

Minutes of the ALADIN evening meeting, Toulouse, 10th of October 2000

An informal meeting took place after the second day of the 22nd EWGLAM & 7th SRNWP joint meeting (9-13 Oct 2000, Toulouse). ALADINers gathered together to debate some technical (T) and scientific (S) issues; a summary of the discussions in their chronological order is given hereafter.

T1: Newsletter

- Do we still need to produce the Newsletter on a hardcopy?

As it takes about one month to print the Newsletter, the hardcopies will be replaced by html and postscript files already available from the web site (all the versions are available) and the ftp site (only latest version available), and by a few CD-ROMs (postscript and html version), which will be distributed to the National Meteorological Services.

- Frequency

Patricia Pottier wants to keep the 6-month production frequency, which is the most relevant rhythm for also producing documentations for the Assembly and reports for ALATNET.

- Scientific content

Some people complained at the last ALADIN workshop about the diffusion of scientific results. This could be alleviated if most NMS provide a more detailed description of deported scientific work (as Romania, Hungary, Luce and France already do).

T2: "Trombinoscope"

A rogues' gallery will be produced for the web site; all the ALADINers will have their numerical photo taken by Jean-Daniel Gril, during the week for those who leave at the end of the meeting, later for the other ones. Numerical and paper (scanned then returned) photos can also be sent to him.

T3: Statistics of participation: a new system

With the increasing complexity for processing the statistics of participation due to new contributions in the framework of ALATNET, delays in sending the contributions now differ from one country/network to another one, so that the current system is not adapted any longer. Anyway the previous long delay did not avoid problems. A new system is now suggested.

- Automatic system

An interactive system on the web site will enable the contributor to introduce his report in an homogeneous form and to print it for keeping a trace of it. When the system has performed a general validation of the input (units, etc.), the informations are sent to feed the database with a quick manual further checking / verification in Toulouse. This system should be ready in one month's time.

- Report form

Two formats are conceivable: the report can be done either with respect to the location, i.e. where the activity took place, or with respect to the team. Up to now, reports have been done according to the location, but this solution has not been unanimously approved. The solution that is now adopted is a double-level solution: the contributor will be proposed two forms, in the first one the report will be done with respect to location (compulsory), in the second one the report will be done with respect to team/NMS (as an option for double-checking).

- A link towards scientifically oriented reports for the Newsletter

More personalized reports for the Newsletter are expected: each person should produce a scientifically oriented report, but when? The new system will enable to control the progress of the tasks, the milestones in the works. As a trial, Jean-François Geleyn will flag items to get reports when it seems to be time: if a given topic appears x times, or when an important work has come out, or once a year, etc. This somewhat arbitrary decision is an experimental solution for one year.

T4: Technical Notes

A few ALADIN Technical Notes have been produced in the past, but this project was given up because reviewers were too easily taken for correctors. There is a common wish to start these Technical Notes again. An editorial team will fix norms, a policy similar to the ECMWF Technical Memorandum policy could be adopted, i.e. before submitting a paper to the open literature it could be first published internally as an ALADIN Technical Note.

T5: MAE 10-year report

Five MAE 10-year reports (milestones of participation, contributions, etc.) have already been sent to Dominique Giard, five are missing. The missing ones should be sent as quickly as possible (one or two months) to Dominique as she needs to homogenize the reports. Note that it is not worthwhile including the informations about the statistics of participation as Dominique already has the figures. As a reminder, the next 10-year funding will be done on 1st March 2001.

T6: Questionnaire about the ALADIN web page

For improving the web site remarks are needed to know the general impression, identify what is missing, whether a documentation is complete or half finished, etc. Comment should be sent to Ryad El Khatib.

S1: Lecture course in 2001 / Data assimilation

Data assimilation should be the focus of the lecture course to be held next spring in the surroundings of Toulouse. After debating the subject it appeared that one week on data assimilation would not be sufficient. Spread over a two-week period, the lecture course would deal with two main topics: general issues of data assimilation during the first week and tools (tangent linear and adjoint techniques, etc.) for data assimilation during the second week. This organization will depend on the number of candidates.

As a general impression, the whole ALADIN community is weak when involvement in the use of observations is required. A continuation of the training course is suggested to kick off the use of observations specific to ALADIN. But there should be a familiarization of the candidates to this topic beforehand. A small workshop could be organized next Autumn.

S2: Verification strategy for high-resolution modelling

The use of conventional verification tools does not seem to be appropriate for high resolution modelling. Satellite data are sparingly used, only for case studies and as a subjective verification, but not for operational purposes. If satellite data were assimilated, they would constitute a by-product for verification. A key issue for high resolution modelling verification is to make objective a subjective verification (pattern recognition for example), but it will require a few years of work. A workshop on verification targeted to extreme weather is to be held in Prague, 14-18 May 2001. The next SRNWP workshop on verification methods is scheduled in April 2001 in DeBilt, KNMI, The Netherlands.

Automatic verification seems to be more and more irrelevant to the scales we are working on. Currently, if objective verification does not clearly show any improvement, the project is usually abandoned, whereas at fine scale we should take common sense to make a decision. According to Jean-François Geleyn, when testing modifications in high resolution modelling the tendency should rather be: (1) work on case studies; (2) evaluate the potential for future developments; (3) run conventional scores. Too many developments are not put to an end, i.e. not put in a library, because of the lack of verification tools being used as an excuse. Progress has to be done in that respect.

Finally it has been pointed out that 2D/1D model versions are often a good environment for testing, but it depends on the problem you are dealing with.

S3: Priority topics for the next years

This topic was on the agenda, but was not debated for lack of time.