

## Notes from ‘Users’ splinter session

Mike Osborne / Ulric Wilson

Although badged as a ‘users’ session, introductions around the room revealed very few attendees had actually used the MEDIN Portal in earnest, probably around 1 in 3.

**Where were users getting data?** - A wide variety of sources (Cefas); gather own and commission others (EDF); mostly own collection (Marine Planning Consultants, MPC).

MPC raised the issue of data on recreation data (and socio-economic data in general): very disparate and no DAC but in some cases hugely significant (e.g. Solent area within ‘Southern Marine Plan’). TMPC has been working in Pembrokeshire and trying to map recreation data.

MEDIN has considered the issue of socio-economic (SE) data for the last 2 years. Consensus is that it does concern MEDIN and that MEDIN will facilitate easier access to SE data but a SE DAC is considered outside its scope. Instead, MEDIN (with PSEG) will help facilitate easier access to marine sectoral data stored within existing data centres e.g. ONS. There is still concern over primary data e.g. obtained during the MCZ consultation process and where and how this will be archived, if at all.

The increasing focus on Marine Planning is raising the profile of SE data but difficulties in collation: some organisations (e.g. RYA) have structured data but many do not have well managed records for their sector, although as a constituency they can be highly motivated. Online recording of activity was suggested but this would be significant development and departure for MEDIN to be collected primary data.

**Portals?** – There are many portals (e.g. MMO, MEDIN, Crown Estate MDE etc) and this causes confusion. Aggregation seems likely (and desirable up to a point) but users felt there was a role for ‘domain-specific’ portals. General view was that a complete merger to one portal (say data.gov.uk) was too extreme and would result in an unwieldy system. Pitching a small number of data portals at the right level would be key.

If a small number of domain specific portals then they could share data through allowing harvesting of metadata records (e.g. via CS-W), although this possibly negates many of the advantages of having separate domain specific portals.

Some suggestion that the MEDIN portal could provide a simpler user interface which was too complex for users unfamiliar with it. A suggestion of having HTML with ‘novice guides’ i.e. series of plain English questions about the type of data required that step user through examples of selecting data.

**Increasing use of MEDIN?** There were multiple anecdotes highlighting fact that MEDIN and the portal do not have enough recognition and visibility. MEDIN’s own sponsoring organisations could do more to incorporate MEDIN objectives into their own work and particularly build in requirements for data to be well managed, using MEDIN standards, e.g. in contracts are let for survey work.

British Marine Aggregates Producers Association stressed that a lot of data was already passed to some of the sponsor organisations as part of compliance monitoring – ensuring this was collected to MEDIN standards and there was a route for data flow to DACs would provide a significant amount of data and encourage private sector engagement with MEDIN. All compliance data should go to

MEDIN as part of ‘business as usual’. Sponsors should make more use of MEDIN themselves and do so in a visible manner to help raise MEDIN profile. More ‘top down’ engagement would provide a lead.

Marine planning and licensing (e.g. MMO charging regime for planning) results in lots of data being submitted as part of the process. This should be MEDIN compliant and presumption that data will go onto MEDIN unless clear commercial sensitivity.

In the Oil & Gas sector there have been instances of industry led data sharing, but point made that likes of aggregate industries do not have the financial or manpower resources of the Oil & Gas industry, so unrealistic to expect them to take the same lead.

Renewables sector seen as ‘fledgling’ industry with early players having to undertake significant data collection at high cost and ‘prompt’ data sharing seen as giving competitors a commercial advantage (cost saving as don’t have to collect same data), so ‘level playing field’ a concern.

Heritage DACs provide a good model (and is supported by the aggregate industry and consultancies e.g. Wessex archaeology, where standards and metadata have been mandated for some time and now are just ‘part of the process’ and the overhead is minimal.

Paul Leonard suggested providing boilerplate text for use in contracts, specifying MEDIN standards for adoption, mandating MEDIN standards in contracts and engaging contractors / users through more direct approaches. [Nb. This approach is already planned by MEDIN WS2 (Standards) as soon as revised data guidelines are fully signed off]. The ‘contractors’ letter’ is aimed at priming contractors and alerting them to the fact that mandated use of MEDIN standards will be increasingly common, particularly in public sector contracts.

Overall, more is ‘outreach’ required (although in the current financial climate this is difficult, particular communications spend restricted by Government ‘marketing restrictions’).

NASA remote sensing data cited as a good example of using case studies to drive engagement with data. MEDIN could use specific case studies to promote the platform and benefits of shared and properly archived data.

**Products?** MEDIN so far has focussed on archiving raw data but many initial data requirements from users are for ‘a map of XXX’ i.e. a derived data product rather than raw data that needs additional work before it can be used or interpreted.

**Should MEDIN catalogue products?** General agreement that MEDIN should, but has potentially wide scope so engagement with products could be at varying levels.

Cefas highlighted that under MSFD there may be an obligation on UK to make MSFD reporting products available online (and MEDIN could do this) as well as reporting data.

Availability of aggregated data products e.g. maps of parameters would be very popular but ideally want to be able to get to underlying data ‘beneath’ product (e.g. in cases where data need to be standardised, such as ‘normalisation of nutrient data to salinity’)

If MEDIN had a higher profile, attracting some less specialised users, the need and then the requirement for more accessible products likely to increase.

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Suggestion MEDIN could provide key ‘baseline’ data products e.g. open DEM for UK waters [perhaps this is example is more online with reference data layers] but in general the principle should be to look to prioritise basic underlying data products.

Overall MEDIN was viewed as useful and doing a reasonable job but needed a higher profile with the specific requirement of more visible sponsor adoption of MEDIN objectives and more proactive engagement with industry.

## Attending

<b>Company</b>	<b>In user splinter</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Associated British Ports Marine Environmental Research (ABPmer)	1	User	Perks	Thomas	GIS Analyst
Associated British Ports Marine Environmental Research (ABPmer)	1	User	Williamson	Daniel	GIS Technician
British Geological Survey	1	User	Harrison	Matthew	Director of Informatics
British Geological Survey / MEDIN Geology DAC	1	User	Henni	Paul	Senior Marine Data Manager
British Geological Survey	1	User	Baker	Garry	Head NGDC
British Marine Aggregate Producers Association	1	Supplier	Russell	Mark	Director
Cefas	1	Supplier	Foden	Jo	Marine policy scientist
Cefas	1	Supplier	Bacon	John	Shelf Seas Modelling Team Leader
Contract Consultant	1	User	Taylor	Jessica	Marine Research Consultant
Defra	1	User	Buhecha	Heeran	Deputy Head of MIEU
Defra	1	User	Hill-Gibbins	Paul	MIEU Offshore Wind Farms
Defra Offshore Wind Farms	1	User	James	Gary	Policy Adviser
Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)	1	User	Cook	Julie	Environmental Specialist
EDF Energy	1	Supplier	Bloomfield	Angus	Marine Specialist
JNCC	1	User	Wilson	Ulric	Technical Project Manager
Marine Institute, Plymouth University	1	User	Leonard	Paul	Visiting Professor
MEDIN	1		Campbell	Helen	Data Scientist
MEDIN	1		Cotton	Dave	MEDIN Project Coordinator
OceanWise Ltd	1		Osborne	Mike	Managing Director
Renewable Energy Association	1	User	Merry	Stephanie	Head of Marine
Senergy	1	User	Grewcock	Gareth	GIS Technician
The Crown Estate	1		Edmonds	Peter	Marine Data Manager
UK Hydrographic Office	1	User	Thomas	Judith	Bathymetric Database Manager
Wessex Archaeology	1	Supplier	Tizzard	Louise	Marine Geophysicist