
baltrad+ Newsletter

March 2013

An advanced weather radar network for the Baltic Sea Region

The innovation lies in the development of an ICT network architecture allowing real-time data exchange and processing of weather radar data using common methods according to local needs in each country.

Highlights: BALTRAD+ now, International cooperation, BALTRAD+ User Forum

BALTRAD+ now

On 26th January 2012, the original BALTRAD project ended. The following day marked the start of the BALTRAD+ project. The transition has been seamless. Data has continued to be exchanged in real-time among the existing nodes in the network. The overall scope of the project has, however, changed.

We are pleased to announce an enlarged partnership in two ways. First, we welcome new partners from new countries - Germany, Lithuania, and Norway. Secondly, we welcome new partners from Denmark - the University of Aalborg and Århusvand A/s. All previous partners have continued and this gives us now complete geographical coverage in the BSR with 13 partners in 10 countries.

The thematic scope has also become enlarged with the transition from BALTRAD to BALTRAD+. The partnership already runs weather radar supporting applications at the regional scale. Our new Danish partners bring with them expertise in using weather radar for applications at the municipal scale. Behind this scope is the innovative use of small X-band systems that cover municipalities with even higher spatial and temporal resolution than the larger C-band systems operated by the national meteorological institutes. The co-location of these two types of radars outside Århus provides the project with a unique chance to transfer BALTRAD software technology to the municipal scale and use it to support e.g. urban hydrological applications like waste-water management and water quality monitoring.

In BALTRAD+, there is a stronger focus on end use of radar-based information in various ways. Supporting this focus is four planned User Forum events (so-called BUFs), one for each six-month project period.

There are a couple of different categories of "users". The classical end user is someone who needs to make decisions based on the knowledge of where precipitation will occur and how much will accumulate. This knowledge must be available with as high accuracy and as little uncertainty as possible, e.g. the transport sector. And the other category of user is: someone whose responsibility is to run a BALTRAD node supporting the decision-maker. BUF events are designed to support each type of user and provide an interface, where the partnership can receive feedback that can be used to improve the quality of our outputs.

International cooperation

During the second half of 2012 the European weather radar network, organized under the framework of EUMETNET OPERA, decided to deploy the BALTRAD toolbox software at OPERA's operational data centre, called Odyssey. Since the start of the main-stage BALTRAD project, there have been regular liaison between BALTRAD and OPERA, and the idea of OPERA deploying BALTRAD software has been raised several times. However, with the successful trial of the toolbox earlier during 2012, the decision was finally made to deploy the toolbox. Its task is to improve the quality of all input data from as many of the 30 OPERA member countries as possible prior to these data being used to create continental-scale composite products. During November 2012 an updated version of the toolbox was released that contains the required functionality for Odyssey.

Also during the second half of 2012, a new consortium was formed for being entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out the fourth incarnation of OPERA starting in January 2013. BALTRAD partners in Finland (FMI) and Sweden (SMHI) are proud to be in the OPERA-4 consortium which is led by FMI.

During 2012, the partnership was approached by the Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Center (UHMC), the national meteorological institute in Ukraine, about joining as a partner. The Cooperation Agreement was signed by nine partners at the end of the main-stage project at the BALTRAD Final Seminar in Tallinn in December 2011, and this agreement contains provisions for new members to join. We had the first chance to apply this mechanism. After consulting and partners unanimity in support, the process was completed last month when UHMC signed the Cooperation Agreement. Let's welcome Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Centre as a new partner in BALTRAD!

During December, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology invited the BALTRAD+ project manager to its headquarters in Melbourne for a week's visit.

Through previous contacts, it was found that there are similar software developments going on in Australia, so it became of mutual interest to see whether there is scope for cooperation in such a way that could be beneficial to both. After the week, the answer was clearly "yes", and 2013 will see a reciprocal visit to the BSR by our friends from "down under". BALTRAD is going global!

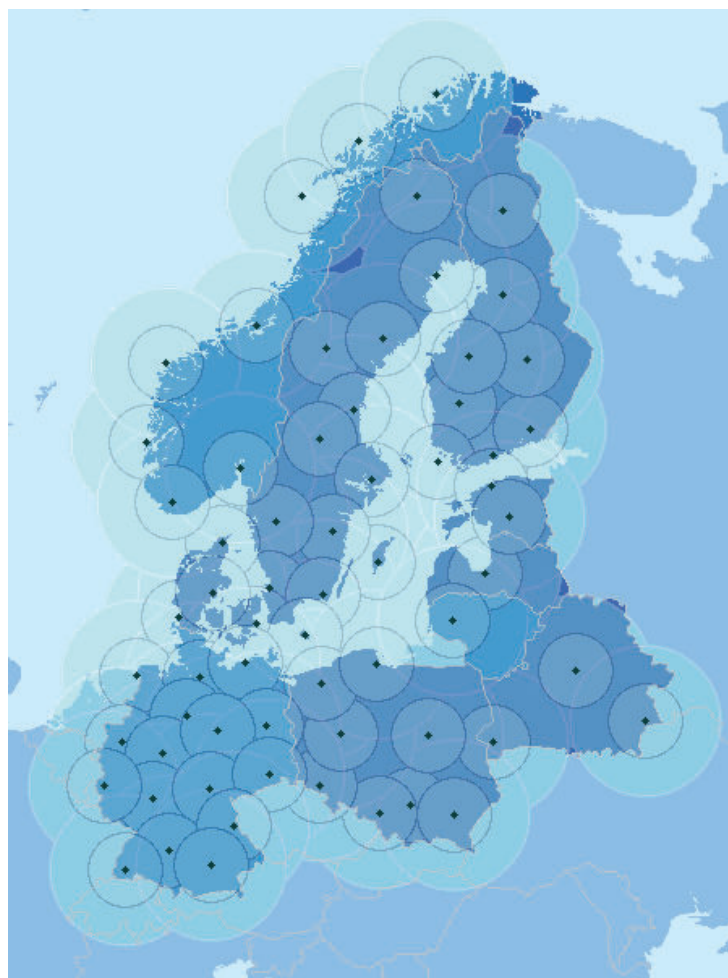
BALTRAD User Forum I and II

On 15th to 16th May 2012, the first User Forum was held in Krakow, Poland. The first User Forum introduced the new stage of the project and gave an overview of the possibilities of employing radar and radar-based data in weather forecasting, radiation and nuclear safety, aviation, disaster management, and urban water management. The second part of the forum concentrated on discussions about the main features of BALTRAD network and current status of interconnections between nodes. All BALTRAD+ project partners presented their experience and issues they had encountered. Collected knowledge forms a good base for the following developments and discussion subjects for the coming meetings.

As was expected the second User Forum was much better focused! In the second User Forum in Norrköping, Sweden, the technical session was held in a "Do It Yourself" format, where BALTRAD node software was installed, configured and used. Participants brought their Linux notebooks and exchanged data among themselves during the session. How interesting was that!

Announcements

The third BALTRAD+ User Forum "BUF III" will be held on 16th May in Vilnius. Please consult the project website for further details



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