

63rd Working Group Meeting of the MEA IKM Initiative

Thursday, March 11, 2021 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM CET

Audio Conference – Geneva, Montreal, Bonn, Nairobi, Singapore, Rome

Report

Meeting Participants

BRS – Julien HORTONEDA, Osmany PEREIRA
CITES- Haruko OKUSU
CMS – Aydin BAHRAMLOUIAN
ECLAC – David BARRIO
IPPC - Paola SENTINELLI
ITPGRFA - Francisco LOPEZ
IWC - Moussa Ki SOW
Minamata - Anna Garcia SANS
Ramsar- Manuel KERN
Regional Seas – Nancy SOI
UNEP MAP – Maria Luisa Rodriguez LUCAS
UNFCCC- Jingwen YANG

KM Team

UNEP – Eva DUER, Kelly KABIRU, Peter SPEELMAN, Leah KIURA, Abdul GHANI, Lillian ONYANGO

Meeting Summary

Ms. Eva Duer welcomed the participants to the Working Group (WG) meeting which focused on:

- The implementation of the outcomes of the Steering Committee Meeting;
- Plans to revise the InforMEA III project with the available additional funding;
- The E-Learning tool as an outreach vehicle to achieve this co-funding that is very important for the sustained support by the European Union;
- Representation at the digital transformation taskforce.

1. Update by the InforMEA team

MEA Calendar/ UN wide Calendar: As an outcome of the 11th InforMEA SCM, a decision to create a joint MEA calendar coincided with the decision to create an institutional UNEP wide calendar to facilitate the scheduling of online meetings. UNEP management decided that those calendars will be

interoperable. The design presented at the SCM is already under implementation, in the context of the migration of InforMEA to Drupal 9 ([link](#)¹).

Migration of InforMEA to Drupal 9: The early phase of InforMEA Phase III is being used to upgrade the platform from Drupal 7 to Drupal 9. As indicated above, and to avoid duplication of efforts, the calendar is being used to start upgrading the required data sets. The Drupal upgrade will then allow for the implementation of other features such as dashboards envisaged in the recommendations of SC11.

E-Learning and Introduction of e-learning specialists: Due to the ongoing global pandemic, many requests have been received regarding the development of online e-learning courses for specific capacity building purposes. With two new e-learning experts on board, the core priority is to update the popular courses with the more interactive **Articulate Rise 360** e-learning authoring tool. Introductory courses into about 10 MEAs mostly in the Biodiversity and the Land and Agriculture cluster will be considered for such an upgrade during the first half of 2021. This includes CBD with potentially its two protocols given all the momentum around biodiversity. Some MEA Secretariats such as Ramsar, CMS and Ozone are already updating their courses through the second license that InforMEA procured for the Articulate Rise software. The InforMEA team reiterated that it would support any MEA in the process of developing and updating courses. The e-learning specialists Ms. Leah Kiura and Mr. Abdul Ghani were introduced in this context, bringing in capacity as developer and instructional designer, who will provide support in developing and enhancing InforMEA courses and ensure international quality standards.

Server migration: Kelly Kabiru informed that with the support of the Law division and the hosting environment of the BRS Secretariat, a new server with a much better capacity has now been installed. The migration of most websites hosted by InforMEA is complete. With the enhanced capacity it will now be possible to meet the recommendations by the SC Meetings. ECOLEX has also been migrated to the new server, alongside the LEAP platform and the Judicial Portal. Two additional servers are still awaiting installation ensuring sustainability for the InforMEA environment for the years to come.

Semantic indexing/PoolParty: The PoolParty production server is also in the process of installation. The PoolParty sub working group will be reinitiated to guide the experts including Semantic Web Company (the creators of the PoolParty system) in the finalization and clean-up and mapping of the Thesauri and InforMEA glossary. MEAs were invited to join the PoolParty sub working group.

¹ <https://new.informea.org/events>

Digital Transformation Taskforce: Following to the recommendation of SCM11 to ensure good representation by the MEAs in the InforMEA initiative at the digital transformation task force of UNEP, it was proposed that MEAs should have a representative from the InforMEA Initiative in the task force. Osmany Pereira of BRS expressed his interest in representing MEAs, his time resources permitting, which was warmly welcomed by the participants. Also, Anna Garcia Sans from the Minamata Secretariat had already been invited to serve on the taskforce.

Akoma Ntoso: The possibility of jointly investing in an Indigo license that would allow access to the Indigo platform for Akoma Ntoso translations was now on the table with Laws Africa having been vetted in the UNEP partnership portal. This will be focused on in the next working group meeting.

2. Feedback from the MEAs on the updates

BRS (Julien Hortonedea) thanked the MEAs for their patience in the recruitment of the PoolParty expert who is now on board remotely working from Cuba, setting up PoolParty version 8 on the server and advancing on its configuration.

ECLAC (David Barrio) enquired about the timelines regarding the E-Learning enhancements and about translations, especially of the SDG 16 course into Spanish with the ESCAZU Agreement entering into force on 24th of April 2021. ECLAC also would like to be involved in the online diplomacy course and requested for guidance on how they can contribute.

On data mining, ECLAC commented that as much as the SDGs are important, they would rather focus on the Biodiversity and Climate Change SDGs for now.

On the Judicial Portal, ECLAC mentioned an upcoming meeting of Focal points on the Montevideo programme scheduled for June 2021 and queried on whether the Judicial Portal will be launched by then.

Action points:

- It was agreed that translation of the SDG 16 course would be fast tracked for the ESCAZU entry into force and associated outreach opportunities.
- On the issue of the online diplomacy course, a course outline will be developed and then shared out with the MEAs for review and inputs.

BRS (Julien Hortonedea): Reacting to the point in relation to the SDGs, National reports and data mining, Julien echoed the importance of SDG 16 which is basically related to open society, open data,

and transparency; and quite a few of our MEAs, especially the ones with information exchange, have such or could apply for such a goal.

Regarding the digital transformation Task Force, he noted that the meetings generated lots of information and literature which at times can be overwhelming, especially since MEAs are structured around specific mandates. He suggested that having regular updates on the MS Teams channel would be very helpful, including an overall update during the regular InforMEA working group meetings.

Action point:

- Representatives and InforMEA team to share invitation on MS Teams channel

CITES: (Haruko Okusu): Thanked the InforMEA team for following up on the numerous work streams and for channeling the relevant information to the InforMEA working group.

CITES expressed a keen interest to joining the PoolParty sub-working as reinitiated. The major challenge that the CITES Secretariat would face in 2021 is to back tag all the relevant documents against the finalized CITES Thesaurus and this would best work in the context of the PoolParty license of InforMEA.

CITES welcomed the new e-learning experts as it looked at revising all its online courses to which end a consultancy recruitment process is ongoing. The entire content of the Virtual College will have to be moved with documents going to be tagged in a more structured manner against a mapped type of ontology with the rest of the web materials that is on the CITES website. The new courses will be in the Moodle format and in line with what is contained in InforMEA. The location of the hosting of the courses is yet to be determined.

BRS (Osmany Pereira): BRS will attend the digital transformation taskforce meetings recognizing the need to provide the MEA perspective in the ongoing discussions. Osmany's expectation was that he would not be involved in decision making that could be relevant for all MEAs, and that he would only serve as a liaison person. He invited any extra hand to come in and join the taskforce too.

Minamata (Anna Garcia Sans): offered to support BRS in the taskforce and confirmed that the associated time investment was at times overwhelming.

She also informed that the new Minamata website is under development with its online reporting system on track. Minamata has started mainstreaming the gender perspective and launched a review on 8 March 2021 for International Women's day. A consultant was on board to provide a mini lecture,

an assessment, and a roadmap on gender. There was a lot of material that can be transformed into an interesting eLearning course.

The Minamata Executive Secretary's initiative to lead an informal working meeting on how to organize virtual COPs will be held on Thursday 18 March 2021 from 2.00pm-3.30pm Geneva time. An invitation has been extended to anyone that wants to participate.

Action points:

- Gender material to be considered for the pending Gender and Environment course on InforMEA.
- The information working meeting will inform the negotiators' course.

Ramsar (Manuel Kern): Ramsar is at the end of its reporting cycle and on the online reporting system and had gathered relevant information for its assigned SDG indicator which will be interesting in the context of the anticipated data mining work.

Ramsar has recently deployed MS Teams at their Secretariat and requested to receive an invitation for the webinars.

Ramsar (Ed Jennings) will work on the pilot with a set of chosen documents from the Secretariat to test Akoma Ntoso. He received the login details and will share his experience with the working group soon.

Ramsar is in contact with the Data Reporting Tool (DaRT) consultant on a pilot integration with the UNEP-WCMC ORS to get information out of DaRT into the online reporting system. They are checking internally whether a relatively simple integration is possible.

On E-Learning, Ramsar has a temporary position to re-design the online Ramsar course. The course structure is ready, and the process now is to draft a funding proposal to find someone to create the actual course on the InforMEA platform.

International Whaling Commission (Moussa Sow): informed that the IWC is getting ready to install the InforMEA server with Drupal 8, and sought to be guided on whether it is better to install Drupal 9 instead of Drupal 8.

UNFCCC (Jingwen Yang): informed that the Secretariat was looking forward to supporting the InforMEA Initiative on web archiving and to obtain the endorsement on the next steps including associated budget needs.

ITPGRFA (Francisco Lopez): welcomed the renewed emphasis on e-learning and looked forward to updating their courses in the coming months. The calendar is one of the tools that will facilitate their meeting coordination. On data mining, ITPGRFA supports a course on SDG 15 which is aligned to the focus of the year and the current discussion on CBD. On reconnecting to the API, they are awaiting feedback from the IT experts on the data point.

IPPC (Paola Sentinelli): referred to the ongoing preparations of their commissions meeting.

Regional Seas (Nancy Soi): In terms of data mining Ms. Soi confirmed that for the regional seas programme SDG 14 would be very interesting considering the amount of information that has been generated by the conventions.

They are working very hard behind the scenes to try and link up to the API of the InforMEA platform and have hired a consultant to support this process.

A prototype knowledge platform for the regional seas programme is under development which will include relevant data, information and the resources that have been generated by the regional seas over a period of time on SDG 14, and the secretariat will be pleased to share case studies relevant of the SDG 14 online course.

3. Updates on InforMEA Phase III Logical Framework and milestones

The Final Narrative Report on InforMEA Phase II as well as the progress report for InforMEA Phase III for 2020 had been shares out to the WG prior to this meeting. Ms. Duer shared the InforMEA Phase III logical framework and its main elements, highlighting on the main changes that have been incorporated in relation to some available co-funding, whose sources are the Austrian Government and from the NORAD funding in the context of LEAP.

Additional courses on the SDGs, including Marine Litter in the context of LEAP, are in the pipeline. The Basel course is also being revamped, especially introductory courses and to discuss the topics in detail. Finally, another important commitment from the Steering Committee Meeting was the online negotiation course which will require the input of the MEAs.

WG members are invited to suggest names and contacts at national government level who can be contacted regarding the usefulness and impact of the InforMEA project.

Work on outreach is ongoing, and some outreach material will be shared at the next working group meeting. User numbers are peaking steadily and show a solid growth.

One of the recommendations from the previous meetings was to identify two or three SDGs and then mine MEA reports against any information that is relevant to this SDG. One of the deliverables from December 2020 was to have those goals identified. These goals have now been identified that are relevant to the MEAs of this group, ranging from **14, 15 and 16**, inclusive of others. The MEAs have been called upon to identify the targets and indicators close to their mandates, so that when a data mining expert is onboarded, then a change of looking specifically into that relevant matter will be available.