

Comet Explained

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Concept

ECOMET is an Economic Interest Grouping under Belgian law located in Brussels. ECOMET was created end of 1995.

Its 23 Members are the National Meteorological Services (NMS's) of : Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

The ECOMET grouping reinforces the traditional relationships amongst the NMS's and the developing relationships with the private sector within the relevant EU regulations.

After having confirmed its intention to do so in September 1997, the European Commission (Directorate-General Competition) approved the ECOMET arrangements in October 1999.

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Objectives

The primary objectives of ECOMET are to preserve the free and unrestricted exchange of meteorological information between the NMS's for their operational functions within the

framework of WMO regulations and to ensure the widest availability of basic meteorological data and products for commercial applications.

Further objectives of ECOMET are:

- to guarantee the access to meteorological data and products, be it for public or private sectors.
- to recover part of the infrastructural expenses of the European NMS's by a contribution from all commercial users, in order to maintain and improve the meteorological infrastructure.

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Why

Development of legislation by the European Commission led to review of the traditional practices of the NMS's

Particularly in the field of competition and the open market concept the practices of the NMS's wanted to be harmonized with the European Law.

By applying the ECOMET rules, the NMS's, being governmental organizations, comply with the competition rules, as defined by the European Legislation. The NMS's have developed in ECOMET a legal framework to establish equal competition conditions for the public as well as for the private sector.

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Benefits

All users of meteorological information (being data, products or value added services or a combination thereof) would benefit by the operations of ECOMET.

The users may be end-users, broadcasters or service providers in the private as well as in the public sector. (For license conditions related to each of the user groups, see below "licensing conditions" or any ECOMET licensing agent, see attached list.)

The essential benefits are the availability anywhere in the joint territory of the ECOMET Members of all meteorological information for commercial use and delivery of all information arranged through any one of the Member NMS's.

Further benefits are:

- no need for bilateral agreements between customers and the originating Member NMS's.
- any combination of catalogued items will be available through any of the Member NMS's,
- international operators can obtain the information through the NMS in the country of their choice for practical or cost-effective reasons.

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Equal competition conditions

ECOMET licensing conditions apply to all commercial use of the meteorological information, either in the private or in the public sector.

The ECOMET Catalogue: A basic tool at the disposal of the users of meteorological information in Europe

All meteorological information that can be used commercially is available under ECOMET license and listed in the ECOMET Catalogue

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Catalogue

The ECOMET Catalogue is divided in sections:

a. The Non-chargeable Data and Product Set - this set contains all data and products exchanged globally and classified as "essential" in the WMO programs, including also other data which are declared non chargeable by the ECOMET Member.

Zero information price.

b. The data and product sets, covering all commercially available data and products against license fee.

c. Non-Member data and products

For additional information about the items in the catalogue, the customer can contact the appropriate NMS ECOMET licensing agent, or the originating NMS for a value-added service. Dependent on the specific nature of the information requested, delivery can be arranged through an intermediate NMS if required.

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A global One-Stop-Shop for professional requests

In order to better meet requests for data and products, particularly from service provider companies, electronic access points are implemented, which allow the ordering of the ECOMET Catalogue items in a single procedure. Such One-Stop-Shops are available from the

Météo-France (the FOSS) and UK Met. Office Meteorological Services (the DPDS).

Each order can thus be directed to any NMS be it the one in the customer's country, the one which originates data or products as requested, or any other. The information price is the same; only handling costs may vary, according to national abilities and policies.

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