



THE UK MARINE DATA AND INFORMATION PARTNERSHIP

MDIP Fisheries DAC workshop – Agenda and Recommendations

Thursday 8th Feb, 10:00-13:00 IMAREST, London

Workshop Objective:

To investigate how fisheries data and information could be managed within / accessed through the MDIP framework.

Introduction:

The Marine Data and Information Partnership (MDIP) are working to achieve a more coordinated approach to managing marine data and information across the UK marine community. As part of this process a network of Data Archiving Centres is being established, by the linking together of the best of existing capacity. This workshop aims to investigate how fisheries data and information could be incorporated within this framework.

Agenda

Presentations and Scene Setting

1. Overview of MDIP aims and activities (DC)
2. Explanation of the MDIP DAC principle, thematic coverage of existing MDIP DACS and introduction to the expected capabilities of an MDIP DAC (JP)
3. Brief presentations from attending parties (CEFAS, FRS, AFB): *Fisheries data holdings, existing reporting requirements and contributions to centralised data centres.*

Discussions

4. The possible scope and data thematic coverage of a fisheries DAC for MDIP
The purpose should be to ensure that all important "fisheries" data (where not catered for elsewhere within the MDIP DAC framework) are properly managed, long term archival is taken care of, and information on these data can be easily accessed.
5. What should be the structure? (e.g. Distributed, but single point of access?)
6. Fisheries agencies interactions, including data exchange principles.
Harmonise MDIP requirements with MARG and ICES requirements - so that the MDIP coordination would support/complement these requirements rather than add overheads.

Agreeing Actions

7. If it is agreed that it makes sense to establish an MDIP DAC for fisheries data - identify practical steps that need to be taken. If possible, establish a timetable.
 - a. Implementing a structure.
 - b. Moving to meet MDIP DAC requirements of best data management practice.
 - c. Accessing fisheries metadata through the MDIP metadata discovery service.

Attending:

FRS: Andrew Newton

AFB (NI): Steven Beggs

For CEFAS: Paul Eastwood

MDIP: David Cotton, Jon Parr

Apologies:

CEFAS: Pete Kershaw, Richard Ayres, Steve Flatman



Recommendations

(text highlighted in RED constitute David Cotton's personal observations or suggestions after the event – please feel free to comment, disagree, propose alternatives, etc.)

After some very positive and fruitful discussions, the following recommendations were agreed by the participants (and discussed over the phone with CEFAS - Paul Eastwood and Steve Flatman):

- *Fisheries Data Archive Centre Working Arrangement*

The participating agencies: CEFAS, FRS and AFBI will act together to establish a distributed Fisheries DAC within the MDIP DAC framework. Each of the participating agencies (**Fisheries sub-DACs?**) will continue to be responsible for managing the data they themselves have collected, but will work to implement an agreed set of conditions which will ensure fisheries data will be available through MDIP in a common data exchange format and metadata will be provided on a cruise by cruise basis in the form of cruise summary reports.

CEFAS, FRS and AFBI agree to make fisheries data available through MDIP on this basis.

- *Definition of Fisheries Data:*

Initial effort will focus on Fisheries Survey data. Specifically included will be stock monitoring data gathered on trawl surveys. Specifically excluded (initially at least) are data from “market” sampling, discard sampling, and landings data. This selection has the benefit of bringing in the most valuable data sets, which are also the easiest data to collate and maintain. It excludes data sets which may be sensitive and/or data which would require significantly greater effort to prepare.

Data could include:

- Species identification
- Location
- Numbers
- Length
- Age
- Sex
- Maturity

Other data describing the marine environment (**temperature, salinity,**) are usually taken at the same time and place as the fisheries sample. Usually these data are forwarded to BODC, but it would be important to retain a link between these data and the fisheries information (**is reference through the cruise report sufficient?**).



THE UK MARINE DATA AND INFORMATION PARTNERSHIP

Other types of fisheries data are also potentially available (acoustic data, TV footage, and egg surveys), but significant effort would be required to establish standard formats and protocols. Again, these standard formats and protocols already exist for the trawl sample data, and so it was agreed to concentrate initially on the above list.

- **Data Formats:**

Data may be stored internally in formats specific to each of the **Fisheries sub-DACs** requirements, but for external use fisheries will be made available (**on request?**) in the DATRAS exchange format, which is a format standard fisheries data format established by ICES. It should be noted that this format is not particularly 'user friendly' and that end users may require further help.

- **Cruise Summary Reports**

Cruise Summary Reports were identified as containing the necessary information to support metadata descriptions of fisheries data holdings. Thus it was proposed that these reports be used as the base source for metadata information. The use of Cruise Summary Reports would have the additional benefit that CEFAS and FRS already generate Cruise Summary Reports in a standard format established by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) . An outstanding question is whether the information within the CSR format can be easily converted into a standard metadata format (specifically the evolving "MDIP flavour" of UK Gemini.)

1. AFBI to investigate whether they routinely generate Cruise Summary Reports in IOC format, if not to discuss with BODC.

2. MDIP to investigate if Cruise Summary Report information can be translated into "MDIP" metadata format.

3. If 2 is feasible, MDIP to discuss with BODC if fisheries metadata records (translated from CSRs) can be placed on the BODC server for harvesting by NERC Data Grid and thus able to be searched by the Pilot MDIP metadata discovery portal.

It was agreed that metadata on surveys should also be held on a time-series survey basis. It was also agreed that such surveys would have to have a 'health warning' – to be constructed by ????

- **Further Actions:**

Proposed by MDIP, to be agreed by FRS, AFBI and CEFAS

By end March?

- Fisheries sub_DACs to confirm their acceptance of the above recommendations.



THE UK MARINE DATA AND INFORMATION PARTNERSHIP

- Fisheries sub_DACS to generate an estimate of the number of data sets that would be involved, and the volume of data indicated by these initial recommendations.
- Fisheries sub_DACS to agree arrangements (if they are not already in place) to provide Cruise Summary Reports to BODC, which will provide the metadata descriptions of the fisheries data sets.
- Fisheries sub_DACS to establish the resource implications involved in acting as an MDIP Fisheries DAC in this way.
- Fisheries sub_DACS to propose policy regarding data access, availability for use by third parties, and any necessary charging (aim is to achieve a common position).

Questions:

- Is there any way we can take advantage of the checking that ICES carry out on DATRAS data submitted to them?
- We should provide a link to the (static) figures on the ICES website, with plots of fisheries data?
- Is there a benefit to supporting a(n MDIP deployment of) development of the iSeas software that is capable of generating dynamic plots of (datras format?) fisheries data?

David Cotton 16 Feb 2007

Comments by Andrew Newton 19 Feb 2007