

Report of the Chair of the OPAG on Public Weather Services
(Chair Mr K J O'Loughlin, Co Chair Mr Alaor M. Dall'Antonia Jr)

Work of the Expert Teams

ET on Media Issues – Gerald Fleming (Ire)

A meeting of the Public Weather Services (PWS) Expert Team on Media Issues (ET/MI) was held in Minneapolis, USA from 26 to 30 June 2001, in conjunction with the American Meteorological Society's 30th Conference on Broadcast Meteorology. The meeting was chaired by Mr Gerald Fleming (Ireland). Under its terms of reference the Expert Team had to develop guidelines on: (I) improving the use of official, consistent information; (II) improving media relations and (III) weather on the Internet.

The team developed guidelines on strategies for:

- Ensuring good coordination and communication within the NMS and between the NMS and the media
- Designing appropriate and user-friendly public weather services products
- Ensuring good knowledge by the media and public of the NMSs services and the availability of these services
- Making NMS staff prominently available to the media during severe weather events and at other times on a routine basis

As regards approaches to improve relations between NMSs and the media:

- It was recognized that the relationship between the NMSs and the media could be improved in order to address the concerns of both the NMSs and media organizations. The expert team developed guidance materials on best practices covering the subject.
- The guidelines also discuss how NMSs could work with the media during delicate emergency situations on a step-by-step basis with the aim of using the media to transmit vital information for saving of life and property.
- Recommendations were developed for interaction with the media for the preparation and dissemination of daily weather forecasts, climate outlooks, and participation in joint workshops etc.

- The subject of public education through the media was debated and the advantages of such interaction brought out.

In regard to the provision of weather services on the Internet, a set of guidelines was prepared by the expert team in which, the following points were elaborated:

- The NMS policy in regard to access to weather information (free public access / commercial access / specialized access) needs to be clearly thought out and articulated.
- The content to be placed on a Web site should, where possible, be expressed in the form of maps, graphs and charts, making full use of Web page technology.
- Forecasts for the national territory of a NMS should always be reviewed by an experienced forecaster before being issued.
- Hyperlinks should be employed to provide as much background information as possible.
- Web pages need to be updated frequently and consistently.
- Direct model output charts on a Web site need to be carefully presented, to ensure no inconsistencies with the official forecast.
- The NMS should ensure that the design and layout of its Web pages are of high quality, to reflect the quality of the underlying information and to enhance the image of the NMS.
- The NMS should realise that significant resources need to be devoted to the establishment and maintenance of a Web site, and thus make appropriate arrangements for the availability of these resources.

These guidelines are under preparation for printing and distribution to all NMSs.

Expert Team on Product Development and Service Assessment – Jim Lee (USA)

This Team is concerned with the application of new technology and research to the production and delivery of new/improved PWS products and with additional guidelines on service assessment.

There are linkages between the work of this Team, the future capability of the WMO Information System, and some of the issues canvassed at the CBS Technical Conference held in conjunction with the recent CBS Session.

On the aspect of service assessment, work is underway that will concentrate not so much on the theory of service assessment (this is covered by guidelines already published under the PWS Programme), but on compiling case study material from NMSs on how they conduct their service assessment activities and then go about incorporating that into their service improvements.

The Team is meeting in Honolulu from 3-7 December and a verbal update may be possible by the time of the Management Group session. Chair Jim Lee (USA) has been replaced by Bob Landis for this meeting.

Expert Team on Warnings and Forecast Exchange, Understanding and Use – C Y Lam (Hong Kong, China)

While this Team has not yet met, some excellent work is continuing on both the planned pilot Web site projects. Work is being led by the chair of the Team and colleagues at the Hong Kong Observatory, China.

While this will be covered in more detail at the Management Group session, members are invited to visit the sites prior to the session if possible as you may wish to show to colleagues. The sites are:

<http://www.worldweather.org/> and <http://typhoon.worldweather.org/>

The Team has also begun to address the issue of standardized formats for international exchange of public weather forecasts. This issue was referred to CBS at the most recent session of WMO Executive Council (June 2001).

A sub group of this Team is also examining the issue of how to go about improving public understanding of public forecasts and warnings. This work involves some collaboration with social scientists at James Cook University, Townsville.

Interaction with the World Weather Research Programme (WWRP)

The involvement of the OPAG chair on PWS in the Steering Committee of the WWRP is proving to be mutually useful to the WWRP and to CBS.

The fourth session of the WWRP Steering Committee held in Geneva 23-26 October 2001 considered the following issues of interest to CBS:

- A report on the Sydney 2000 Forecast Demonstration Project – this is regarded as a very successful project and is notable for the degree of interaction between research, operations and end users. Some of the experimental systems are still in operation and are influencing the design of future operational nowcasting systems, forecasting methodologies and improved ways of delivering timely services;
- The planned THORPex experiment – this is shaping up as a fairly major exercise that is relevant to the work of a number of existing CBS ET's and rapporteurs, including:
 - o The Expert Team on redesign of Global Obs. System
 - o The Rapporteur on OSEs/OSSEs
 - o The Expert Team on Ensemble Prediction Systems
 - o The Rapporteur on Application of NWP to Severe Wx Forecasting
 - o The Rapporteur on the Impact of GOS on NWP
 - o The OPAG on Public Weather Services
- The GAW Urban Research Meteorology and Environment (GURME) Project – this is in response to the increasing number of request from NMSs for assistance with guidance on the handling of urban environmental problems. WMO's involvement in this area raises issues related not only to research but to possible future demands on the operational systems, for example, operational air quality forecasts derived from NWP output;

- Ensemble NWP – the WWRP is aware of the increased interest in this approach and has begun discussion on the research efforts needed to assist a transition to more robust operational approach;
- Athens 2004 Forecast Demonstration Project (FDP) – Greece is interested to have an FDP in association with the 2004 Olympics. Greece has foreshadowed significant modernisation and infrastructure improvements to their observing and DP systems. The PWS programme will foster the concept of linking the enhanced domestic public weather service activities to the WMO Web site to emphasise the availability of global information via WMO.

Implementation Coordination Team on PWS

A meeting of the ICT on PWS is planned for the 2nd quarter of 2002. Apart from the review of the work of the Expert Teams, the agenda will include examination of a number of general issues that are not allocated to ETs, the work of the Regional Rapporteurs, the links with the WWRP, and some of the issues that are now emerging as potentially significant PWS matters, such as air quality forecasting/GURME, GDIN and the increasing demand for GIS data linked to meteorological data.

Current Workplan

An updated version of the summary workplan for the OPAG on PWS is at Attachment 1.

ATTACHMENT 1**OPAG ON PWS - WORK PROGRAM 2001/2002 Rev 1**

Team/Chair	Issues	Deliverables (tor)	Meeting	Comment
ET on Product Development and Service Assessment – Jim Lee (USA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Technology • New WMO Info System • Application of research • New/improved PWS products • Service assessment – case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide on the application of new technology and research • Supplementary guidance on service assessment 	Honolulu, 3-7 Dec 2001	Coordinate with ET on Future WMO Info System
ET on Media Issues – Gerald Fleming (Ire)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media access to Warnings – Web site • “Official” sources/attribution • Weather information on disasters • Demand for weather on the Internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement pilot (end 2001) • Guidance on improving use of official, consistent information • Guidelines on improving media relations • Guidelines on weather on the Internet 	Minneapolis, USA, 26-30 June 2001 (in conjunction with AMS Conf on Broadcast Meteorology)	
ET on Warnings and Forecast Exchange, Understanding and Use – C Y Lam (Hong Kong, China)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International exchange of public weather info. • Cross border exchange • Public understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot cities Web site (late 2002) • Pilot Web site for warnings • Guidelines on international exchange of PWS including cross border exchange • Guidelines on improving public understanding 	Washington, USA, April 2002 (tentative)	Coordinate on technical aspects of city forecasts and warnings sites – communications, formats, etc
ICT on PWS - Kevin O'Loughlin (Australia) and Alaor Moacyr Dall' Antonio Jnr (Brazil)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult/collaborate with other OPAG's and Commissions • Promote mutual awareness among basic systems and PWS experts • Technical info on Met. Systems suitable for PWS • Guidelines on relations between NMSs and emergency management • Monitor training at Regional level • Document improvements in PWS • Review results of public user assessment activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines on relations between NMSs and Emergency Management and Document regional practices on training and emergency management • Document improvements in national PWS activities arising from WMO PWS guidance/support. 	Location TBA, 2nd Quarter 2002 (tentative)	Include consideration of: Links to WWRP Possible Athens 2004 activity PWS aspects of Nowcasting Explore PWS aspects of digital radio issue (World Space Corporation) Air quality forecasting Standard formats for forecasts exchange