

Unlocking the Benefits of Open Weather Data

Main Messages and points for further discussion

New government-level policies, such as the European Union Open Data Directive, are likely to have a significant impact on the delivery of meteorological and climate services. There is the potential for unlocking significant socio-economic benefits from the application of such policies.

Prof. Dr. Gerhard Adrian, President of the German Weather Service (Deutscher Wetterdienst, DWD), explored the issues surrounding open data in the context of weather and climate data and services, and their implications. He presented the European Data Strategy that pursues empowerment of society by open public data, through; 1) a single market within the EU and across the sector, fully respecting and fairly applying the relevant rules across all stakeholders; and, 2) an attractive, secure and dynamic data economy. Ongoing efforts for full implementation comprise; setting clear and fair rules on access and re-use of data; investing in next-generation tools and infrastructures to store and process data; joining forces in European cloud capacity; pooling European data in key sectors, with common and interoperable data spaces; and, giving users rights, tools and skills to stay in full control of their data.

The Presenter shared the experience of DWD regarding open data policy and its implementation following the EU Inspire Directive; it has demonstrated a large economic benefit of meteorological information, and that free and open access to public meteorological information supports its exploitation to the greater extent. At the European level in ECMWF, EUMETSAT and EUMETNET, countries are joining forces to build a “European Weather Cloud” as an open federated infrastructure, as part of implementing the 5-year strategic goal for free and open data policy. Complex data policies of the contributing member state organisations, as well as dealing with issues around the sale of public data, remain as major challenges. He noted that the role of government is critical to ensure transparency and full participation of different stakeholders (e.g. building a common understanding of the role of governmental institutions, compensation of the loss of revenues).

Following the presentation, webinar participants considered topics including: 1) implications to developing countries, national meteorological and hydrological services; 2) roles and impact of the private sector including proprietary data; and, 3) the role of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) at the international level.