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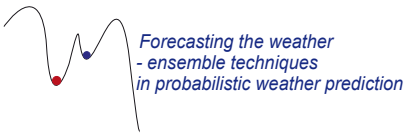

Web-based Information Services for the Environment (WISE) - Casablanca

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Information on weather and climate are essential for decision making in many societal fields, and are widespread used e.g. in agriculture, forestry, water resource management or urban planning. However, the availability of suitable data is still limited in many less developed regions of the world. Even when such data exist, there are often access restrictions or economic rationales preventing stakeholders to utilise them, thus resulting in sub-optimal decisions.

New scientific and technological developments have stimulated the generation of a broad spectrum of weather and climate products like global gridded atmospheric data sets from ground observations, remote sensing systems or numerical models. Many of these data are available for download from public web sites free of charge. However in many cases, the data themselves are not directly delivering the information required by the stakeholders, thus user-specific products are required.

These general problems are also present in Casablanca, Morocco, and are currently studied within a research project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) dealing with sustainable urban development in view of climate change. Especially the problem that more and more farmland in periurban areas of Casablanca is converted into settlements forms the background of the study. Making information on weather and climate and other environmental aspects publicly available has been identified as a key strategy to raise the awareness on the importance of considering them in spatial planning.

We will present and discuss a new system called “Web-based Information Services on the Environment (WISE) - Casablanca” that is currently developed to provide stakeholders application-specific information for decision making. The system architecture of the WISE enables the information providers to include further information services in an easy, efficient way. Selected examples will be presented, which demonstrate the wide field of scientific analyses and applications of the WISE - Casablanca.