

65th Working Group Meeting of the MEA IKM Initiative

Tuesday, June 22, 2021, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM CET

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

Draft Report

Meeting Participants

BRS – Osmany PEREIRA, Julien HORTONEDA
CBD- Frederick VOGEL
CITES- Haruko OKUSU
ECLAC – David BARRIO
IPPC – Paola SENTINELLI
IWC – Moussa Ki SOW
Minamata Convention – Anna GARCIA SANS
Ozone Secretariat- Gerald MUTISYA
UNCCD- Jeroen Van DALEN
UNEP Law Division-Joyce JELAGAT
UNFCCC Secretariat- Jingwen YANG

KM Team

UNEP – Eva DUER, Kelly KABIRU, Iddah KAMAU, Lillian ONYANGO, Leah KIURA, Abdul GHANI,

A. Dates and Processes agreed

There is the need to start assigning the Working Groups for the upcoming online SCM scheduled for November 2021 since it is not possible to have in-person Steering Committee Meeting in 2021. The WG is to identify what the different workstreams will be doing between now and then, to identify the leads of the workstreams.

B. Updates and main developments by workstream lead MEAs/InforMEA Team

I. Archiving

The Working Group was given a brief update of the Archiving webinar by UNHCR that had taken place during the month and informed that the sub-working group on Archiving is ready to do such webinars when needed. The webinar informed about the kind of work, effort and resources required to run the whole Archiving initiative. The UN entities are expected to carry out some form of archiving. With web archiving specifically, some considerations that we need to make that were presented by this group to the rest of the team. Some MEAs expressed their interest to engage further in this aspect. The next immediate step is to set up the first meeting of the sub-working group on archiving. From the last SCM, we had two major recommendations on archiving i.e. (i) we began by showing this webinar, and there can be one or two more and (ii) a pilot i.e. how to consider one, how to plan for one, who would be interested in joining it, and also to be able to discuss further the whole issue of web archiving considerations about implementation, cost and sustainability, any of the technical requirements that can then inform this bigger group of what the way forward will be that we will consider going forward.

Further to the archiving webinar, MEAs were requested to channel any of their questions to Jingwen (UNFCCC) through the InforMEA team - Kelly Kabiru, and those will then be used to set up the agenda for the meeting on the sub-working group, with meeting notes to be made available especially for those who will be unable to attend the meetings.

Jingwen (UNFCCC) added that the webinar was very good, reiterating on the importance of setting up a working group meeting on archiving before the SCM. The WG will be needed to work out some recommendations for the SCM if we do not have a concrete plan or implementation of the pilot. UNFCCC confirmed that they will be the lead for the archiving Working Group.

Follow-up items:

- *To find out which MEAs would be interested in the pilot for the archiving initiative.*
- *The InforMEA team to support the coordination of the Archiving sub-working group on sending out meeting invitations, scheduling the meetings, sharing the information, and supporting the pilot project.*
- *A MS Teams Channel for the Archiving sub-working group to be created for collaboration.*

II. Semantic Indexing

An update on way forward with the InforMEA tagger and PoolParty features/projects was given with a brief introduction of the PoolParty history. Semantic Indexing was introduced to InforMEA to find a way to be able to always make information searchable that would be meaningful and would provide results that would be sensible to people that are searching for information within our infrastructure, and also to find a way to ensure that in whatever model that we are doing our information exchange that this kind of capability would be able to serve the intended purpose.

The Thesaurus Management Systems, PoolParty System, was introduced in 2017 by Semantic Web Company for that purpose and was acquired by InforMEA in 2019. Two licenses were obtained, one for development and one for production. A stable infrastructure is now in place courtesy of additional funding. InforMEA is now in the process of going full fledged and responding to the recommendations of the InforMEA Steering Committee Meeting of having a stable infrastructure and to proceed to the production. The team has since then been able to engage the developers including Semantic Web Company who are the system Developers, with a lot of ongoing work with great support coming in from BRS, and in the process developed a whole lot of issues that need to be resolved.

The PoolParty sub-working group has learnt a lot in terms of things that need to be done in terms of governance, generally in terms of looking at specific aspects of the entire process, making coherence some processes with quality, and are working closely with Semantic Web Company, who still have an existing contract.

To improve the quality of tagging of all sorts of content contained in the context of the InforMEA group, a lot of work needs to be done both at the InforMEA level and at the MEA level. From the MEA perspective, it will be easy to tag content against a proper Thesaurus. The PoolParty tool will be helpful to manage Thesaurus like LEO and individual MEA Thesauri, with all sorts of tools in relation to the quality of the concept and the available labels, definitions, etc. The tool also enables access to some features bound to artificial intelligence to give suggestions on how a particular document or webpage should be tagged.

A lot of progress has been made in the recent weeks. There are now have two stable servers, one for the development and one for production, both updated with the latest version. The PoolParty sub-working group has learnt how to move thesaurus from the development server to the production

server. URI and their resolutions are some of the things currently being worked on by a PoolParty Specialist, Mr. Santiago Riera, and Semantic Web Company. A tagger is also available in both servers to retrieve suggestions.

Knowledge on the use of Corpus Management has been gained by the PoolParty sub-working group. The Corpus is used to give one a sense of whether the taxonomy is using the right concept. There is also a lot of work ahead because the next step will be to have a pilot to see the results when a 'search' is run against a term.

Action points:

- *Interested MEAs were invited to be part of the initial pilot. Requirement is for them to invest some time to review, verify, and substantively check that their Taxonomy tests well with the corpus, and that they have the right corpus. Volunteers were invited for this initiative.*
- *CITES requested for the inclusion of Helene and Haruko on the Trello board, and volunteered to move their Thesaurus for auto tagging as part of their pilot.*

III. Outreach

A new InforMEA calendar has now been developed and implemented based on feedback that was received from the survey responses to the InforMEA portal. Among the requests was the availing of filters on an overview page, which can now be seen by among others topic, region, type-virtual attendance, what is coming up this year, and what is available this month. The previously available list view now has some additional filters such as region, topics, and the type of event, ability to filter by virtue of the attendance. The ability to select a date range is now possible. The ordering of how the events are listed can now be changed. The calendar view also has the same filters with the ability to view the information by date, week, and by month. A user is now able to 'mouse-over' and should be able to see a snippet of what the event is, the dates, with some showing the agenda and related documents.

Work on the calendar is ongoing with some few pending items. Among these is the suggestion to make the events shareable. For this to happen, the inner pages will need to be redefined and redesigned to provide more information. On this request for the events to be made shareable, there are two options currently being considered. These are the 'eye-curl' standard and having a widget which will then fall under the inner page of the calendar to make it shareable. Data clean-up is also a pending item especially since some of the required fields have no data as they were never mandatory fields, and the available filters will not give the required information for now.

On the UNEP side, a meeting took place some days ago with MEAs requested via email to share all their events via an Excel sheet that was provided, with UNEP being able to share their calendar as an API. The benefit of this is that we will be able to have events from MEAs whose calendars are managed by the Communications division such as the Regional Seas, Bamako, etc. We will also be able to share with them events that are MEA specific.

Action points:

- *Proposal by BRS (Osmany) to schedule a review of the schema for the next Steering Committee Meeting and then have a proposal for amending and making those fields that are now very important for the joint calendar with UNEP to be compulsory. (For Technical elements WG).*

IV. E-Learning

Users on InforMEA are continuing to increase. We had a peak month of April 2021 with 75,000 users, and is now consistently over 70,000 users, with a big increase on the e-learning tool. An outreach strategy has been implemented that was already in the recommendations and we are now moving towards implementing those, with the hope of having a consultant on board to support us. Some feedback is expected through an evaluation that will be done towards the end of 2021 which is the midterm evaluation into the current project phase. Volunteers for the e-learning group to lead or co-lead were also called upon.

On E-Learning, an E-Learning developer and an Instructional Designer are on board working on the updates of the InforMEA courses. The E-Learning developer was instrumental in the creation of a one course version for all languages i.e., one course with different language versions. There has also been some great progress in the creation of non-UN language course versions as well. The Instructional Designer has also been able to revamp most of the InforMEA introductory courses and the InforMEA team has started selecting them according to their popularity, existence, and duration, among other criteria options. MEA secretariats that are ready to work on some of their course updates were invited to do so.

With the newly revamped e-learning tool with the possibility of selecting MEA related courses or SDG related courses, or cross-cutting issue courses, there are more and more processes to try to bring groupings of courses e.g. with the request from UNEP for the creation of a course for Negotiators. UNEP greatly desires to create a whole portfolio of courses that can then be used in the context of capacity building efforts ahead of COPs and others major meetings.

V. SDGs

The InforMEA team has been tasked with mapping at indicator level to some of the work that MEAs do in general to the SDG indicators. Available already is some mapping at indicator level and currently looking into the work previously done e.g. Like looking at the relationships e.g. between Ozone, depleting substances and data, and the impact of the Basel convention, etc. Deeper mining of what can be found in the MEA reports that could consider being matched against some of the indicators of the SDGs is also being considered. The InforMEA team has entered a collaboration on data mining with Zoi Environment Network (Zoi), an organization that is experienced with this kind of work with some entities already within the basic MEA and UNEP structure. Zoi will be given a sub-set of documents to analyze those documents against 5 SDGs. Some parameters for them to be making this in-depth analysis will also be looked at. What is required is to pick some SDG indicators and a few topics, to focus on this set of indicators and try to analyze them against MEA reporting and to pick a few countries as examples. Zoi will then make a presentation to show how those are linked and how they are presented in those reports. This will not only aid InforMEA in the SDG mapping exercise that are part of our recommendations, but also in the Semantic indexing to bring in the SDG interface ontology. This will then be presented at the upcoming Steering Committee Meeting. The primary findings by Zoi will be presented at one of the very last working Group meetings of 2021.

VI. Context

Feedback from the Digital Transformation Taskforce was given by BRS (as a liaison between InforMEA WG members and the taskforce), with a request for a dedicated working group meeting to give a proper briefing the entire team on outcomes from the meetings, and to get members views regarding the different topics that they are interested in. There is a need to collect information from the InforMEA Working Group on things that we may need to check in the taskforce and then bring back information to have a dynamic exchange of information in one direction. Requested for questions from MEAs on the specific issues that they want to be raised on their behalf at the taskforce.

C. Round of feedback by MEAs

- CITES has finished with their Thesaurus and had started embarking on testing the auto tagging, with plans to pick up the work in September 2021. At the CITES Secretariat, they have started embarking into a complete overhaul of the former CITES virtual college, with a plan to scrap most of the current online course material currently available there to be replaced with a new set. They are currently in the process of hiring people to create a blueprint/outline for a series of courses for CITES. Hosting options for the CITES courses are either to see if the host of their current website might be able to create an instance for hosting the Moodle courses that they are developing; or whether InforMEA might be interested in and is capable of hosting some CITES dedicated sets of courses which could be a place for parties to go when they need to look for a set of courses. On another matter, CITES has a specific call for assistance to the interview process on 1st and 2nd July 2021 for a consultant to come up with the CITES courses blueprint. Requested for volunteers from the team to be on the interview panel as external members.
- CBD remains committed especially to the topics around Akoma Ntoso, Web Archiving, and Data Connectors (OData, Drupal connectors).
- UNCCD will soon need to decide on whether to do a complete re-writing of their Course or to take it completely offline because it is getting outdated. UNCCD has some specific courses tailored for negotiators.
- Minamata Convention volunteered to chair the Outreach and Dashboards group ahead of the SCM.
- UN ECLAC 'entered into force' on 22 April 2021 and will have their first Conference of the Parties (COP) in April 2022. They are planning for a virtual pre-COP end of 2021. Volunteered to co-Chair any workstream and pledged his support towards peer review, editing, etc. Regarding the e-learning courses, ECLAC is available to support with peer reviewing of the new courses. Enquired on the possibility of teaming up to have having virtual side events and virtual booths at the upcoming CBD and UNFCCC COPs for Outreach purposes.
- Ozone Secretariat are working on updating their online e-learning course. Meetings at the Secretariat and now online due to the current pandemic situation.
- International Whaling Commission has installed Drupal 9 and Tomcat and are seeking for a host from among the MEAs. Regarding course development, they will share material soon.
- UNFCCC has finished a 3-week virtual Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) session with over 45,000 participants. UNFCCC is collaborating with the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) to develop a new virtual meeting and physical meeting booking system for the UNFCCC COP scheduled for early November 2021. UNHQ has hired two consultants to carry out

an UN-wide assessment of records and archives management. Focal points for supporting this kind of work are being sought after. UNFCCC supported the suggestion of having a side event at their COP and will assist if need be. Regarding E-Learning, UNFCCC is still contacting their legal department regarding sharing their draft course on compliance mechanism.

- BRS (Osmany Pereira) expressed their interest in the work of UNFCCC on the platform for online meetings. They are currently developing things ad-hoc based on available resources.

Action points:

- *Request for a specific Working Group meeting for a briefing on the Digital Transformation task force discussions.*
- *To pick up International Whaling Commission to see what the situation is like to propose the way forward for sharing their data on InforMEA.*