

Report on the 2nd GMES and Africa Workshop on: Water Resources Management

14/15 May 2013, Abuja, Nigeria

Next to the Marine & Coastal Areas and Natural Resources Management themes, Water Resources Management was selected as a priority area for further consultation, in the framework of the process to prepare the GMES and Africa Action Plan. The main objective of this workshop was to discuss in detail the content of the updated draft chapter on Water Resources Management.

The workshop was organized through the BRAGMA FP7 project and was co-financed by the European Union in the framework of the joint Africa-EU Strategy and by the host organisation NASRDA. It was attended by over 60 participants from over 30 African countries and including representatives of the AUC, AMCOW, ECOWAS, EAC, CEMAC and NEPAD. The Workshop was furthermore attended by representatives from the EU and EU financed supporting projects in Africa and the European Space Agency. The background of the African technical representatives, as proposed by the AUC, was very broad and ranged from members of various (trans-boundary) water resources implementation organizations to members from various national universities, as well as the NASRDA, which also acted as the Workshop local organizing committee.

During the two day workshop, starting with the opening addresses from AUC, EU, NASRDA and the Minister of Water Resources from Nigeria, further information was provided on existing Earth Observation and Water Resources Initiatives. This was followed by a briefing on the procedure of the consultation process by the Moderator and the Speaker. Afterwards all participants were requested, based on their preferences, to join one of the working groups.

The parallel working group consultations focused on a combination of different thematic topics and how these were reflected in the updated chapter on Water Resources Management. Working group 1 discussed: *policies, strategies and legal frameworks for water resources monitoring as well as national, trans-boundary and integrated water management*. Working group 2 looked at: *surface and ground water resources monitoring next to water use monitoring (for: drinking, hygiene, sanitation, industry, agriculture, energy, transport, tourism and ecosystems)*. Working group 3 focused on *Early Warning Systems for flood and drought monitoring, monitoring for climate variability and change adaptation strategies and (African) space technology for water resources monitoring*. All working groups also took into consideration a number of cross cutting issues, like general political, strategic and legal frameworks and African capacity building network(s) of higher education Institutions.

During these 3 parallel working group sessions the draft chapter was discussed in detail by the participants, guided by working group chairs and rapporteurs, with the main objective to see if the content of the chapter was appropriately reflecting the thematic topics as well as to indicate if there are gaps, omissions or other remarks. Working groups 1 and 2 consisted of nearly 20 participants each and working group 3 attracted nearly 10 participants. A generic reporting template was provided to assist in quick preparation of the main findings of the working groups for the plenary session and to facilitate ingestion of remarks provided into the final chapter.

During the afternoon session of the second day the working group chairs and rapporteurs presented the results of the parallel working groups to the plenary. From the remarks and further discussions it became clear that the updated chapter, discussed in detail, was well appreciated and remarks from the various working groups which have been brought forwards will further strengthen the final Water Resources Management chapter.

During the closing session of the workshop the chapter was accepted unanimously by all participants, provided the integration of (technical) comments that were brought forward during the working group consultations. It was clear that all participants showed a very committed attitude towards discussions and the general feeling is that the Workshop strongly contributed to a strengthening of the process to start the GMES and Africa Action Plan for the Water Resources Management theme.

Participants are still given some more time to reflect on the chapter, e.g. to provide additional feedback once they report back the Workshop results within their respective home organizations. The results of the consultation process will be incorporated within the final version of the chapter on Water Resources Management and will be submitted in June 2013. The chapter will then again be topic of discussion at the validation workshop scheduled for October 2013, but this time from a more political perspective. This validation workshop will also address the two other priority actions mentioned above. The outcome of these discussions should be in time to prepare for the AUC and EU Summit for final political endorsement in 2014 of the GMES and Africa Action Plan.

As already briefly indicated above, the objective of the workshop was achieved given the committed consultation process which evolved during the workshop and the resulting remarks and comments provided will definitely strengthen the final version of the chapter on water resources management.

As some participants were leaving during the day after the workshop a visit could be organized to the National Space Research and Development Agency to obtain further information on the Nigerian Space and Ground Components, which demonstrated once more that enhanced use of Earth Observation can strengthen the provision of adequate information as a basis for sound decision making.

Abuja, 16 May 2013