

# WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

## COORDINATION MEETING OF THE WORLD WEATHER INFORMATION SERVICE (WWIS) WEBSITE HOSTS Hong Kong, China, 9 - 11 January 2007



### FINAL REPORT



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A coordination meeting of the World weather Information Service (WWIS) website hosts was held in Hong Kong, China from 9 to 11 January 2007. The meeting was chaired by Dr M.C. Wong (Hong Kong, China). The coordination meeting concentrated on several aspects related to the different language versions of the WWIS namely: Coordination and Procedures; Development of new products; Information Technology (IT) issues; Language issues, Common Framework and Translation; WWIS operational manual and user guide; and the meeting also included experience sharing sessions from participants.

The key conclusions from the work of the Coordination Meeting are summarized below:

- Updating of WWIS language versions to be done simultaneously
- Language hosts to assist with recruiting more countries to participate in WWIS
- A common set of weather forecast bulletins to be prepared for WWIS use
- Efforts to be continued with adding tourism links to webpages
- Designation of a technical contact person by language hosts of WWIS website
- Preparation of a road map for future activities

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) hosted a coordination meeting of the World Weather Information Service (WWIS) website hosts (Hong Kong, China (English), Oman (Arabic), China (Chinese), Macao, China (Portuguese), Spain (Spanish)) in Hong Kong, China from 9 to 11 January 2007 in response to a request by the 58th Session of the Executive Council (EC-LVIII/Doc. 3.4.1 para. 3.4.1.10) in 2006. The meeting was chaired by Dr M.C. Wong (Hong Kong, China). Ms Haleh Kootval (Chief, Public Weather Services Division, WMO Secretariat) welcomed the participants on behalf of the Secretary-General of WMO and briefed them on the background of the WWIS. She recalled that HKO had been tasked to develop and operate the WWIS website as well as the Severe Weather Information Centre (SWIC) on behalf of WMO. Both websites were regarded as examples of most successful computer projects under the PWS programme. On behalf of WMO, she expressed her gratitude towards HKO for hosting of these two websites and commended HKO for its very capable leadership in these projects. Subsequently, different language versions of WWIS had emerged and other Members would be expected to join in hosting other language versions. For the purpose of maintaining and enhancing the WWIS website, a coordination meeting among WWIS website hosts was arranged. She highlighted the objectives of this meeting were to formalize procedures among hosts in order to achieve a common look and feel for all WWIS language versions. She expected a fruitful outcome from this meeting.

1.2 The Chairman then highlighted the key issues to be discussed at this meeting. These were:

- (a) Coordination and Procedures
- (b) Development of New Products
- (c) IT Issues
- (d) Language Issues
- (e) Common Framework and Translation
- (f) WWIS Operational Manual and User Guide

1.3 He opined that as the representative from France was absent due to sudden illness, the daily discussions and recommendations should be summarized and emailed to the French representative so that he might contribute his views to the discussion. Dr Wong then gave a presentation on the current status of the WWIS.

1.4 The list of participants is given in Annex I. The programme of the meeting is contained in Annex II.

1.5 The representative from Hong Kong, China gave a presentation regarding the hosting and technical aspects of the English version of the WWIS website. Experience sharing sessions from various representatives were then conducted followed by discussions on various key issues.

## **2. Discussions**

### **2.1 Review of current status of WWIS by Hong Kong**

2.1.1 The Chairman informed the meeting that as the English version of the WWIS website was maintained quite current, other language hosts could make use of the English

updates to refresh their respective versions. The meeting participants then shared their experience on updating of the respective versions.

- 2.1.2 Some hosts expressed the preference to be provided with the latest updates only rather than the whole database dump. Others experienced difficulties with translating weather forecast texts into their language because of too many non-standard terms used by different participating Members. It was found that even the listing order of cities would be different for different language versions. Participants also expressed difficulties in obtaining official translation of city names. The meeting requested WMO to provide a list of official translation of city names for the official languages. However, for the Portuguese version, this would have to be arranged by Macao, China in consultation with Portugal.
- 2.1.3 With regard to the translation of weather observations, the meeting did not consider the work to be of great difficulty because observations were mainly depicted in graphics form.

## 2.2 Hosting of the WWIS English version by Hong Kong, China

- 2.2.1 The “photo and map” feature on the English webpage was noted. This feature and the tourism information were considered to be attractive and informative for users. However, not many participating Members submitted the photos or tourism information for use on the WWIS. The meeting suggested that participating Members be encouraged to provide the necessary information for this feature and the WWIS hosts should take the lead to submit the information. The meeting acknowledged that there were inaccuracies in the city location maps. The WWIS Coordinator would invite Participating Members to comment on the accuracy of the information on the maps.
- 2.2.2 The meeting discussed the frequency of downloading of forecast bulletins via the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) from HKO server. In general, it was agreed that an hourly update would be sufficient.

## 2.3 Coordination and procedures

- 2.3.1 The meeting discussed the role of the WWIS Coordinator and agreed that the present arrangement was acceptable. The role of the Coordinator should include:
- (a) Maintaining the WWIS website in cooperation with WMO;
  - (b) Maintaining contact and liaison with language hosts whenever necessary, e.g. implementation of new features, etc ...;
  - (c) Preparing and issuing regular progress reports on WWIS to participating Members every 2 months; and
  - (d) Preparing and issuing an annual report on WWIS.
- 2.3.2 The meeting noted the importance of keeping all the language versions in synchronization with the English version in order to maintain the positive image of the WWIS website. The meeting agreed that updating of the WWIS website content by all hosts should be done every two months and coordinated through the WWIS Coordinator for simultaneous action.
- 2.3.3 The meeting agreed to nominate a technical contact person from each WWIS host to facilitate new product implementation, trouble-shooting and experience exchange at the technical level.

2.3.4 The meeting agreed that language hosts would assist with the recruitment of NHMSs to join WWIS. The new participating Members would return the nomination form to WMO with a copy to the WWIS Coordinator for follow up actions.

## 2.4 Development of New Products

2.4.1 The meeting discussed and proposed the following new products:

- (a) a description on the climate of country/cities in addition to the climatological data table;
- (b) a link to an official tourism agency for the respective webpage; and
- (c) versions of WWIS for mobile users, e.g. SMS, RSS, etc ....

2.4.2 Some of the above items would be addressed at a longer timeframe.

2.4.3 The meeting agreed that the use of weather icons would be a means to overcome problems arising from difficulties with language translations. The WWIS Coordinator would take the lead in reviewing the current set of weather icons.

2.4.4 The meeting concluded that development of new products have to be considered in the light of available resources as indicated by WWIS hosts.

## 2.5 IT issues

2.5.1 The meeting recognized the compatibility problem arising from different software being used by various hosts for their website. It was also agreed that the introduction of a technical contact person would help to tackle these problems more efficiently. System information such as hard- and software configuration were provided by all hosts during the meeting (France also provided the information through email). The information would be taken into consideration when developing new products later.

## 2.6 Language Issues

2.6.1 The meeting agreed to invite more Members to become language hosts whenever the opportunity arose. Regarding the resources required, current hosts indicated that it had taken several months for the technical development and translation work while establishing their websites.

## 2.7 Common Framework and Translation

2.7.1 The meeting discussed the translation of weather descriptions and agreed that it was a lengthy and challenging task with over 10,000 different variations. The meeting agreed that it would be advantageous to standardize the descriptions to a few hundred items. The WWIS Coordinator will take the lead.

2.7.2 The meeting agreed to merge the SWIC to WWIS in a step-by-step manner starting with the observational data webpages such as heavy rain/snow and thunderstorms. The meeting noted that translation of tropical cyclone warnings and definition of gale would be tackled at a later stage. The meeting recommended the adoption of this approach to the PWS Expert Team on Services and Products Improvement (ET/SPI) and the Expert Team on PWS in Support of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (ET/DPM). The experience of EMMA (A EUMETNET project) in displaying warnings would be valuable for the further development of WWIS and SWIC projects.

2.7.3 HKO presented a proposal on the common framework for the WWIS (simultaneous hosting of different language versions in a common server) that would help to ameliorate the updating and translation issues. The “Locale Concept” would be employed to deal with the language issue with uni-code encoding for the text. The meeting agreed to keep this proposal in view as a long term development.

## 2.8 WWIS Operational Manual and User guide

2.8.1 The meeting noted that an English version of the user guide had been prepared and was available on the WMO website. The meeting recommended WMO to prepare translations of the document for different official languages. WWIS Coordinator would provide support to WMO and liaise with other language hosts.

2.8.2 The meeting regarded that an operational manual for WWIS would be preferred for maintaining operations and continuity of the website by language hosts.

## 2.9 Concluding Remarks

2.9.1 The participants declared this Coordination Meeting very useful and necessary for maintaining the efficient operation and enhancement of the WWIS website and recommended that similar meetings be arranged at regular intervals, preferably every two years.

## 3. **VISITS TO HONG KONG METEOROLOGICAL CENTRE (HKMetC) and TV Studio**

3.1 The Meeting paid a visit to Hong Kong Meteorological Centre (HKMetC) and Studio of the Hong Kong Observatory, Hong Kong, China. Participating Members were briefed on the operation of the HKMetC in providing public weather forecasts and warnings as well as the work of a television presenter of weather information. The Meeting expressed appreciation to HKO for the very informative tour.

## 4. **CLOSING**

4.1 The key conclusions arising from the meeting are:

- Updating of WWIS language versions to be done simultaneously
- Language hosts to assist with recruiting more countries to participate in WWIS
- A common set of weather forecast bulletins to be prepared for WWIS use
- Efforts to be continued with adding tourism links to webpages
- Designation of a technical contact person by language hosts of WWIS website
- Preparation of a road map for future activities (Annex III)

4.2 The participants expressed appreciation to the Hong Kong Observatory for the excellent arrangements made for hosting the meeting and the warm hospitality provided.

4.3 The meeting closed at 1700 on Thursday 11 January 2007.

**List of Annexes to the Final Report of the  
Coordination Meeting of the World Weather Information Service (WWIS)  
website hosts held at the Hong Kong Observatory on 9 – 11 January 2007**

- |           |                                |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Annex I   | List of Meeting Participants   |
| Annex II  | Meeting Programme              |
| Annex III | Road map for future activities |

PARTICIPANTS AT THE COORDINATION MEETING OF THE WORLD WEATHER  
INFORMATION SERVICE (WWIS) WEB SITE HOSTS

(Hong Kong, China, 9 - 11 January 2007)

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PROGRAMME OF THE COORDINATION MEETING OF THE WORLD WEATHER  
INFORMATION SERVICE (WWIS) WEB SITE HOSTS

(Hong Kong, China, 9 - 11 January 2007)

	Tuesday, 9 January	Wednesday, 10 January	Thursday, 11 January
AM 0930 1200	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening</li> <li>2. Review of current status of WWIS by Hong Kong, China</li> <li>3. Hosting of the WWIS English version by Hong Kong, China</li> </ol>	Discussion of key issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordination and procedures</li> <li>2. Development of new products</li> </ol>	Discussion of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language issues, common framework and translation</li> <li>2. WWIS operational manual and user guide</li> </ol>
	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
PM 1400 1700	Experience sharing: Presentation by WWIS website hosts by Oman, China, Macao, China, Spain and Hong Kong, China respectively	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion of IT issues</li> <li>2. Visits to Hong Kong Meteorological Centre (HKMetC) and TV Studio</li> </ol>	Any Other Business and adopting of meeting report

### Annex III: Road map of future activities

