EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate D - Water, Chemicals & Biotechnology
ENV.D.1 - Water

Brussels,

DRAFT MINUTES
WS&D INDICATORS EG MEETING

1. Setting

The meeting was attended by representatives from EC, JRC, ETC-W, EEA, NL, FR, ES, FI, SK, HU, BE, UK, EE, Eureau and Eurelectric and took place in Den Haag (NL), Koningskade 4, on 28/02/2011 from 11:30-16:15.

The Meeting Agenda included the following items:

1. Presentation and discussion of the indicators (Drought and Water Scarcity)
2. Comments and agreement of the minutes of last meeting
3. Agreement on next steps

2. Presentation and discussion of the indicators

In general, regarding the different proposed indicators, it will be necessary to define much better what is the audience ("the public") and key communication message(s) related to each of the individual indicators and the set of indicators as a whole. This aspect was raised by different participants (e.g. UK, FR, NL), and in particular there should be a better description of the key message taking into account the relevance for water scarcity and/or drought (e.g. FI).

Furthermore, COM informs that all EG members are currently allowed to upload files on the corresponding EG folders. COM will create specific subfolders for each of the proposed indicators.

2.1. SPI

ES raised its concern on the geographic merging of data, and JRC agreed on the inappropriateness of presenting one SPI value at RBD level. NL suggests including a definition in the factsheet. One of the aspects that needs to be clarified is the reference time period/years to compare current data. JRC is currently using the 1975-2004 timespan, but this might be updated. It was agreed that MS provide JRC with argued proposals on the reference years, and JRC analyses these data for the next EG meeting. JRC will also analyze the sensitivity of the SPI regarding the chosen reference years.

2.2. Groundwater

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FR presented the proposed indicator, and several comments were raised during the discussion: ES specifies that this indicator is valid for water scarcity, but not/less for droughts. ETC-W raised its concerns on the difficulty to find natural, not anthropogenic influenced – data. BE, UK and NL raise the importance of communicating on decreasing groundwater levels, in particular for management purposes, similar to reservoir levels (ES). This element could possible be used in future for the risk mapping required in the Mandate (ES, JRC), considering also vulnerability aspects, based on water usage and the status of WBs.

2.3. SRI and streamflow (Q)

ES presented the SRI (with similar statistical background to SPI, but focused on hydrological droughts), and the discussion focused mainly on its comparison to the NL-proposed streamflow indicator. There seem to be some differences regarding the nature of the streamflows that are analysed (natural/little influenced flows vs. general flows), the data collection and expressiveness of conclusions on D/WS situations (monthly vs. daily), the usage of the indicator (ex-post analysis vs. currently ongoing management or drought-alert) and the use of thresholds. COM expresses its concerns of using different indicators in different areas of Europe, and requires the EG developing the best, most suitable and most easily to develop indicator set.

ETC-W raised the discussion about the viability to identify non-influenced gauging stations in EU rivers, taking into consideration not only upstream dams but also GW abstractions that could influence the baseline flows. UK and BE require more information on calculations in the factsheet. Regarding the thresholds, river/gauge station's hydrological background is the reference, and JRC will check with Hydrological institutes/experts the way this data is used in current water management and which reference period is used. ETC-W will check which data on Q are meaningful at the EU-level (e.g. daily/monthly).

It is agreed that further work is needed on this indicator, especially a check whether the two proposals can be merged. NL will also check the applicability of the SRI in NL.

2.4. Snowpack

FI explains this draft indicator factsheet, and details that glaciers are not considered as they behave very different. ETC-W will recall MS comments on addressing glaciers in the SoE reporting. In principle, glaciers are considered as being more long-term related to CC adaptation and should not be considered in the current indicator set. Eurelectric remarks the relevance of snowpack for this EG's task.

2.5. Soil moisture

No indicator factsheet has been prepared so far, and ES volunteers to develop a new draft factsheet on this issue for the next EG meeting.

2.6. Vegetation response

JRC presents the fAPAR, an indicator which EDO is already using and has been identified as the most interesting choice for this purpose.

2.7. Water scarcity: RWSI

ETC-W explains this indicator. UK and others remark the weakness of the Environmental Flows element (definition and data sets). FI remarks the relevance of EF and Outflows, and EEA had already mentioned to ETC-W to include "international treaties" in the outflows

figure. The weakness of the indicator can apply also to non-authorised water usage. ETC-W explains that this indicator is an improvement regarding the WEI, as it uses actual data regarding the water availability. Another difficulty is how to reflect water returns (EEA). FR remarks the need to reflect seasonal water scarcity, e.g. by irrigation abstractions during summer. SK explains their successful usage of a very similar indicator since 30 years ago, and will present a case-study at the next EG meeting.

2.8. Water storage

This is proposed as an indicator together with RWSI, supporting joint analysis. HU suggests to develop this indicator on the smallest scale, e.g. sub-basin, but it was recognized that the WFD reporting requirements are not established below the RBD level.

2.9. Water use per sector

Though not being an indicator, this information set is useful for the establishment of risk maps and policy conclusions when associated to other indicators. The datasets are split as required by Eurostat. The return water should be considered (Eurelectric).

3. Agreement on Minutes from last meeting

Regarding the last EG meeting, a number of comments were received from ES. It was agreed that there should be a specific mention to the risk mapping output of the Mandate, and a new version of the Minutes will be circulated and uploaded at CIRCA.

4. Next steps

The agreed next steps are the following:

- In the next 2 weeks, until March 14, technical comments on the draft indicator factsheets should be sent individually to the leader of the factsheet development.
- Until March 21, the different comments will be integrated into the factsheets and a new version will be uploaded at CIRCA by the leader of the factsheet development.
- Regarding the SPI reference years, MS should provide proposals – including a justification of the set of data proposed - to JRC, in order to prepare an overview and present at the next EG meeting a draft proposal for discussion.
- ES will develop a first draft of an indicator factsheet on soil moisture, to be presented at the next EG meeting for which COM will draft an agenda
- A note for the Water Directors will be prepared by the EG leaders in close collaboration with the COM. This note should include the current status of activities as well as an integrated outlook on the purpose and future usefulness of the indicators, e.g. in the development of risk maps.
- The next meeting of the EG will be held in Budapest (Hungary), on 31 March – 1 April, associated to a ClimWatAdapt Stakeholder meeting. At this meeting it is expected to discuss the new set of indicators, analyse the set as a whole and to discuss further steps required in the frame of the EG Mandate. The new developments and key changes in indicator factsheets will be presented, including the application of the SK water scarcity indicator.

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Final List of participants, Expert Group's Meeting The Hague 28 February 2011

Country	Name
COM, DG ENV	Henriette Faergemann
COM, Consultant	Guido Schmidt
ETC-W	Maggie Kossida
EEA	Robert Peter Collins
JRC	Juergen Vogt
Belgium (Flanders)	Didier d'Hont
Belgium (Walloon)	Philippe Meus
Czech Republic	Radek Vlnas
Estonia	Tiia Pedusaar
Finland	Osmo Purhonen
Finland	Olli-Matti Verta
France	Thierry Davy
France	Emmanuel Morice
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Slovakia	Jana Poorova
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Spain	Mario Urrea
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UK	Mike Walker
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