

Desertification Information System
to support National Action Programmes in the Mediterranean
(DISMED)

Technical workshop on NAP information needs: minutes of the meeting



UNCCD Secretariat
Bonn, Germany

1. Introduction

The first technical workshop of the DISMED project took place in Florence, Italy, from 20 to 22 June, 2001.

The list of participants to the workshop can be found in Annex 1.

Following the welcoming remarks given by the President of the Foundation of Applied Meteorology (FMA) and the representatives of the UNCCD and EEA, the participants reviewed the following points, in conformity with the Agenda (Annex 2):

1. Country presentation session: Country presentations on national information systems as related to the NAP;
2. DISMED implementation session: Information and the NAP; Environmental indicators; Circulation of information; Information networks;
3. Round table: information needed to improve preparation and implementation of NAPs;
4. DISMED follow-up session: future work programme and identification of needs for DISMED next workshop.

The CCD Secretariat recalled the recommendations of the start-up meeting (Copenhagen, Denmark, September 27-29, 2000) and introduced the objectives as well as the expected results of the workshop.

The Chairmen of the different sessions were identified as follows:

- Mr. Victor Louro (Portugal)
- Mr. Mohamed Ismail (Tunisia)
- Mr. Maurizio Sciortino (Italy)
- Mr. Mohamed Wakrim (Morocco)

The *Rapporteurs* were identified as follows:

- Mr. Jamel Boujdaria (General Secretariat of UMA)
- Mr. Ahmed Taher A. Moustafa (Egypt)

The Chairmen, the *Rapporteurs* and representatives of EEA, FMA and the CCD secretariat composed the drafting group.

2. Summary of discussions of the country presentations and of the DISMED implementation sessions

The workshop noted that the secretariat received a number of reports from countries on the information needs for the preparation and the implementation of the National Action Programmes (NAP).

According to the agenda, the workshop heard presentations from the representatives of countries (Algeria, Egypt, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey) and organizations (EEA, OSS, FMA, UMA, ANPA and Toscana Region) attending the meeting.

After each presentation, a discussion was held and a number of remarks and conclusions were mentioned:

- country Partners to DISMED are at different stages in the development and implementation of their NAPs;
- a number of different methodologies have been used in developing tools to support the NAPs;
- some country Partners recorded a number of constraints at the national level, which are slowing down the NAP preparation process (e.g. institutional difficulties for sharing data and information gathered from different institutions for different purposes);
- in the framework of desertification and drought, national databases, metadatabases, baseline cartography and information systems are at different stages of development and are based on different standards and approaches;
- many country Partners, as well as most of the organizations, have established their Clearinghouses/Circulation Information Systems and Websites, while others are in the process to finalize them;
- while a number of environmental databases and information systems are available, very few are specific to desertification and drought;

3. Summary of the round table information needs to improve preparation and implementation of NAPs

Following the presentation sessions, a round table was held to discuss on information needed to improve the effectiveness of NAPs.

As a conclusion the participants recognized that the following principles would be taken into consideration in the implementation of DISMED:

- pursue short-term results taking into account long-terms goals;
- adopt a pragmatic approach in defining activities and products;
- build activities on existing products, methodologies, infrastructure, documents, and standards;
- facilitate participation of specialized expertise and a real cooperation among them, with shared responsibilities, in developing products at national through DISMED;

- follow a process approach to improve the effectiveness of results;
- promote synergies with other relevant programmes at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels;
- strengthen cooperation with specialized operational institutions acting in the Mediterranean area.

Consequently, the following topics were discussed and addressed, among others:

- Mapping of risk/sensitiveness to desertification and drought, at both sides of the Mediterranean;
- Erosion and other thematic map;
- Indicators applicable at both sides of the Mediterranean;
- Inventory of relevant data for desertification assessment and monitoring;
- Metadata;
- Reporting format;
- Access to existing documentation (methodology, glossary..);
- Access to results from research projects operating in the Mediterranean area;
- Facilitate new projects to respond to specific issues (cooperation among institutions at national and international levels);
- Clearing-houses vs. Circulation Information Systems.

4. DISMED follow-up session: future programme of work

It was agreed that the programme of work for the coming six-month period would focus on the following topics:

- A. Thematic and sensitivity mapping on desertification and drought;
- B. Establishment of a Meta-database;
- C. Access to existing documentation;
- D. Access to results from research and development (R&D) projects operating in the Mediterranean area.

The following activities will be then implemented:

- Convening of technical workshops;
- Establishment of a working group on metadatabases;
- Establishment of interest groups on documentation and results of R&D projects;
- Setting-up a gateway;

With reference to the above-mentioned focal areas, the following programme of work was agreed:

A. Thematic and sensitivity mapping on desertification and drought

Objective: To produce maps at national scale to support NAP design and monitoring, to be further integrated at both sides of the Mediterranean

Activity: Convening of a workshop on existing methodologies for thematic mapping on drought and desertification

Results: 1) Appropriate methodology for the production of the maps identified and agreed upon;
2) Collaborative exercise for the production of the maps, in relation with other relevant operational projects (MEDRAP, etc.), whenever applicable;
3) Results of this workshop presented at the MEDRAP's workshop on sensitive areas identification (May 2002);

Actors: Experts from institutions involved in the set up of the reference mapping to support NAP design and implementation

Date: January 2002

Planning:
- July 31, 2001: Terms of Reference
September 30, 2001: National reports on methodology utilized and or planned for mapping sensitivity zones at national level
October 31, 2001: workshop documentation
January 2002: workshop

B. Establishment of a Meta-database

Objective:
To generate a Meta-database on desertification and drought among countries Partners to DISMED

Activity : Establishment of an Internet-based working group on existing approaches/models of meta-data on drought and desertification

Results: 1) Appropriate methodology for the Meta-database identified an agreed upon;
2) Collaborative exercise for the establishment of the Meta-database launched.

Actors: Experts from institutions involved in the production and management of data on desertification and drought

Date: February 2002

Planning: July 31 2001: Terms of Reference
February 2002: Working group report

C. Access to existing documentation

Objective:
To facilitate access to documentation on desertification and drought within the Mediterranean area

Activity: 1) Establishment of an interest group on documentation;
2) Setting-up a gateway.

Results:
Web page on documentation established

D. Access to results from existing R&D projects operating in the Mediterranean area

Objective:

To facilitate access to R&D projects operating at both sides of the Mediterranean

- Activity:**
- 1) Establishment of an interest group on R&D projects outcomes;
 - 2) Setting-up a gateway.

Results:

Web page linked to R&D projects established.

5. Recommendations of the meeting

The participants to the meeting took the following deliberations:

- Country partners should complete their national reports for DISMED purposes (as requested in the guidelines dated February 2001) and submit them to FMA by July 2001;
- The above-mentioned national reports shall be compiled, analyzed and circulated among DISMED Partners by August 2001;
- Participants who delivered presentations during the workshop should complete their PowerPoint presentations and submit them to FMA by end of July 2001;
- Participants to the Florence workshop should communicate to the FMA their relevant web site addresses;
- The above-mentioned presentations shall be compiled on a CD-Rom, for distribution at COP 5 (October 2001);
- The activities referred to in the future programme of work (item 4) should be implemented respecting the agreed deadlines;
- A side event on DISMED outcomes should be held during COP 5 and the CCD secretariat is requested to facilitate its organization.

In addition to the above deliberations, the following recommendations were made:

- The General Secretariat of UMA is invited to collaborate with the Northern African country Partners so as to facilitate the implementation of DISMED in the sub-region;
- OSS is invited to strengthen its collaboration in developing DISMED activities of mutual interest, particularly in: a) facilitating the participation of DISMED Northern African country Partners; b) the development of tools and methodologies; and c) facilitating future SISEI developments coherently with DISMED results;
- Country Partners to DISMED are invited to support consideration of the circulation of information, within the CST work programme;
- The UNCCD secretariat is requested to facilitate the participation of Northern Mediterranean and Northern African countries not having been involved yet in the DISMED project;
- The UNCCD secretariat is further requested to explore ways and means, in cooperation with all DISMED partners, to get additional resources for DISMED activities;
- The UNCCD secretariat is also requested to finalize and circulate the outcomes of the Florence workshop.

6. Concluding remarks

The participants accepted with appreciation the generous offer made by the representative of Tunisia, to host the next workshop in January 2002.

The participants expressed also their gratitude to the hosting institution (FMA) and to the facilitating committee (UNCCD, EEA, FMA) for the excellent work undertaken in organizing and servicing the workshop.

Conclusions and recommendations of the workshop, as well as the final agenda and the list of participants, will be made available at:

- DISMED interest group: <http://eea.eionet.eu.int:8980/Members/irc/eionet-circle/Home/main>
- The workshop web page: http://p-case.iata.fi.cnr.it/dismed_florence/index.htm

Annex 1: List of participants

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Annex 2: Final agenda

Wednesday, 20 June 2001

- 09.00 - 9.15 Registration of participants
- Opening session**
- 09.15 - 10.30 - Welcome addresses - FMA - UNCCD - EEA
- Introduction to the workshop - UNCCD
- 10.30 - 10.45 Coffee break
- Country presentation session**
- 10.45 - 12.30 Country presentations on their information systems as related to the NAP (part 1)
- Morocco
- Tunisia
- Egypt
- Algeria
- 14.00 - 15.30 Country presentations on their information systems as related to the NAP (part 2)
- Italy
- Portugal
- 15.30 - 15.45 Coffee break
- 15.45 - 17.15 Country presentations on their information systems as related to the NAP (part 3)
- Spain
- Turkey

Thursday, 21 June 2001

- DISMED implementation session**
- 9.00 - 10.30 - FMA: Information and NAP, the Mediterranean experience
- EEA: the European approach to environmental indicators
- OSS: Desertification Information Circulation System (DIS)
- 10.30 - 10.45 Coffee break
- 10.45 - 12.30 **Circulation of information:**
- UMA : Information circulation system on desertification and environment for UMA countries
- 14.00 - 15.30 **Information networks:**
- EEA: European Environmental Reference Centre; EU Biodiversity convention Clearing House
- ITALY: Italian clearing house on desertification
- ANPA and Toscana Region: SINANET/MEDINET
- 15.30 - 15.45 Coffee break
- Round table**
- 15.45 - 17.15 Information needed to improve NAP

Friday, 22 June 2001

DISMED follow-up session

09.00 - 10.30 DISMED work programme and identification of needs for the 3rd workshop

10.30 - 15.30 Drafting of the minutes of the workshop

Closing session

16.00 - 17.15 Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop