

Minutes of the 12th ALADIN General Assembly held in Ljubljana, on 7th and 8th of November 2007

1. Welcome and opening of the meeting

Dr. Henri Malcorps, General Director of the RMI and Chair of ALADIN General Assembly (GA), first thanked Mr Silvo Zlebir, General Director of the Environmental agency of Slovenia, for his kind invitation to hold the meeting in Slovenia. He welcomed all the participants and informed that Dr Aderito Vicente Serrao from Portugal will be replaced at the meeting by Ms. Maria José Correia Monteiro and Dr Zoltan Dunkel by Dr Andras Horanyi.

The GA Chair thanked also the people who are for the first time attending the ALADIN General Assembly: Mr Silvo Zlebir, Mr Pierre-Etienne Bisch from France, Mr Michal Ziemianski from Poland.

The GA Chair gives the floor to Mr Silvo Zlebir.

Mr Zlebir welcomed all participants attending both ALADIN and RC LACE meetings in Slovenia. He stressed the importance of the ALADIN predictions and that it is a story of success in international collaborations. He said that we are on the right way with a closer cooperation with HIRLAM. He stressed that following the recent severe weather event in Slovenia it is evident the public meteorological services have to work more and more efficiently in order to produce more successful forecasts and warnings.

He wished all participants a good and successful meeting.

After the address Neva Pristov gave some practical information to the members.

There are no questions and this item of the Agenda is closed.

2. Adoption of the Agenda and of the Minutes of the 11th GA.

The agenda consisting of 16 items is approved.

The Minutes of the 11th GA in Budapest are subject to some changes proposed by Mr Alain Ratier of Météo-France. There are some contradictory items which must be clarified. He will send later his amendments by mail. Mr Ratier also proposes to draw up a list of decisions to put at the end of the minutes of this meeting.

The Minutes of the 11th GA are approved.

3. Report of the GA Chairman on the 'Bureau preparatory meeting', Vienna, 24-25/10/07

The GA Chair informs that at the last PAC Meeting, it was decided that a meeting with the Chair of GA, the Chair of PAC, the Chair of CSSI and the ALADIN Program Manager, together with Emanuel Legrand should take place. This ALADIN Bureau

type meeting was held on 24-25 October 2007 in Vienna, but Emmanuel Legrand could unfortunately not attend.

The following items were discussed:

- Examination of the strategic plan; Verification of the integration of the remarks of the several ALADIN bodies as well as individual remarks in the plan. Clarifications during the meeting were also integrated.

The GA chairman expresses his gratitude to everyone who has participated in the realization of the strategic plan.

- Discussion about the budget: the importance of the networking and its relation to the budget was stressed.

- Workload of the Program Manager: finding support to help the PM especially for drawing up the documents before the GA and PAC Meetings.

- Establishing the GA agenda: making up a timetable per item and verifying the logics between the several items and the chronology between them.

There were no remarks on this item from the members.

The GA chairman states that it was a good and efficient meeting and is certainly very helpful for a good preparation of the GA meeting.

The PM recalls that it was proposed at the GA in Brussels to hold bureau type meeting instead of PAC when a PAC meeting would not be deemed necessary. He is convinced that two PAC meetings or a PAC meeting plus a Bureau meeting should continue be organized before each regular GA.

4. Report of PAC Chairman (the PAC 3rd Session took place in Prague, 7-8/6/07)

Dr. Fritz Neuwirth, Chairman of PAC (Policy Advisory Committee), informed in a short way the General Assembly about the PAC meeting third session held on 7th and 8th of June 2007 in Prague, information based on the preparatory document 4.

Several items were discussed, in particular the establishment of drafting team for ALADIN Strategy Document convened by Emanuel Legrand.

The minutes of the PAC were distributed to the members.

The GA Chair informs the members that there is a possibility to discuss later during the meeting these PAC minutes if necessary. The delegates are invited to ask for precisions, to give comments on the issues that were dealt with or those which will not specifically be dealt with during the Agenda items of the GA.

Ms Dijana Klaric informs that suggestions made by the previous GA were adopted by LACE new MoU.

Ms Jeanette Onvlee (HIRLAM) expressed her appreciation that a representant of the HIRLAM Advisory Committee could take part in the PAC meeting.

5. Programme Managers' reports:

a. ALADIN work in the intersession and outlook for issues at the 12th GA; CSSI matters;

The GA Chair gives the floor to the ALADIN Programme Manager Jean-François Geleyn. The ALADIN PM informs that due to his work overload he could not send any preparatory document for this item in advance, therefore he was going to give a PowerPoint presentation and distribute handouts.

Outline of the presentation:

- a. Main topics for the Programme in the past year**
- b. Links with the items of the 12th GA Agenda**
- c. Boundary conditions:**
 - Harmonie**
 - RC LACE**
 - Evolution of C-SRNWP**
- d. CSSI and related matters**
- e. PM Activities**

a. Main topics for the Programme in the past year

b. Links with the items of the 12th GA Agenda

The PM recalled the history of creation of the Strategic Document to be discussed later in detail at the occasion of the Agenda item 7 a. Among the main scientific and (pre)operational achievements he pointed out the first promising results of the vertical finite elements implementation to the non-hydrostatic scheme, improvement of the short-range forecast thanks to the local data assimilation and first results of the 3MT microphysical convective parameterization scheme.

The PM recalled that the first full year of the flat-rate budget had passed. The budgetary procedure is now in routine mode and the back-log of money transfers is progressively reduced. The delegations of organization of stays to Météo-France and to RC LACE were successfully installed. There is however a problem of incomplete execution of non-Météo-France non-LACE parts of the budget, a worry that got worse in the current year, contrary to expectations that it would settle down.

Christian Blondin informed that the transfer of money is working well but that there are nevertheless problems with:

1. increase of yearly transfer sums in some cases
2. for 2008, there will be a problem with Royalties money channeling, the corresponding amounts having to be handled outside the flat-rate budget.

The PM continued by giving the overview of inter-GA meetings. There is now a well-established rhythm of core meetings in frame of ALADIN/HIRLAM and EWGLAM/SRNWP workshops when CSSI and LTM meet before and/or after the scientific part of the program. He recalled ALADIN/HIRLAM workshop will take place in Brussels in 2008 with some 120 scientists.

PM noted the links with Météo-France's CPPN work on 'the European collaboration in the framework of the ALADIN and HIRLAM consortium'. There is a complex issue of the AROME-ALARO relationships in terms of physics development and physics and dynamic interfacing:

- The medium and long-term aspects may be discussed under Agenda item 8.
- On the shorter term: two common actions have been initiated that may lead to some common code development, namely (a) the diagnostics and its interaction with the interfacing code and (b) the use of the AROME microphysics in ALARO via a joint selective modularization.

The ALARO-0 training course in Radostovice, 26-30 March 2007, was a very important event. It was a general opinion that it was a fruitful preparation and venue which generated necessary momentum for the scientific maintenance of ALARO-0 modules. Unfortunately, in spite of accepted commitments, the initial momentum is currently fading away.

Next year there is a main training event namely the AROME training course in Lisbon (3-7/03/2008).

c. Boundary conditions:

1. Harmonie

There was a joint HMG-CSSI meeting in Oslo. A survey of the progress on the common part of the HIRLAM and ALADIN plans indicated a correct rate of realization. Some general actions were decided in Oslo in order to look in details at difficult issues and in Brussels 2008 one shall start assessing the outcomes.

2. RC LACE

The enlarged LSC (Lace Steering Committee) has become a scientific forum with more time for discussions. RC LACE is also partner in the execution of the flat-rate budget related plan.

The present year is an important one for RC-LACE. New Memorandum of Understanding and new working procedures are to be approved in Ljubljana at the meeting which will take place just after this GA.

3. Evolution of C-SRNWP

It is an enhanced scientific cooperation between European LAM Consortia, specifically targeted to the elements of the EUMETNET vision of NWP (Numerical Weather Prediction). Starting from end of 2008, SRNWP will change its format in a number of aspects.

There will be a new Programme Manager, Mr. Andras Horanyi from Hungary. There will be a new body, the SRNWP Advisory committee (to review the strategic developments within European NWP; to identify needs for specific projects and/or coordinated activities; to define and initiate projects or activities and to monitor their progress; to advise the C-SRNWP PM for all matters of the Programme) composed by the Heads of the five Consortia.

Like in past annual EWGLAM/SRNWP meetings will be organized in autumn. Thematic Expert Teams will be set-up joining experts on specific areas from all Consortia (planning and organizing all SRNWP activities in their area of responsibility with special emphasis on concrete deliverables; planning and organization of workshops and expert meetings; reporting to the C-SRNWP PM and to the annual EWGLAM/SRNWP meeting; identification of suitable areas of cooperation projects aimed at specific deliverables of EUMETNET). There is a new SRNWP website opened at <http://srnwp.met.hu/>.

d. CSSI and related matters

Due to the departure of Andras Horanyi for the function of C-SRNWP PM there is the need for a new CSSI-Chairperson. Mr. Piet Termonia from Belgium is the only candidate. The Bureau meeting recommended his nomination. Piet Termonia has confirmed to accept to carry on Andras Horanyi's work as the HIRLAM contact point. Based upon a joint proposition of French LTM and of the ALADIN PM, PAC recommended to redefine the role and missions of the ALADIN-2 coordinator for Networking aspects and to continue the support to the function in its new definitions. As approved at the last GA it is Mr. Martin Janousek who occupies the position. The PAC meeting supported the nomination of Jean-François Mahfouf as CSSI member for 'Surface issues'.

Concerning CSSI member position for 'Observation data' PAC recommended to wait for the RC LACE decisions on the position of Data Manager before replacing Mr Sandor Kertesz in its CSSI member position for 'Observation data'. The Bureau meeting recommended to adopt a similar attitude concerning the replacement of Dr Andras Horyani as CSSI member for 'Predictability and EPS'.

The position of the Documentation Officer remains vacant. The PM had too little time to find a suitable candidate for this function.

Additionally the PAC members recommended to further extend CSSI by responsible members for LAM-Climate and Nowcasting, without however participation to the joint HMG-CSSI meetings with HIRLAM colleagues (there is currently no scope for enlarging the HARMONIE collaboration on these issues).

Recapitulation of needed actions:

1. Work on Strategy document (to be discussed on Agenda item 7)
2. Medium term planning issues (to be discussed on Agenda item 8)
3. Budgetary problems (Agenda item 11c)
(The PM informs that there was no preparatory document for the Royalties Issue, but Christian Blondin already spoke about the new constraint, see above.)
4. How to better ensure scientific maintenance commitments for ALARO-0?
5. Do we need to adapt some of our working procedures to the new C-SRNWP situation?
6. Fixing at this session of GA some of the CSSI issues and giving guidelines for others.

Discussion:

Alain Ratier recalls great expectations from the outcome of the SURFEX Workshop last year and asks if the expectations were met. Jeanette Onvlee expresses slight disappointment with the progress since only recently the SURFEX code is made available and a number of complex issues linked mainly to the data flow persists. There is a need to put more pressure to move things ahead.

Radmila Brozkova asks for more balance in the way how LTMs get on the one hand requirements for operational issues but hardly have any opportunity on the other hand to express their view to CSSI. There is not enough interaction of LTMs and CSSI.

The PM suggests moving this issue to AOB item 14.

The GA Chair asks precisions about what are the means to help connections between CSSI and LTM.

The PM replies there is alas no formal regulation in the MoU, only opportunity for information flow through meetings but no stable system. Alain Ratier proposes the suggestion to CSSI and LTM to hold a special meeting for them or to talk about things during a workshop. PM worries the program of meetings is already too dense. Finally the GA Chair decides to forward the issue to the informal discussions or to AOB.

Mr Emanuel Legrand joins the meeting.

Andras Horyani explains that ALADIN has rather complicated structure and expresses the need to adapt some of the working procedures to the new C-SRNWP sessions. The ALADIN structure is differently organized and it has its advantages and disadvantages. Unlike other NWP Consortia ALADIN has no working groups so there is no straightforward way to fill the SRNWP Thematic Expert Teams.

Radmila Brozkova asks how the SRNWP projects will be pushed. She recalls there are many projects but not enough manpower in local teams.

The PM confirms that this can cause problems in the future especially for the Thematic Expert Teams to find qualified dynamic people. Additionally, he is not afraid about interest to participate in SRNWP projects as they will be sufficiently transversal. He is rather concerned if active participation of ALADIN experts in TETs does not supersede CSSI role.

Alain Ratier informs that there are also difficulties with other EUMETNET projects especially with coordination of existing projects. It is of the utmost importance to maintain dialogues at the workshops and to finish existing projects before new projects are made up. There is no need to make it complex.

Andras Horanyi gives precisions on projects under C-SRNWP: there is no duty under which every Consortium must participate in each project set up by a TET. He stresses the key importance of relation between CSSI and TETs and of handling of situations when they have different opinion.

The PM points out advantages of CSSI to put experts together but also its weakness in not playing a role of scientific body. A search for a pragmatic and adaptive solution is needed.

The GA Chair proposes to review this matter again within a period of one year after sufficient experience is collected. Andras Horyani notes that the C-SRNWP PM should however get mandate to fill up TETs before the end of 2007.

Alain Ratier asks Jeanette Onvlee and Andras Horyani which SRNWP projects they have in mind. Jeanette Onvlee explains the projects in question are those currently not funded by EUMETNET. Alain Ratier ask what are those SRNWP projects not funded. Claude Fischer explains any TET can initiate any project. Jeanette Onvlee then responds that this is the reason why people have to be cautious while not forgetting to foster a true inter-Consortia cooperation.

GA Chairman recalls the decisions made with regard to the CSSI membership:

- a) Piet Termonia is a new Chairman.
 - b) Piet Termonia is a new contact point for HIRLAM.
 - c) Redefinition of the role of the Officer for Networking.
 - d) Jean-François Mahfouf is new member for "Surface issues".
- All issues were approved by GA, item b) also by Jeanette Onvlee.

b. HIRLAM aspects of the joint plans under HARMONIE.

The GA Chair gives the floor to Jeanette Onvlee.

There are three main points in the presentation.

1. General impression of evolution of HARMONIE cooperation

Strategic level: the strategies on the whole are well aligned.

Tactical level: the scientific planning and coordination MG-CSSI is continuing in a correct way, despite frequent CSSI changes of composition.

Contacts between researchers: evolution of common workshop; direct cooperation on the increase: number of visits among researchers are growing.

Code maintenance and system aspects: the code maintenance needs to be further developed. the correct routine is growing in importance and there are more common discussions on system aspects.

Common stands in SRNWP-related issues.

2. Relevant developments of the past year from HIRLAM point of view

Embedding of HARMONIE system will soon be available in 7 HIRLAM institutes.
In data assimilation the convergence is made towards a 3D-VAR on the basis of HIRLAM practice and of ALADIN code.

In surface the progress is slower than desirable.

Development of GLAMEPS system.

System development, plans for replacement of HIRLAM by HARMONIE.

Increase of membership in both Consortia.

Closer links to ECMWF management on strategic/system issues.

3. Points of attention

Manpower shortage on short/long term: there is a brain drain going on, there are few young scientists and more and more of the experienced people are leaving without passing their knowledge so that their experience is lost.

In particular points of interest:

- dynamics (manpower shortage)
- surface (data flow, consistency issues, data assimilation, manpower issues critical)
- convergence of AROME-ALARO physics and interfacing (concern expressed, importance of convergence being reached in a few years)
- GLAMEPS
- maintenance and phasing (more decentralized system desirable, need to keep pressure on moving to HARMONIE system)
- common workshops
- availability of model version for research purposes (academia)
- evolution of future organization in a longer term

The ALADIN PM expresses his agreement with the emphases about HARMONIE.

Dijana Klaric asks whether HARMONIE EPS is planned as one system or one model.

Jeanette Onvlee answers the ambition is to make it as one system.

6. *'Classical matters' for the past year:*

a. *Operational report (Martin Janoušek);*

The Chair gives the floor to Mr Martin Janousek for presenting his PowerPoint presentation.

On the common operation switches:

We learned that on 9th of May Météo-France operations migrated to a new supercomputer. It can be concluded that it was a smooth switch and that the march towards higher-resolution ARPEGE has started.

ARPEGE resolution increase:

This increase is scheduled between December and January 2008.

There is an increase of resolution of coupling files for ALADIN applications. The file size increases and this will have an impact on the data transfer. The necessary tests must be done to verify the system.

ALADIN operational systems:

There are 19 ARPEGE-driven ALADIN operational implementations;

There are only 3 data assimilation systems operational;

A new ALADIN implementation is going to happen soon in Turkey

There is an increasing diversity in physical parameterization.

Telecommunications:

Since June there is a new RMDCN: A "meteorological Internet" with a good stability and bandwidth for ALADIN data.

Concerning LACE: the backup coupling files are stored at ECMWF.

It is an open option for all connected partners.

Most of them use Internet, because it is cheap and fast but there is no backtrack in case of problems and it can be vulnerable to local internet overload in case of severe weather situations.

Erik Anderson (ECMWF observer) says that with the Internet you have often a lower traffic when you need to download files but it sometimes fails and you then have no back up.

b. Maintenance report (Claude Fischer) :

The GA Chair gives the floor to Claude Fischer for explaining his PowerPoint presentation.

Phasing becomes almost continuous activity with many interim cycles. There is an important aspect of training for people who perform phasing. A good balance in the composition of teams has to be maintained mixing experienced people with newcomers.

The updates of the system have formed a basic activity when we look at the time schedule of the year.

In the future foreseen activities:

- Phasing will continue, including invitations to Toulouse.
- Understanding and enhancing the cooperation with HIRLAM on maintenance issues and phasing
- Enhancing real-time networking capabilities, including teleconferencing.
- The raising importance of multi-platform installations

Radmila Brozkova asks if one should expect further big amount of new routines. Claude Fischer sais no, the main increase was with the incorporation of Meso-NH routines for AROME physics. Radmila Brozkova further asks if there is a clear boundary between integrated code and externalized packages. Claude Fischer replies that there is no unique recipe and it has to be decided on a case by case basis.

c. Manpower figures for 7-06 to 6-07 (ALADIN PM).

The GA Chair gives the floor to the ALADIN PM for his presentation.

The various slides show us the total participation in the ALADIN project:

- The evolution of the quarterly manpower
- The breakdown of the person.months by member
- The breakdown of the person. Months by country
- The breakdown of the participants by country
- The breakdown of the person. Month by money funding
- The breakdown of the ALADIN effort by activity
- The breakdown of the ALADIN work by type

The total number of person x months increased due to incorporation of AROME development into figures.

What is worrying is the increasing fraction of homework with respect to stays. There is also a suspicion of reporting development work for activity which is rather local maintenance.

Dijana Klaric notes that there is no so much reason for worry with the increasing local home work as teams having built up sufficient capacity are able to achieve results. The PM replied that in order to maintain balance the teams which do not travel should invest more in the direction of the common actions, but that it is not always the case.

COFFEE BREAK 16h – 16h30

7. *ALADIN Strategy:*

a. Presentation of the Draft Strategy Document (Emanuel Legrand);

The GA Chair gives the floor to Emanuel Legrand for his presentation.

Emanuel Legrand presents the history of the Strategic document and its main highlights. The Strategic document is the result of a process which started at the Extra-ordinary General Assembly in Brussels in February 2006. It has been carried out through several steps which ensure that the text is in an advanced shape to be presented at this meeting with the objective to obtain an approved definitive version.

Delegates were asked before this meeting to thoroughly study the text and come with concrete proposals during this GA in Slovenia for modifications in the text which did not meet their approval. The General Assembly is now invited to discuss, to update if needed and then to approve the ALADIN strategic Document for the period 2008 to 2017.

The General Assembly should adopt to-morrow the presented Strategic plan with inclusion of the modifications done by certain members during the meeting. The propositions of the PM for this last updating procedure have been globally accepted.

The execution aspect of this strategic plan for the institutes will be a four year plan in which some important issues and points of interest are now going to be discussed. All members are asked to contribute to the construction process of this plan of which a first version will be examined by the PAC ALADIN during its meeting in springtime 2008.

b. Consequences for the ALADIN planning process (ALADIN PM);

The PM presents the consequences of the Strategic document to the planning process. The General Assembly should agree on or modify the proposed time-table for a declination of the newly approved Strategy Document into a full planning process. In case of agreement it should officially task PAC with the role of discussing the first version of a running 4 year plan at its spring session in May 2008. This would allow the GA session to discuss each fall the yearly workplan in conjunction with its manpower and budgetary implications. A pre-assembly PAC or Bureau meeting would complete this yearly time-table. PM stressed the planning practice should be moved from the recent on-offer basis to on-demand one.

c. Comments, discussions and final shaping of the ALADIN Strategy Document (GA Chair).

All the participants are of the opinion that this is an excellent document and express their gratitude to everyone who participated in its realization. The GA Chair opens the possibility for discussion and comments before adopting the strategy.

Emanuel Legrand: informs that various members want to modify somewhat the text and have sometimes submitted written comments that can be incorporated by the PM, with GA's approval.

Alain Ratier states that the plan that is overall a good work but wishes to make some minor comments and proposals on several issues in the text. Namely he proposes

- to add to the item 3, page 7, reference to AROME-related scales as well;

- to better reflect the reason for limited availability of ALADIN code to academia (page 8) in the fact we are not owners of a part of our code rather than stating a wish to protect the code;
- to modify the mention of the Interoperability programme as a mean for comparing against other consortia because this is not the only content of the Interoperability (page 11);
- to remove the statement about stopping the development at 10 km scale because it will still be the scale for climate modeling and EPS (page 12, 4th bullet);
- to get rid of the sentence “Experience shows the limits of the committees when it comes to launching scientifically new ideas (...)” (page 15, item 5.1).

Radmila Brozkova strongly disagrees with Alain Ratier’s latter item and wishes to keep the sentence or at least its spirit. Alain Ratier maintains his proposal.

Alain Ratier further proposes

- to remove the last sentence of 5.1, page 16;
- further modifications in the chapter 6.

The GA Chair concludes that there are some disagreements to be talked about later on this evening during diner. This item 7c of the GA Agenda will be further treated tomorrow.

At 17.47hours, closing of the first day of the meeting.

Dinner

On the 8th of November the meeting will start at 8.30 a.m.

Special presentation: Performance ofALADIN in the extreme rain event on 18th September2007 in Slovenia (Mark Žagar)

Mark Žagar shows in his PowerPoint presentation the results of ALADIN programme tools for the extreme rainfall of September 2007 in Slovenia and he evaluates the performances.

The GA chair points out that it was an interesting presentation and asks the members if there are any questions.

He also points out that the LTM of the organizing country, Neva Pristov, will sent all presentations given during the meeting to all the participants by mail.

7c. Comments, discussions and final shaping of the ALADIN Strategy Document (GA Chair) - continued.

The GA Chair asks whether there are other proposals for the strategic plan.

The PM informs he will introduce several non-controversial minor updates to the text. Alain Ratier informs the members that they were able to discuss with Radmila Brozkova on their different views on one part of the document and that they found acceptable formulations.

The PM informs that he has checked all other proposals of Alain Ratier and he has found them uncontroversial except for the amendment of the item 6.2. He proposes to work with Alain Ratier to find an acceptable solution. Alain Ratier agrees and gives his trust to PM to find a better formulation on this issue.

The PM presents with a PowerPoint presentation the input for the agenda item 7C including the contributors not currently present at the General Assembly in Ljubljana. He identifies two major committing amendments:

- Where should the limit for a probabilistic presentation of the results be set? At highest resolution or at a lower resolution but using better methods?

Andras Horanyi asks where in the text this issue should materialize. Christian Blondin makes a proposal for the 'location' but judges the incorporation of the issue rather ambitious. The GA Chair suggests to leave the text as it is and review it in the four-year plan.

The PM continues:

- Should the work on an "exportable HARMONIE version" be more explicitly mentioned (just a few words yet)? The work is of interest to the strategic goals for education and collaboration; it shall be undertaken, but under which guidelines? The difficulty is double: (a) how to avoid auto-competition, and (b) how to maintain the product.

Claude Fischer reacts that it would be quite difficult to maintain such a software product, should it be a part of the main trunk. He doubts the strategy should go into such details.

Jeanette Onvlee says that HIRLAM is very keen on the development of such a version but that she admits it is not easy to find the right strategic formulation. She anyhow maintains it would be practical to have a mention in the Strategy.

The PM proposes he will join with Claude Fischer to write a few words of text, explaining also limits and constraints of the exportable HARMONIE version.

Emanuel Legrand further points out to the text at 4.4.2 where modification approved by PAC did not enter the text.

Andras Horanyi requests besides the final version of the document to have also a version tracking all modifications of the text. The PM says there will be both versions available at pre-final stage.

Eric Anderson makes comments to some parts of the text. Namely he points out there are no requirements towards ECMWF mentioned in the text and he proposes to be more proactive in this point.

Dijana Klaric asks which is the formal level to choose in order to come up with such requirements.

Klemen Bergant suggests to ask ECMWF to accept representative of ALADIN at ECMWF/TAC. The PM agrees it is a good proposal but it has to be treated on an official level completely disconnected from the strategic document.

Radmila Brozkova points out that we have been relying so far on the IFS-ARPEGE agreement. Maybe it should be extended.

The GA Chair concludes the new version of the Strategy document will be disseminated allowing one week for comments. If there is no reaction the ALADIN Strategic Document will be approved.

8. Important scientific or technical issues for the 4-year planning; draft list to be updated if needed (ALADIN PM):

- a. Verification;***
- b. NH-VFE issue (dynamics);***
- c. Convergence steps for AROME and ALARO physics and phys-dyn interfacing;***
- d. Contribution to GLAMEPS (and/or EurEPS);***
- e. Surface modelling- and data assimilation issues;***
- f. Maintenance aspects.***

The PM introduces this item by a PowerPoint presentation because the document was distributed too late just before the present GA Session.

The General Assembly is invited to debate the issues raised in the attached document 8, to enhance this discussion by adding some other topics to the current list of six and thereby to provide input to PAC, PM and CSSI. This input will mostly be used in the preparation of the draft four-year plan, to be ready for the spring Session of PAC (foreseen dates 19-20/05/08).

a. Verification

The starting point is OK but the system lacks ambition for new developments and for high resolution verification. A very recurrent ALADIN issue= warning signal coming from the MO Eumetnet initiative.

A new medium-term impulse is needed. Clearer manpower commitments are needed and also the acceptance of the fact that some systems may diverge in quality, bearing in mind that good scores do not necessarily imply good quality.

b. Dynamics (NH-VFE issue)

The trademark of the ALADIN programme – the dynamics – is in danger of fading out.

Key issues for the future link with the IFS – NH-VFE work; very promising result of the work obtained in SHMI and MF, but breach of continuity in manpower availability. Specialists in dynamics seem to be very flexible but they should not be misused by

charging them always with critical problems outside their main axis of competency. A multi-component solution must be found soon.

c. Convergence steps for AROME and ALARO physics and phys-dyn interfacing;

This is a very complex issue, marked by many legacies. There is for instance a lack of reciprocal positioning before taking low-level decisions which ultimately leads to reinforce the detrimental mix between science, operations and policy.

Presently the way out is to accept on each side to do joint steps without attaching any moral value to this acceptance. Encouraging and stabilizing short term steps were decided at a meeting in Paris on 19/10/2007. Ongoing work to concretize them should receive high priority. We are still lacking a method for keeping this impulse without hampering the future operational steps and without creating 'false twins'.

d. Contribution to GLAMEPS (and/or EurEPS);

For the time being Météo-France main interest in short range EPS is not bound to LAM but to their global PEARM system.

HIRLAM-driven GLAMEPS project appears as most scientifically valid LAM path. The difficult point for ALADIN is in the interplay of LAEF and GLAMEPS which are by construction neither complementary nor competing. Need for a better normalization of priorities in late 2008.

e. Surface modelling- and data assimilation issues;

Externalisation steps avoid most of interfacing problems we have elsewhere. There is a lot of scientific and operational competency in HARMONIE. Like in dynamics there is a problem of exploiting skilled people from surface modeling in other high priority tasks.

f. Maintenance aspects.

It is in a good shape but there are imbalances between countries. There is a clear need to anticipate forthcoming evolutions in order to help keeping alive this asset. A basic clue: to rely on ECMWF for transversal decisions. The continued decentralization of maintenance helps shifting people from local issues to global ones by expecting that local problems will be solved by a local application of the global effort. More concern should be put on the "cost" issues and less on the "upward compatibility" to avoid an increase in need for resources. And finally, we should be more anticipating than solely reacting.

The PM finally states that responses on all this will be welcome. The strategic plan will be ready in its first version in May 2008. The document just presented can now be used for brainstorming.

Alain Ratier has a general comment at four year plan: all issues are very rudimental and important.

Concerning the verification he has the impression that there is a fear of comparison. The evaluation should be done on critical situations. Every Member should run its own evaluation which will show how we progress in the severe weather prediction. Concerning the convergence he says it is a very important issue. There seemed to be taboos about Meso-NH but there are no 'R&D enemies'. Météo-France just wants to use the best available physics. The issue of convergence is considered very seriously by Météo-France and a number of steps have been made to progress in such difficult matters.

Jeanette Onvlee comments on the verification, saying that it should be used by NMS to show the value of products provided to the community. Emanuel Legrand responds that this is a part of the Strategy document. Alain Ratier comments that verification indicators are often not understood by users.

Radmila Brozkova makes comment concerning dynamics and manpower. To train someone on those issues takes quite some time. People who require the skills are not easily replaceable and they are rare. She points out that there is a lack of skilled personnel. People who leave the institutes are not being replaced or there is not enough time to train new personnel and pass the experience.

The Central Europe is not in good shape to renovate this manpower but such renovation is highly needed. At the universities there are topics on climate change but not on weather predictions.

Jeanette Onvlee complements that the situation is alas quite similar for surface modeling.

The GA Chair points out that the Directors of the meteorological institutes and universities must know about this problem. It is a question of knowledge management; they must pay attention to this issue.

Dijana Klaric says the priorities of the strategic plan are clear and the document is optimistic and its priorities are in line with those of RC LACE. On the other hand she notices worrying signs: (a) there was no presentation of either ALADIN or LACE on verification on the last EWGLAM meeting, and (b) in case the VFE-NH fails it will have detrimental impact on the new dynamics project at ECMWF which can potentially result in draining further ALADIN people. She also mentions the difficult problem of ODB knowledge.

GA Chair summarizes:

- the members are happy with the six above mentioned items
- the four year plan must be sufficiently open
- verification is a very important point
 - to assess the impact of development;
 - to assess the value of products.
- on convergence: Météo-France states that work has to be done but that there is a plan to solve problems.
- there is a problem of manpower and knowledge management; which solutions have to be found, on the basis of the various discussions at this GA.

Jeanette Onvlee intervenes about the open question of how to tie data assimilation and operations. The PM agrees there should be a new point on technical issues of data assimilation in the post-GA updated version of the document he just presented.

9. Presentation of the work plan elaboration process for 2008, especially in terms of manpower priorities (ALADIN PM).

The PM introduces a PowerPoint presentation.

List of likely understaffed activities in 2008:

- phys-dyn coupling
- ALARO-0 scientific maintenance
- NH-VFE
- DFI development
- transparent LBCs
- GLAMEPS contribution
- Surface issues for LAM-EPS coupling
- DA surface emissivity and land temperature

He says it is difficult to assign people to critical tasks in case they are not interested because they are too protected by local managers. It is mostly (but not only) a local management problem.

Alain Ratier proposes PM and CSSI to identify key people and then to discuss with LTMs. The PM says local managers do not want names assigned to tasks as they want freedom to assign their people to local tasks. Alain Ratier objects that if people are not identified there is not way to solve the problem. *The GA Chair* agrees we need to be more concrete.

Jeanette Onvlee proposes to rather tackle the problem by looking at tasks which are overstaffed and check if people are efficiently used. The PM agrees but he asks GA for a clear mandate to try to identify overstaffed topics because it would represent quite a new approach in manpower management. The GA Chair supports the view but he points out that Directors are not LTMs and that the LTMs may have different opinions. The PM thinks we should try the new approach and he points out that problem with LTMs is rather opposite as they often feel they have not enough weight. Andras Horanyi notes that the approach to point out an overstaffed topic was tried with EPS with little success: it is difficult to force people to do what is important in LAM EPS instead of just downscaling ECMWF. PM agrees but he maintains the new approach should be tried on a more general basis.

The GA Chair informs that there may be some pilot projects and that Belgium will do as first this test. He asks Josette Vanderborght to take necessary steps.

Radmila Brozkova notes that ALADIN does not have enough staff renewal at topics where this would be needed. She says difficult tasks should be assigned to young scientists but we need to first awake their basic interest for such tasks. Jeanette Onvlee points out importance of giving some parts of the code to universities making a chance of changing teaching. The PM agrees and summarizes that the understaffing has to be tackled by combination of teaching plus training of new people and reorientation of existing people on the basis of an analysis of overstaffed area, in full coordination with LTMs.

10. Membership and cooperation matters (GA Chair).

GA Chair gives the floor to Mr Fatih Buyukasabbassi of the Turkish NMS.

Fatih Buyukasabbassi declares Turkey wants to become from 2008 onwards a full-right member of the ALADIN Consortium. He summarizes the recent collaboration undertaken in the field of ALADIN numerical weather prediction. He says that the membership procedures are an important issue. There has been an exchange of letters on the issue between Turkey and the GA Chair.

He informs that two TSMS staff members underwent a six week training in Toulouse in order to get trained to the basic configurations of the model. The participation of a third staff member of TSMS to the last EWGLAM venue in Dubrovnik, in October 2007, completes the ongoing effort.

The targets for a full-membership as from 1/1/2008 have been evaluated and it is found that they are concentrating on the local procedures. The money transfer to Météo-France (invoice flat rate) has been done. The remaining issue is the payment of the entry fee. Turkey aims at becoming a full member already for 2008.

The PM says the full answer cannot be given today.

Fatih Buyakkassabasi explains they need indication on membership since the entry fee is high and their service need to set the budget for 2008 in short time.

Alain Ratier points out that the MoU allows earlier access to the code if the entry fee has been paid.

GA Chair states that for a full membership the approval of the GA is needed and that it cannot be decided today, however willing is the GA to find practical solutions to the mentioned procedural remaining obstacles.

PM says the decision can be taken either in a few weeks (by correspondence) or in 1 year time. Christian Blondin adds that the invoices are sent to the members in February.

Ivan Cacic says the motivation of Turkey is appealing and that he sees no obstacle for full membership.

Andras Horanyi asks Turkey whether they can fulfil manpower commitments. Fatih Buyakkassabasi replies 2 people are available for ALADIN and therefore they will fulfil the requirements of MoU.

Alain Ratier says there will be no definite decision taken about this subject today. There is need to verify what is needed for full membership so that the key actors fully understand what they have to do.

Fatih Buyakkassabasi states this means a problem for them. They need to foresee the budget. They have a budget but have to reserve it also for other expenses.

The GA Chair asks the GA members if they are prepared to vote by correspondence still in 2008. There are no objections from the members.

Alain Ratier asks for a documented requirement of Turkey to join the Memorandum of Understanding. The document will be disseminated among GA members, they will express their opinion and vote by correspondence.

<p>The GA can conclude that the steps undertaken so far by TSMS are very positive and compatible with the requirements stated for full membership within the ALADIN MoU. The procedure of acceding for Turkey can be carried on by the PM with the goal to succeed before end of 2007, with the knowledge that the time-table will be extremely tight for that.</p>

Klemen Bergant pointing back to agenda item 7 asks about possibility to nominate ALADIN Observer to ECMWF TAC. The GA Chair says the question has to be asked at ECMWF Council and that he will explore it.

COFFEE BREAK 10h30 – 11h

11. Budget matters (ALADIN PM):

- a. Accounting of the 2006 budget;*
- b. Report about the ongoing execution of the 2007 budget;*
- c. Adoption of the 2008 budget*

In the recent 'Bureau meeting' on 24 and 25 of October 2007 the budget was also discussed. During this discussion the importance of the networking and its relation to the budget was stressed.

a. Accounting of the 2006 budget;

The PM gives the presentation of the document 11a. He explains that the last three lines of the table at page 2 are totals. There is a matter of fact that the in-kind contributions were overestimated and consequently the total budget was fulfilled only partly.

The delegates of the GA are invited to take note of the content of the 2006 budget accounting, with special attention drawn to the yellow underlined paragraphs in the document 11 a. The GA will be asked to confirm or modify PAC's suggestions for the future accounting, from 2007 onwards.

Christian Blondin notes that there were missing payments of the flat-rate for some countries but that their clearing is in process.

b. Report about the ongoing execution of the 2007 budget

PM presents document 11b. He points out that the non-execution sum even further increased with respect to 2006. He stresses that, if the tendency continues, the penalties will only increase and the money stock will increase at Météo-France which can bring additional difficulties.

Christian Blondin presents additional information. The positive message is that all contracts are settled now. However, the implementation of the contract was supposed by exchange of letters with non-LACE members in May and June 2007 and replies are needed at M-F. Christian Blondin recalls the missions are not paid from Météo-France budget but from Partners' money sent to Météo-France. There is currently a new financial controller at M-F which slows processes a bit but now all documents are alas yet available for him. Christian Blondin further explains that all figures on numbers from beginning of 2007 and due to the non-executed missions and missing in-kind contributions in 2007. According to this some countries may be in debt in the final figures of 2007.

Concerning royalties he recalls that this is an income from ex-territorial applications and payments. The royalties cannot be further collected by M-F because of a new tax in France. Therefore the processing is proposed via MFI (Météo-France International) which will document exactly what amount every member will be eligible for and send a letter. This letter must be answered and a bill must be issues to MFI.

The PM recalls difficulties of Morocco and Romania who cannot send an invoice to non-public institution. Alain Ratier explains it is not public money but that it goes back to public sector. Christian Blondin proposes pragmatic solution: those who cannot

send bill to private company have to accept their share of royalties will be reduced by tax in France.

Christian Blondin urges importance of sending now the missing answers to M-F letter of last spring.

c. Adoption of the 2008 budget

PM presents the document 11c on the adoption 2008 budget.

The PAC approved the general presentation of the 2008 budget, it was of the opinion that the 2008 flat-rate budget has to be at ceiling level and that they will recommend to this meeting that same savings have to be found which could come from limiting the financial support for meetings. The delegates to the GA are invited to carefully consider the proposed draft decisions for the 2008 budget. The General Assembly shall have to modify them if necessary before final approval. The declination for flat-rate financed stays and missions shall then be done in the winter like for the past two years.

Christian Blondin explains that M-F made mistake in 2007 by putting a 100% rate of royalties to the total budget. This bug is fixed for 2008 and therefore the contribution will decrease accordingly, on top of the fact that this item goes out of the flat-rate budget.

The PM recalls Belgium will host the joint ALADIN/HIRLAM workshop, hence more expenses are expected on this side than in 2007. On the other hand there will be savings. If Turkey enters and pays the entry fee, all figures will have to be adapted. Christian Blondin makes remarks on Turkey's contribution usage, for example to use part of it in order not to reach ceiling for countries in debts. The PM suggest to use it also for organization of the Bureau meeting. The GA gives the PM freedom to treat this issue at the same time as the Turkish full membership issue. One guideline could be to split the use of the entry fee between 2008 and 2009.

Jeanette Onvlee recalls the joint ALADIN workshop and Hirlam all staff meeting shall be held in Belgium for 2008 and therefore reservations for the budget have to be made for this. The proposal for sharing the cost discussed at PAC is 50% for the organizing country, 25% for each consortium. It would be good to have a general procedure rule.

GA Chair judges this is a clear proposal and asks GA if this is agreeable. The GA approves the proposal.

PM asks for approval to cover travel expenses of LTM to one meeting per year if needed. The proposal is approved by GA.

Christian Blondin makes a note concerning royalties. Partners may decide to keep royalties in the computation of the budget ceiling and thus to spare money exchange.

12. Elections of the General Assembly Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (PAC Chair).

Fritz Neuwirth takes the floor. The General Assembly should elect or re-elect its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for a two year period, up to the 2009 regular Session of the GA.

Election of the GA chairperson:

GA Chair, Dr Henri Malcorps leaves the room.

Pierre-Etienne Bisch takes the floor. He suggests that Dr Malcorps should be re-elected as GA chairman.

Dr Malcorps accepts to be GA chairman. He thanks the members for their confidence and will help to get through the different matters during the meetings.

Election of the Vice-Chairperson:

Jozef Roskar takes the floor. He retires as Director of his institute. He thanks everyone for their support and work during the GA meetings. Vladimir Pastircak proposes Mr Klemen Bergant as Vice-Chairperson.

Klemen Bergant agrees and the GA elects him.

13. Appointments of the PAC Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (GA Chair).

The General Assembly should appoint or re-appoint the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Policy Advisory Committee for a two year period, up to the 2009 regular session of the GA.

Mr Neuwirth leaves the room.

The GA chairman is very satisfied about his work during the PAC meetings.

His election is approved.

Vice-Chairperson of the PAC: Mr Cornel Soci is also re-elected.

14. A.O.B

The PM notes he would appreciate suggestions

- how to implement the idea of a pilot study of cooperation of CSSI and LTMs
- how scientific maintenance commitments should be reported and measured.

The GA Chair encourages suggestions are asked and responses can be made in a positive way to the PM.

Fritz Neuwirth recalls the 4-year-plan will be central part of next GA.

The GA thanked Mr Emanuel Legrand and Mr Andras Horanyi for their advice and cooperation during the different ALADIN GA meetings. They will both move to exercise another functions. New function for Emanuel Legrand will be the Head of Computing Department of Météo-France. Andras Horaniy will be the Programme Manager of EUMETNET SRNWP, something that will leave him the possibility to remain close to the ALADIN community in non EUMETNET tasks.

15. Date and place of the next General Assembly (or of the next two General Assemblies).

The General Assembly accepted the offer of Portugal to hold the ALADIN General Assembly **2008 in Portugal**.

Date for this meeting is: **Thursday 6th and Friday 7th of November 2008. The meeting starts at 14 o'clock at 6/11/2008 and ends at 12 o'clock at 7/11/2008.**

The Turkish delegates offer to hold the **ALADIN General Assembly 2009** most likely in Istanbul. The Assembly gladly accepts their offer.

Mr Radim Tolasz of the Czech Hydrometeorological Institute offers to hold the ALADIN General Assembly **2010 in the Czech Republic**.

16. Closing of the meeting (tentatively at 12h).

The meeting was closed at 12.03 hours.

The GA Chair thanked everyone for the constructive way of working together and the Slovenian hosts for their hospitality and their perfect organization.