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Workshop E

Wetland inventories in France

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Some key points

Before 2000, wetlands inventories in France were:

- either at national level, but not specifically designed for wetlands,
- or specific for wetlands, but using local methodologies.

Since 2000, a national approach is conducted. The objectives are to build inventory methods for:

- planning purposes,
- regulation purposes.

The first step (2001-2004) was to define and organize data recording. A minimum data set was defined, and most data are treated by dictionaries (“closed questions”).

Another important point was to provide a unique code for each wetland, but with:

- no national attribution
- possibility to work at different scales.

A software has been elaborated, with all the documentation. This software is free and can be downloaded.

It has been also necessary to train a group of people in charge of the implementation and to nominate a national coordinator.

The second step (2002-2005) is to describe methods to realize maps of wetlands areas. These maps will correspond to the definition of wetlands in the water law “Loi sur l’eau”, using 3 criteria:

- land usually submerged,
- or water saturated soils, and
- if present, hygrophilous vegetation.

This definition is rather similar to the North American one.

For planning purposes, accurate delimitation is not required. The GlobWet programme (2003-2005) and national work (2004-2005) will provide a method to map wetlands on large territories, using GIS layers and remote sensing.

For regulation purposes an accurate delimitation is needed. Delimitation methods will be derived from the North American example.

