

Professional and collaborative experience of the Baltic+ course

Izolda Marcinonienė

izolda.marcinoniene@meteo.lt

Abstract

Already eight years have passed since 2014 when the “pilot” training was held in Riga with strong decision – to organize blended course for meteorologists from the Baltic region every year.

Obviously, it was a wise solution in spite of some uncertainty regarding the regional style, professional level, limited number of participants and, finally, financial side of the event. As a contact person from Lithuanian Hydrometeorological Service (LHMS) the author took part in all 2015–2021 trainings, including the role of the main organizer in Vilnius (2017).

The Baltic+ course is a joint initiative of the National Meteorological Services of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Along with EUMETSAT reliable financial support and approval these regional institutions united their forces in order to deliver a training programme that brings the new developments in satellite meteorology and in tools for operational forecasting. One the objective is increasing the level of professional knowledge and competence in the use of the very new satellite products and numerical weather prediction (NWP) data.

The “Plus” in the course name represents the three additional countries – Belarus, Russia and Ukraine – which were invited to join the training. Nowadays due to the political changes in Europe only Ukraine has been left to continue collaboration with the Baltic States, Poland and EUMETSAT.

According to the rules of the “Baltic+ Course Cooperation Paper with EUMETSAT” each year the course is organized by rotation in different country. The activities and contents are managed by the National Meteorological Service that is responsible for the course in the following year. Thus the themes are different – from identifying frontal structures in satellite images (Tallinn, 2015) to detecting low clouds and fog (Warsaw, 2016), from severe summer convection events (Vilnius, 2017) to non-frontal mesoscale phenomena and usage of satellite application facilities and newest multispectral environmental satellites (Riga, 2018), from analysis of heavy precipitation and local sea-land effect along with NWP (Tallinn, 2019) to the application of the satellite products for diagnosis of southerly flow environment favourable to pre-convection and summer heavy precipitation (online, organizer Poland, 2021). In autumn this year LHMS will invite meteorologists and come back again to blended style of training to learn more about cloudiness and phenomena in cold season using different satellite data and numerical models.

One of participants’ duty is to do home task – collaborative case study according to the course theme. In cooperation with their colleagues and using training zone forums they could discuss, share necessary information from different countries and finally, the joint presentation for each group should be prepared and shown in the face-to-face meeting.

EUMETSAT Training Zone running on Moodle platform is used for managing the learning activities. Moodle platform, simulators and webinars create an environment to work and study together efficiently. Especially it was evident during pandemic situation when new tools (breakout rooms, padlet, slido) helped a lot in running the course fully online. Satellite experts and training officers from EUMETSAT, teachers of the participating countries and other instructors are invited in order to meet the training needs. However, it is very important to develop friendly atmosphere to learn and work as one community. This presentation will show various ways to foster more broad and honest communication between colleagues from different countries and to reduce the distance between instructors and learners as well.