Expert workshop on

metadata management & referential data sets

CONCLUSIONS

La maison du séminaire, NICE (FR)

This expert workshop gathered some 19 participants representing 12 countries (Austria, Egypt, France, Jordan, Israel, Cyprus, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey), international experts, the European Environment Agency and the European Commission Joint Research Center of Ispra. This workshop was organised side by side with the 9th coordination seminar of EMWIS National Focal Points.

The objectives were to:
- Review the needs and requirements for a water metadata catalogue in the Med area (interoperability, multilingualism, harvesting, etc.). Those needs encompass both the technical aspects of the metadata catalogue tool functionalities, and the topical ones.
- Review of standards necessary for metadata cataloguing
- Ensure metadata interoperability, especially with Water Information System for Europe (WISE) and INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community)
- Promote the use of interoperable water metadata catalogues by MPC (Mediterranean Partner Countries) and identify the most suitable open source tool as regard to the needs and requirement identified,
- Agree on a metadata profile : the way metadata as to be structured and the information that have to be provided
- Initiate metadata collection in MPC as a clearing house mechanism for the region
- Identify spatial referential data sets necessary for cataloguing and as 1st components of a Med water information system

The first sessions were dedicated to the experiences of some EU countries in implementing metadata management as part of their Water Information Systems: Spain, France and Austria. The status of INSPIRE implementing rules on metadata (IRs) as well as WISE metadata profile were presented and discussed. It was reminded that the WISE metadata profile is an annex to the WISE GIS guidance document that is a "living" document

It was agreed that the metadata profile for the Mediterranean will follow WISE metadata profile recommendations published as an annex to WISE GIS guidance document. It was reminded that WISE metadata profile is compatible with INSPIRE implementing rules on metadata, themselves based on ISO19115. The Mediterranean profile includes some 25 mandatory elements, with the possibility to set some default values for a few of them in order to minimise the input time of the final operator.

But to ensure a better interoperability, agreements on some code-lists are also necessary:
- For the geographical coverage, EU countries are using River Basin Districts (defined for the Water Framework Directive), as this concept does not exist in non EU countries, it was agreed to include:
  o River basins when they exist
  o List of countries based on ISO 3166

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- Administrative management units (e.g. regions, governorates) as geographical entities for which descriptive data is produced (population, water consumption, discharge, etc.)
- A list of aquifers could also be defined at a later stage
- For the thematic coverage, a 2 levels approach was decided:
    - A water data domain keyword, with a restricted list of value (7 to 9) allowing to make a quick categorisation of the metadata
    - Thematic keywords coming from GEMET thesaurus (thus allowing compliance with INSPIRE IRs)

Possible value domain restriction to suit EMWIS needs and ease metadata management were agreed on :
- INSPIRE IRs Topic Category was reduced to 5 possible values. It was also agreed that 'inland Waters' would be the default one,
- Standard text were also validated for 'Originating controlled vocabulary', 'Specification' & 'Degree', 'Metadata standard name', 'Metadata standard version' metadata elements

EMWIS Technical Unit will collect the necessary information to set-up the lists of river basins and administrative management units. These were briefly introduced by the country representatives.

A first prototype of the Mediterranean Metadata catalogue was presented using the open source solution geonetwork. It was agreed to further develop this prototype on the basis of the workshop conclusions (adding the agreed code lists and interoperability rules) and to use it for metadata collection or harvesting existing catalogues or existing online descriptive metadata attached to datasets or services in the Med countries and related international initiatives.