Document 10d\_ii\_b approved.

## **11. ALADIN Programme plan for 2006/2007**

PM Manager presented the position paper describing Objectives and Priorities for 2006/2007. The presented version was already commented by PAC, and updated. GA approved the document, thus further steps could be built on it to prepare the working plan (WP).

Tunisia asked whether the local working plans of Partners are needed to build the ALADIN one. It was answered by PM, that under new governance the situation is rather opposite: no aggregation of local WP, but priorities will be set according to discussions with LTM, CSSI and at the Aladin workshop and the local WP have to adapt to this collective procedure rather than the opposite.

## **12. AOB**

Bulgaria informed GA about the request of Ukraine to join ALADIN consortium. ECMWF director explained that the ECMWF Council has defined criteria for considering Scientific and Technical Co-operation with States and would be ready to consider application for RA VI and Euromediterranean partnership States. Therefore GA invites Ukraine to start the procedure to become the ALADIN acceding Member.

## **13. Date and place of the next GA**

Portugal confirmed the invitation for the PAC meeting on 21-22/09/2006 to Lisbon. Hungary invited GA to have next meeting in Budapest on 9-10/11/2006 (noon-noon), as usually joined with RC LACE Council session. For 2007, Slovenia offered to host GA meeting.

## **14. Closing of the meeting**

H. Malcorps, the Chairman of ALADIN GA, closed the meeting.

## **Addendum**

After the GA, the Director of Poland sent a letter to protocol the ALADIN extra-ordinary General Assembly, which was held on 23-24 February 2006 in Brussels.

According to the Polish regulations, financial commitment resulting from the 3rd ALADIN Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to be accepted by the Polish government.

The Polish delegation is pleased to inform you that it will take any necessary efforts to obtain such approval. Financial contribution due from the Polish Party in support of the ALADIN Project can be transferred upon receipt of the government's acceptance.