

Summary Record of the meeting of the Database Steering Committee,

Ottawa, 8 May 1998

The Database Steering Committee met under the Chairmanship of Dr Paul Williamson (Australia). Members of the steering committee who attended were Mr. Uematsu (Japan) and Mr. Young-in Kim (Korea). Dr. Mauricio Tellias (Chile) could not attend. Mr. Tomas Astorga, overseer of the Database project and Chairman of GEMEED also attended. Representatives of Australia, Canada, Chile, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and the United States also attended the meeting.

The Chairman explained that this first project of GEMEED aimed to tie national databases together through the Internet. At ECOW'97 in Japan Stage 1 of the project — production of the home page, was presented. The Steering Committee agreed that the contractor had satisfied Stage 1. Since then the Steering Committee had had to take some decisions out of session. As some member economies had had difficulty in providing URLs (Universal Resource Locators), a more flexible approach had been adopted to allow some economies to simply have the contractor access databases on the Internet and then define the URLs. Other member economies could input by providing data for marking up, until the economy concerned had had access to the Internet.

Additional topics approved for inclusion in the Database were:

- best practice environmental management
- best practice in community relations
- infrastructure.

Additional subjects that might be included, in light of discussion in the Environmental Cooperation Steering Committee, were:

- scientific information (such as on impacts of metals in the environment); and also
- material coming from environmental initiatives.

The Steering Committee had agreed to Canada's request that data could be input with a breakdown by province or State, where the economy wished this.

It had circulated for approval an application for funding for Phase 3.

It must now look to the Secretariat's documentation seeking a contractor to carry out Phase 2.

The existing (Phase 1, Stage 2) contract called for available URLs to be linked to the home page and fully functioning on the Internet for this meeting, and to further populate the database for handing over to the Steering Committee by September 1998. The contractor for Phase 2 would then take over.

Current work by the existing contractor (Australian Marine Science and Technology Limited – AMSAT) was progressing well. A representative of the contractor, Mr Brian Elliott, gave a presentation on the completion of Stage 2, Phase 1 of what is now called *Network of Minerals and Energy Databases*.

ANMED links member economies' databases and meta-databases (lists of databases), but the content of these remains the responsibilities of individual member economies.

In this Phase 1 contract, the project included three phases: (1) development of a template, (2) establishment of ANMED on the World Wide Web, and (3) population of the database with URLs. The work consisted of a number of major tasks:

1. ***Design and implementation of the GEMEED home page.*** This was completed and launched on 20 October 1997. It shows the APEC logo and lists member economies.
2. ***Site operation and maintenance.*** Work was on time and continuing to operate. Nine nominated contact names had been received, and provision made for inclusion of Peru, Russia and Vietnam, but contacts had not yet been received for these. The number of sites tied to the database is now 377 and the number of visitors to the page had increased from 739 in November 1997 to 4215 during March 1998. The contractor has searched the Internet for suitable addresses for demonstration purposes.
3. ***Coordinating and collecting Internet addresses.*** All addresses provided to date have been entered into the database.
4. ***Linkages to member economies and other relevant international data- and metadatabases.*** 377 sites had been linked, including, for demonstration purposes at this stage, the Minerals and Energy directory created by Korea. Work was continuing.
5. ***Communication with nominated contacts with member economies.*** Work was on time.
6. ***Marking up of data from member economies.*** Work had been done for Papua New Guinea, as it would have no access to the Internet before late 1998.
7. ***Maintenance and updating of the home page.*** Work was continuing and was meeting or exceeding contract specifications.
8. ***Template design.*** Work was completed, with 72 topics now specified and classified under seven group headings. The electronic template was demonstrated at the database launch.
9. ***Monthly reports.*** These had been delivered regularly each month, and the final report on Phase 1 was due at the end of September 1998.

Next steps

More Internet addresses were required, to keep linking member economies' databases and the other links identified by AMSAT. Work would begin on meta-tagging (indexing) to help users find ANMED more easily. Feedback would be sought from contacts.

Consultant's recommendations

The consultant's recommendations were that GEMEED should:

- provide a list of authorized contacts,
- approve connection of the Minerals and Energy directory created by Korea, and
- approve completion of the Stage 2 of Phase 1.

The Chairman noted that authorized contacts were still required for Brunei Darussalam, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore and Thailand. He encouraged those member economies to provide him with names of the authorized contacts.

In relation to member economies, which had not yet supplied contacts or URLs, there was discussion of whether material already available on the Internet could be considered public and therefore able without specific authorization to be linked in to ANMED. The United States signified it had no objection to this approach, and the Chairman accepted that any such US information could therefore be linked in.

Thailand noted that 90 per cent of its own information was still available only in Thai. The Chairman noted that while the official language of ANMED was English, investors using it would also want access to material in the host country's language, so in future ANMED could link in to these existing non-English language databases. The Chairman of GEMEED (Mr Tomás Astorga) suggested that available data in the local language could be fed into ANMED and each country concerned could then take it on as a project to translate material as it could.

The Chairman (Dr Williamson) informed members that if information was in Microsoft Word files (in any form), the consultant could mark it up for the Internet, as done already for Papua New Guinea. Information could be developed into an entry and retained on the server with the contractor, so it would show as a member economy entry in ANMED.

He noted that at the moment ANMED allowed search engines set up for Netscape and Windows 95 to be applied to find it. The contractor was working on the design of ANMED to enable all search engines to find it through key words.

He confirmed that to ensure that information in the ANMED database was acceptably up to date, member economies should undertake updates of their data at least as frequently as every six months.