**MINUTES FROM OPEN DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK 27/3/13 (4:30 to 6pm)**

**Data issues**

1. ERA40 vs ERA Interim`

The issue discussed first was that of which re-analysis data sets to use for the comparison between statistical downscaling methods and RCMs.

Sven made some useful additions to this morning’s presentation of the respective merits of these two re-analysis data sets by pointing out that some RCM groups have run longer RCM experiments with ERA Interim (going back to 1979). There are probably at least 2 or 3 such experiments available at scales of 50 km and 10 km. As a result of a discussion involving Heike and Douglas, it was agreed that the way ahead would therefore be:

* to use only RCMs using the Cordex set-up (with ERA Interim) for 30 year periods, *if there are indeed enough such RCM experiments available*
* *if that is not the case,* to make use of both RCMs using ERA40 predictors and RCMs using ERA Interim predictors
1. Station data sets

Douglas made the case for making use of sets of stations covering *areas* embedded within the total areas (hereafter, *regions*) identified this morning (e.g. Austria, Norway, etc). Essentially, the idea is that such areas would correspond, for instance to the size of areas useful for given applications (e.g. the catchment size for hydrologists). It was pointed out that this might be a somewhat too precipitation-biased argument to make, and Radan argued that the3re was no reason not to apply a given downscaling method to all the gauges available in a given region. It was indeed suggested that it would only be fair to expect all downscaling methods to be tested on the same set of all available gauges in the region (Martin).

While Jun-Ichi pointed out that we don’t have enough information to discuss this point properly, Richard argued that it would not make sense to test a downscaling method over an area that it much larger than the size for which this method was developed. He added that if he were to spend time testing his GLM model for an area the size of a whole country, he would find that it performs poorly, which he already knew anyway, so the whole effort would be a waste of time and resources.

While Heike also argued for using the whole region for all models, some consensus was reached by agreeing to consider areas smaller than whole regions, with a minimum size of the order of 100 x 100 km2. To make this proposal more concrete, it was decided that maps would be sent round to those developing multi-site models, to enable them to identify what regions they would be happy to work with.

**Added value**

Pedro had raised the issue that it would be interesting to use this COST exercise to provide some insight into what would be gained by using an RCM to downscale from grid boxes of side 50 km to grid boxes of size 12 km. As Douglas pointed out, the question this raises is that of whether this can somehow be integrated into the validation framework, or whether it would require that something be added to the remit of this COST exercise, i.e. would it amount to an “extra box”. Martin argued for the first option insofar as all that this required was the consideration of additional scales in the validation exercise, a point that seemed to attract general consensus (or at least I have no record of points made against this!). Douglas noted that skill scores could usefully be applied to measure added value. It was concluded that the next step would involve identifying a group of people interested in assessing added value.

**Feedback**

Martin gave an overview of the feedback that had so far been received and asked for further comments from those still present.

Joanna complained that people from one working group do not get to see what is done in another working group. This is potentially counter-productive. Douglas acknowledged this problem.

Heike complimented the organizers on the fact that the temporal structure of this meeting had been more relaxed. Ulle added that this meeting had been more focussed than the Trieste one, and that the working groups were clearer about their tasks.

I was however pointed out that the discussion was sometimes too detailed, and as a consequence, that it then lost some of the audience. Douglas acknowledged the point, indicating that such discussion were relevant, although the issues raised therein had not necessarily been noticed previously. Douglas pointed out that there were two types of discussion: brainstorming where the issue can be left open, and discussions which have to issue in a conclusion. It was pointed out that it was not always clear which was which, and Heike made the point that in brainstorming sessions (for which she coined the expression ‘organized chaos’!) it should be possible for people to talk in a somewhat disorganized fashion, and the chair should tolerate apparently deviating contributions. Pedro added that the discussion style at this meeting had improved a lot from Trieste, but that there was probably still room for improvement. Doug accepted this, but emphasized the importance for al l participants to be up to speed with the contents of the MoU of this COST action. Heike added that it is important for the chair in each session to take centre stage and for Douglas to sit down, a point well taken by Douglas.

Jun-Ishi suggested having more discussion by e-mail, to which Doug responded that there were already lots of e-mails being exchanged in this COST action.

A discussion then ensued about the timings of these COST meetings: Radan suggested starting at noon on day 1 and finishing at noon on day 3, which would mean only two nights at the hotel. It was pointed out that this would not necessarily work for people travelling from the fringes of Europe (e.g. Portugal). Douglas also indicated that he preferred having some time to settle when he arrived somewhere, and that it is likely that many people who had to get up early would be too tired and not as intellectually productive if they had to go directly from the airport to the meeting. As a vote showed a rather undecided audience, it was suggested/decided (?) alternating between the current and the noon-noon model would be a reasonable compromise.

Martin continued with further points he noted from the feedback forms, and flagged the important fact that some people are not sure how they can contribute to the COST action. These people were invited to contact their WGs and Heike made the point that in some cases, it would be a good idea to ask people if they want to contribute (I think I got that right – not sure!).

Martin and Douglas emphasized the importance of the last break-up meeting of these COST meetings, as the place for the WG leaders to distribute work to the members of the group – it would seem that this did not however take place this time.

Finally Douglas noted, with detectable satisfaction, that it was exactly 6pm…

C.O.