



World Meteorological Organization
Working together in weather, climate and water

Regional Association VI, Forum Hydrology, Koblenz May 8 – 10, 2012

Statements of the national hydrological service of France

Organization, role and main tasks

French NHS : under the Ministry of sustainable development

- 2 General Directorates for 'Risk prevention' and 'Water & Biodiversity'
- 1 central service (SCHAPI) under Risk prevention GD,
- 28 hydrometry units (HU) and 22 flood forecasting services (FFS) under regional management, coordinated by SCHAPI (FF & H network)
- Apart from Météo-France (public establishment under the same Ministry)
- Onema and basins agencies are in charge of water quality

FF&H network (Schapi + local services) main tasks :

- **Operational** : flood vigilance and forecasting (<http://www.vigicrues.gouv.fr>), water level and discharge data production (<http://www.hydro.eaufrance.fr>)
- **Development of tools** for HU, FFS and SCHAPI : data collection / data processing / data dissemination, national database, hydrological risk detection, flood forecasting models
--> with partnerships and subcontractors
- **Prospective** : contribution to flood prevention and water management policy, research guidance and anticipation of social demand in these areas

Biggest success (or progress)

An enhanced and unified community of work :

- **after having reformed the flood warning system in 2002**
 - Schapi & the FFS created in 2002-2005, flood vigilance in July 2006, integration into the meteorological vigilance dissemination system in Dec 2007
- **after having reformed the organization of hydrometry in 2006**
 - To unify flood warning and water resource management measurement networks
 - To bring consistency in the assignment of levels of responsibility
- **in a context of a big reform of the State organization in 2008**

We have tried to unify and strengthen :

- **our 'close' network** : Schapi + FFS + HU
- **our 'wide' operational / development / research partnership network**
(in and outside the Ministry)

We are generally happy to :

- be service-minded, work for the safety of persons and property
- make different partners work together towards common goals, in our fields of interest and more generally in the fields of hydrology and sustainable development

Biggest failure (or difficulty)

We have had (and still have ?) eyes bigger than the stomach

- **Many reforms to be implemented in parallel**
- **A project probably too ambitious and not progressive enough to renew the national database (still in progress), with other major projects already launched, waiting for the new database :**
 - New workstation for forecasters
 - New data analysis / processing / publishing tools around the database
 - Operational platform to launch and monitor the forecasting models
 - Publishing forecasts on the flood vigilance website

... We feel sometimes unhappy because :

- **There is so much to do, and the social demand is so strong !**
- **The context of human resource management is frustrating**
 - gradual reduction (as elsewhere is the Public Service)
 - difficulties in promoting staff while keeping them in our field of activities
 - then difficulties in maintaining and developing skills in the FF & H network, whereas it would be required

Expectations

At the national level, to be able, with the hydrology community (our « wide » network), to :

- **Continue and improve early achievements :**
 - To complete the renewal of the national database
 - To unify methods for data control and rating curves calculation
 - To make progress in the flood vigilance and forecasting system
- **Go further in order to meet the social demand, in particular towards :**
 - Estimating uncertainties (on observed data, on model outputs, in a context of increasing pressure on water use)
 - Better anticipation of flash floods
 - Forecasting flooded areas, in addition to water levels in the rivers...

At international level :

- **Enhance exchange of observed or forecast data**
- **Exchange and compare methods and practices**
- **Work (between NHS and with WMO) to unify methods and practices, if necessary bring changes in existing standards or develop new ones**