annual report 2005

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Foreword

2005 was a landmark year for the aviation meteorological community in Europe. In January a ceremony in de Bilt, the Netherlands, marked the inauguration of a new, dynamic and forward-looking organisation dedicated to better and more efficient service to aviation. This organisation is the MET Alliance.

As you see from its Mission Statement, the MET Alliance is committed to ensuring better and more cost-effective service to its customers and in supporting its constituent organisations in fulfilling these objectives. The realisation of this commitment has already begun, evidenced by the Projects undertaken in 2005. These are listed elsewhere and include the development of AUTO-TAF, cooperation and standardisation in training for operational personnel and forecasting support for low visibility operations at airports.

The constituents Members of the MET Alliance have different organisational structures, some national meteorological services and others part of air traffic services. This variety will ensure that the MET Alliance has a broad perspective on service provision and the opportunities and threats emanating from a rapidly changing external environment.

The MET Alliance is built on an ethos of cooperation and sharing, developing synergies that will yield significant economies of scale, which will benefit our users and the travelling public.

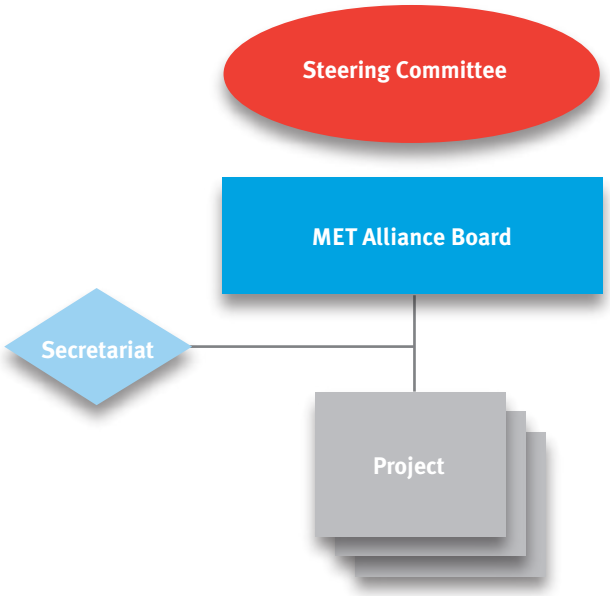
The child has had a successful birth. It is our job now to ensure that it grows into a happy, healthy and productive adult. The task is proceeding.

Declan Murphy
Chairman Steering Committee

The inauguration

Left to right: D. Murphy, Director Met Éireann; D. K. Keuerleber-Burk, Director MeteoSwiss; F. Brouwer, Director KNMI; C. Baubin, Chief Executive Officer Austro Control; J. C. Tintin, Chief Executive Officer Belgocontrol

The MET Alliance was formally inaugurated at a ceremony at the KNMI headquarters in de Bilt, the Netherlands, in January 2005. The picture above shows the Directors/Chief Executive Officers of the constituent organisations at the signing ceremony.
Mr Declan Murphy, Met Éireann, was elected Chairman of the Steering Committee and Mr André van Lammeren of KNMI was elected Chairman of the Board.



Support and Communication

Establishment of the Secretariat

An essential element in the success of the MET Alliance was the establishment of a Secretariat to provide support for Members and to ensure efficiency in the work of the MET Alliance. Belgocontrol took the lead in this Project and also provided necessary logistical support.

The Secretariat is now firmly established and is located in Belgocontrol Headquarters at Brussels National Airport. The Secretariat has strengthened and streamlined the production and distribution of documentation and has acted as a focal point and clearing house for external and internal communications. All communication with the MET Alliance is now dealt with efficiently by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat contact details are:

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phone: +32 2 206 2898
fax: +32 2 206 2899
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Website

Another essential part of the support infrastructure for the MET Alliance is the Website. This has been successfully and efficiently established and is now available to the public, with a restricted area for Members. In addition to being a valuable source of information, both for the public and for MET Alliance Members, the architecture used supports efficient interaction between members, minimising the need for expensive and time-consuming face-to-face meetings.

The website address is:

www.met-alliance.com

In conjunction with the website, the MET Alliance has also secured its brand and corporate identity.

Highlight Projects in 2005

The MET Alliance has had a busy and productive inaugural year. It has had to "find its feet" and show quickly and clearly that it can make a substantive and substantial impact on MET service provision. Following are some of the landmark projects undertaken by the MET Alliance in 2005:

Congestion at Airports and in the Terminal Area

Congestion at airports and in the terminal area is an issue if critical and increasing importance. There is an obligation on all players to work towards increasing capacity without compromising safety. With respect to weather forecasts, the MET Alliance has carried out a detailed examination of this issue and concluded that, because of the differing requirements of customers and different climatological regimes, it is not currently possible to prescribe a common procedure for weather forecasts in support of airport capacity.

However, as the MET Alliance countries contain a wide variety of different users and different climate types, then it is uniquely positioned to provide examples of how this issue can be tackled. Each Member has its own methods and products for providing airport capacity forecasts. These methods will be posted on the website and can be made available to users for assessment. In addition, each Member can use this information as a support in formulating improvements in forecasting for airport capacity for its own airports, in consultation with its own customers.

The MET Alliance also organised a Workshop on the issue of visibility forecasts. The Workshop comprised Experts from each Member orgnisation and took place in Zurich in June. The Workshop concluded that effective automated visibility forecasts, especially in support of LVP operations, were still some time away. However, the Group of Experts will remain in operation and report to Board on developments in visibility forecasting.

These important issues will be kept under continuous attention by the MET Alliance, the ultimate aim being the most efficient production of the most effective forecasts for customers at any given time.

Common Performance Indicators (cKPI)

European MET providers will have to obtain certification for service provision from independent National Supervisory Authorities in 2006 or 2007 under the Single European Sky. This certification requires the provider to have in place – or put in place by a specified date – an acceptable quality management system. The ISO 9001:2000 standard is explicitly acceptable in this regard. An essential element of any QMS is the setting of key performance indicators for systems, products and services. However, a problem identified by the MET Alliance was that the current regulatory documents governing MET provision do not clearly specify KPIs in all cases and in some cases no KPIs are specified at all. In these circumstances, the organisation requesting certification has to specify KPIs for its own organisation based primarily on its own experiences.

The MET Alliance, as a group of European MET providers with a total of 320 year's experience in supporting aviation, is uniquely positioned to set standards which can easily translate into best practice KPIs. This Project has already identified some common Key Performance Indicators and Members will implement these. It is intended to continue to expand the areas to which cKPIs can be applied, based on the experiences of the individual Members and in consultation with customers.

This is an area in which the unique composition of the MET Alliance enables it to set international standards of performance and best practice.

SIGMET Coordination

The MET Alliance recognised the concerns expressed by users regarding a lack of coordination of SIGMETs between neighbouring Flight Information Regions. To deal with this issue, the MET Alliance arranged for such coordination between the FIRs of the Netherlands and Belgium, on the one hand, and Austria and Switzerland on the other. The current arrangements require telephone notification by one Member to another in the event of a SIGMET issue and follow-up discussion if required. The system is working well.

It will be kept under continuous review and consultation with users and any improvements identified will be implemented. It is noted that ICAO has now requested action by States on this matter.

Sharing Operational Websites

Very early in its work, the MET Alliance recognised the potential for synergies and more cost-effective delivery of service through the development of a unified Internet distribution system for operational data. This Project however would be large and complex and would take time to assess and implement. In the meantime, and as a pilot for the main project, the Board arranged for the linking of the operational websites of the member organisations. This development will provide customers of any Member access to the operational data from all the member's websites.

This Project will provide significant advantages, especially for users from neighbouring countries, and will also act as a feasibility study for the much larger, fully integrated delivery website.

Training Cooperation

The MET Alliance considered that cooperation in the development, certification and delivery of training was an area, which would yield significant benefits to Members and users. To this end, the Members committed to moving towards common syllabi for operational staff, common assessment standards and a detailed examination of the feasibility of developing a MET Alliance licence for operational personnel involved in the provision of MET services to aviation.
Common standards relating to ongoing assessment of staff will also be delivered from this work and will provide Members with an internationally validated accreditation system for use in their ISO 9001:2000 processes.

AUTO Observations and AUTO Forecasts

Each Member has already developed or implemented plans working towards the automation of the aviation observations. The MET Alliance will act as a clearing house for national developments in this area and where such opportunities arise, will act as a coordinating body encouraging common standards, support and developments by Members.

AUTO forecasts are not as well developed as AUTO observations. The MET Alliance agreed in principle to base its work in this area on the AUTO-TAF Project of KNMI. This will become a formal MET Alliance Project and will set standards for the development and implementation of automated forecasts. Such a cooperative development will act as a flagship Project on how the MET Alliance can deliver cost-effective, standardised and professional service to users.

New Members

The Steering Committee has a sole responsibility on the expansion of the MET Alliance to include new members. To facilitate its work, the Board will be asked to draft accession protocols for sign-off by the Steering Committee.

The rules of the MET Alliance permit the acceptance of applications for membership. These rules will form the basis for the protocols to be developed. However, any decision on expansion will have regard to the working effectiveness of the MET Alliance and the ethos under which the organisation was set up. New membership with the DWD is considered and the MET Alliance expects to finalise the discussions in the spring of 2006.

The Future

The MET Alliance has now established itself as a main player in the provision of service to aviation in Europe. It will continue to build on this firm foundation, fulfilling its mandate to examine and implement synergies, which will provide real savings to customers and deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness in service provision.

For the immediate future the path is already clearly mapped. The MET Alliance will continue to drive forward on a variety of fronts, including:

- Continued development of the MET Alliance website
- AUTO-TAF development
- Synergies in training
- A common platform for Internet delivery of service
- Setting benchmarks and standards supporting quality management systems

In addition, the Steering Committee will continue to examine the protocols governing applications from new members and keep the SES environment under review with regard to its potential threats and opportunities for the MET Alliance.

MET Alliance Activities 2005 – Meetings/Workshops

Date(s)	*Type*	*Function*	*Location*
Jan 2005	Steering Committee	Inaugural Meeting	De Bilt
Jan 2005	Board	Inaugural Meeting	De Bilt
Mar 2005	Board	Meeting	Dublin
May 2005	Steering Committee	Meeting	Dublin
Jun 2005	Workshop	Visibility Forecasting	Zurich
Jun 2005	Board	Meeting	Vienna
Oct 2005	Board	Meeting	Zurich
Nov 2005	Steering Committee	Meeting	Zurich

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Profiles of Member Organisations

Austro Control

The Austrian MET Service Provision for Civil Air Navigation is one of the core processes of the national Air Navigation Service Provider Austro Control. The MET Service Units are located at six international airports (Vienna, Linz, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz and Klagenfurt) where the Vienna office is Meteorological Watch Office. Furthermore Austro Control is partly responsible for the service provision for the Austrian Air Force. The Vienna office is also one of the three European OPMET Databanks providing the world with OPMET information.

MeteoSwiss

MeteoSwiss is the national weather service in Switzerland. As such, it fulfils its meteorological tasks for the use of the public, businesses, and public institutions. The MET service units are located at the international airports Zurich and Geneva. MeteoSwiss issues forecasts for these international airports and all the regional airports. Furthermore it provides en-route documentations, briefings and is also responsible for warnings at the aerodromes as well as for the FIR Switzerland.

Met Éireann

Servicing aviation needs under ICAO regulations for Ireland is one of the most important tasks of Met Éireann. It comprises the Central Aviation Office at Shannon Airport together with the meteorological offices at Dublin, Cork, Knock and Casement airports.
It issues forecasts (TAFs and Local Area Forecasts) for the various airports and smaller airfields in the country as well as local warnings, SIGMETs for the Shannon Flight Information Region (FIR), en-route documentation and briefings. Meteorological Services for the Defence Forces and meteorological training are provided at Casement Aerodrome

Photos (from left to right):
Schiphol Airport, Zurich Airport, Vienna Tower, Shannon Aerials, Brussels Airport

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Belgocontrol

Belgocontrol is an autonomous public company in charge of the safety of air navigation in the civil airspace for which the Belgian State is responsible. It controls aircraft movements in and around Brussels National Airport and the four regional public airports: Antwerp, Charleroi, Liège and Ostend. The company has its own in-house meteorological service. The Belgocontrol's Met Office produces weather forecasts and warnings, while ensuring the meteorological watch for the Flight Information Region of Belgium and Luxembourg. Furthermore, the Brussels office is also one of the three European aeronautical meteorological databases serving aeronautical users.

KNMI

KNMI is responsible for the service provision in Dutch Airspace and at all the international and regional airports of the Netherlands. The central forecasting unit of KNMI, located in De Bilt, is the central production facility for all the forecasts and warning. Supported by small units at the regional airports and the weather dependant deployment of forecasters at the Schiphol Airport site. Furthermore, the central office is performing the task of Meteorological Watch Office for the Dutch FIR and for the Dutch Continental Shelf (North Sea).



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