

# **Guidelines for project co-ordinators in area 2.4 (*European Component of global observing systems*)**

## **About “area 2.4”**

This is the first time the Environment programme has contained a section dedicated to setting up long term monitoring. Observing systems are an essential part of meeting the objectives of the key action, and in understanding and tackling global change in general. The challenge here is not so much about doing Nobel prize-winning science (although that should not be excluded...), but about putting in place the components we will need in the long term to monitor global change. This can include some science, but it also brings in the development of new methodologies, technologies and organisational aspects. A key feature for these projects is the need to look beyond the 3 or 4 year life of the contract, and to consider how the systems put in place can continue in the long term.

## **Engaging with users**

These projects must make a real impact beyond the scientific circle of the consortium members. In some cases users are already involved as project partners, but even here the consortium should seek to reach out to a wider community of stakeholders. This is why, for example, we emphasised links with international initiatives such as GCOS, GOOS, GTOS etc. Wherever appropriate, we would like to see policy makers take account of the systems developed in these projects. In some case the techniques may directly support international agreements. The key question, therefore, is how to engage with real and potential users throughout the project. This is not always easy, and it requires a certain amount of special effort. This is why we asked for the inclusion of a User Requirements Document as a distinct deliverable.

## **The User Requirements Document (URD)**

This is not supposed to be a detailed set of specifications of the sort expected in an engineering project. However, it should provide information on possible applications of your work beyond the scientific publications of consortium members. Issues to address include:

- a) Who is interested in the work you are doing? What sort of organisations? Which specific organisations?  
eg. public health authorities; environmental conventions.
- b) Why are they interested?  
eg. what part of their mandate are you addressing? what will they do with the information/models you deliver? How interested are they?
- c) Which of your deliverables will they find useful? What would be the minimum specification?  
eg. requirements for time and spatial resolution

You would have to put a little bit of effort in talking to 'typical' end users, and getting them interested in your work (if they are not already so). It is normal that user requirements evolve during the course of a project, and so an iteration between 'providers' and 'users' may be necessary during the project. The URD is therefore a dynamic document

The users should also provide you with some feedback towards the end of your project as to how well you have met their expectations. The idea is to draw lessons learned. Don't regard this assessment as a indicating success or failure of the project.

## **Project reporting**

I want to reduce bureaucracy as much as possible and I want to keep project reporting to the minimum necessary. This is why I have not requested a 6-monthly 'management report'. Instead, I would like to receive a 'Quarterly Report' (QR) every three months, plus the annual Interim Reports (IR). Project deliverables should normally be delivered (or reported) with the annual reports. The only exception is the URD, which I would like to see as soon as it has been produced.

### **Quarterly Reports**

This should neither be a burden for you to write nor for me to read. It should be no more than 2 pages. The purpose is to rapidly signal successes or problems in the project. QRs should be sent electronically, preferably as WORD attachments. The format should normally be:

#### Overview

One or two sentences summarising progress. (eg. '*The project continues to follow the work plan despite delays in staff recruitment...*')

### Highlights of the quarter

Announce any significant achievements (eg. field work finished, deliverables completed, scientific papers published, newspaper articles on the project). If there are none, don't hesitate to say so!

### Problems encountered

List significant problems, with possible solutions. Problems should be numbered, and carried over from QR to QR until they are resolved. If there are none, don't hesitate to say so!

### Significant departures from the Description of Work

For example, major delays in completion of work packages, substantial changes in the specification of deliverables.

### Upcoming Meetings

Give the dates and venues for forthcoming project meetings and/or workshops, where these are known. Indicate those in which you would like me to participate.

## **Annual Interim (and final) reports**

These reports are contract deliverables upon which a decision will be made regarding the payment of money against your cost statements.

The contract states that the interim and final reports should be in a form suitable for publication, or, failing that, a version suitable for publication should be produced alongside the full report. I will need a hard-copy version in every case.

Normally each progress report should build up incrementally to reduce the burden involved in writing the final report.

Please find below guidelines for the reports under theme 2.4. The page lengths are indicative only. I am happy to discuss proposals for alternative schemes with co-ordinators on a case-by-case basis:

### SUMMARY (5pp max)

- Highlights (listed as bullets - imagine a press release )
- Objectives
- Context of the work (why is it important, who will benefit, links with other activities)
- Outline of methodology
- Progress to date
- Preliminary Conclusions

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2pp max)

Targeted towards non specialists, media, politicians,...

### INTRODUCTION (3pp max)

- Objectives
- Context
- Brief presentation of the consortium

### WORK ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Overview
- Milestones reached
- Progress by work package
- Results

[This should include, but is not restricted to, summaries of any specific deliverables agreed in the technical annex. (eg. user requirement documents, results of data analyses). Full copies should be put in the annex if appropriate]

### PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- Progress towards project objectives
- Implications for next reporting period

### ANNEXES

- Copies of specific deliverables.
- Reports on workshops
- Published materiel (include pre-prints or offprints)
- Publicity material
- Presentation of project web page
- Definitions, acronyms, abbreviations
- Other...