

## How do we know we are doing a good job? Discussing the Maturity Model

### Background

In the February 2012 VLMG online meeting, the VLab Centre of Excellence (CoE) Oman asked this question:

How do we know we are doing a good job?

This question came from a Centre of Excellence, but it extends to all the partners in VLab.

As the VLab is a partnership between Centres of Excellence, Supporting Satellite Operators and Agencies, and the WMO; any assessment of how we are doing must fit within the spirit of this partnership.

With the intent to find a process that generates critical reflection, appreciation and dialogue, a Maturity model approach is proposed as a framework.

### Maturity Model

A maturity model expresses the stages of development against particular expectations. Based on these, we can then discuss where we are now and where we would like to be in one or two years, for example. The whole model is supposed to be descriptive rather than judgemental, fostering self-reflection and appreciation of one's development stage.

The following is a possible outline for the Centres of Excellence framework.

	Training needs analysis	Training events	Regional Focus Groups	Training Materials	Proficiency in online training
Cutting edge					
Consistent					
Spontaneous					
Just starting					
Planned					

Figure 1 – Example of an outline for the CoEs framework.

In the above framework, the top labels represent 5 out of the 8 expectations from VLab CoEs, whilst the labels on the left (we may call them descriptors) are meant to reflect where we are and also where we want to be. The descriptors might fit different stages in the development of practices. They are meant to be factual rather than judgemental.

To finish this framework, what would be needed is to find appropriate statements that would describe the different expectations at each stage of development. These descriptions would fill each cell of the above framework.

As an example, please see some possible statements in the framework below.

	Training needs analysis	Training events	Regional Focus Groups	Training Materials	Proficiency in online training
Cutting edge					
Consistent		Annual course, based on needs analysis. Evaluation acted on	RFG held each month. Regional participants, discussion based		
Spontaneous		Courses held most years. Little evaluation		Provides occasional resources to ESRC	
Just starting			RFG held once a year		
Planned	Plans for annual TNA. Completed at least once				Plans training trainers to develop online resources

Figure 2 – Framework for CoEs – examples of possible statements.

Similarly, this kind of framework can be also applied to the VLab Supporting Satellite Operators and Agencies, as seen below.

	Data Availability & Coordination	Development & availability of Training Material	Assistance to Regional Focus Groups	Assistance on the management of resource issues
Cutting edge				
Consistent	Data available, Feedback mechanism in place that gets to regional needs.	All material in ESRC		Works with CoE [&WMO] to gain external funding
Spontaneous		Directory of old presentations available	Supports with thematic courses	Funds CoE course participants
Just starting			Attend RFGs	
Planned				

Figure 3 – Framework for Supporting Satellite Operators and Agencies – examples of possible statements.

Of course the above examples are just the first ideas for a discussion of how to use the Maturity Model to reflect on the actual stage of development of the VLab partnership. It is expected that such critical reflection should help us to draw the actions needed to build an even stronger and more effective partnership.



## Preparation for the VLMG-6 meeting

In preparation for the VLMG-6 meeting, you are invited to:

1. Think of statements that could be used to describe every stage of development for each expectation (top label). You are welcome to add or change the top labels too, based on what you think it would be useful to reflect upon. Try to fill each cell of the framework;
2. After some critical reflection, please circle the stage of development you believe would better describe each of those expectations (top labels) in your CoE or Supporting Satellite Operator and Agencies (as appropriate);
3. Indicate what stage of development you would like to be in two years time.

You might want to gather the trainers in your CoE and try to do these three activities together. This would ensure you bring their views to the VLMG-6 too.

In addition, there is a bunch of questions we would like you to start thinking about, as we believe they will help us in our discussions in Brazil. Please, see some suggestions below. You might even have additional ones, so please bring your notes with you.

Some questions to think about:

- Do the expectations (top labels) properly reflect the expectations of VLab?
- Do the stages reflect the development stages of a CoE/Satellite Operator? Does the wording used to represent those stages reflect a spirit of partnership?
- What should the WMO version of this framework cover?
- Do the descriptions used in each cell affirm achievement (for each stage of development) as well as challenge greater achievement?
- Many CoEs have links with universities and are involved in research (national and international activities). Where does this fit in?
- What about our expectations on the VLab secretariat and WMO?