

*Draft Minutes*

**Twenty-second Meeting of the IACMST Marine Environmental Data Action Group (MEDAG)  
CEFAS Lowestoft Laboratory, Pakefield Road, Lowestoft  
Wednesday 1st March 2006,**

**Attendees:**

Dr Juan Brown (JB) NERC  
Dr Mark Charlesworth (MCW) MED Team  
Dr Dave Cotton (DC) MDIP Project Manager  
Mr Garry Dawson (GD) UKHO  
Dr Gaynor Evans (GE) MED Team  
Ms Beth Greenaway (BG) Defra  
Mr Trevor Guymer, (TG) IACMST  
Professor Peter Liss (Chair)  
IACMST Independent/Chair MEDAG  
Dr Lesley Rickards (LJR) MED Coordinator  
Mr George Slessor (GS) FRS  
Mr Jon Turton (JT) Met Office  
Mr David Willis (DW) Defra

**Apologies:**

Mr Paul Leonard, Defra  
Dr John Portmann, GOOSAG Coordinator  
Mr Michael Rose, EA

<p><b>1) Welcome and introduction; apologies</b> (<i>Peter Liss</i>) The Chair introduced Steve Malcolm, Science Director of CEFAS Lowestoft, who welcomed MEDAG members to CEFAS. The Chair also welcomed members to the 22<sup>nd</sup> MEDAG meeting and apologies were read.</p>	<p><b>Actions</b></p>
<p><b>2) Minutes of last meeting/matters arising not dealt with below</b> (<i>Peter Liss</i>) (<i>Paper A 'Minutes of the twenty-first meeting of the IACMST Marine Environmental Data Action Group (MEDAG)</i>) There were no comments on the 21st MEDAG meeting minutes and the minutes were accepted as an accurate record. MCW reported back on the action list generated from the previous meeting. MCW attended a GI Gateway meeting on behalf of MEDAG and reported that, if and when their funding situation is resolved, links will be made between the GI Gateway site and MEDAG catalogues. The action for TG to look into attendance of IACMST at the meeting between the Met Office and European Commission is ongoing. TG was advised that the person to contact within the Met Office would be Jon Ponting. MCW stated that the OceanNET website comes up on the first page and within the top five web hits when 'marine data' is put into Google. This was deemed satisfactory and the action to improve 'hit' rating removed. Redesign of the GOOSAG part of OceanNET and creation of MDIP pages will go ahead. The cost of the work to GOOSAG and MDIP is still to be negotiated.</p>	<p><b>TG</b></p> <p><b>MCW/LJR</b></p>
<p><b>3) Outcome of the MEDAG Review</b> (<i>Trevor Guymer</i>) The MEDAG Review Group reported to the January IACMST Plenary. TG gave a short verbal account of the recommendations from this Review stating that the report itself will be circulated shortly. A recommendation that came out of the 1999 review was that a midterm review should be implemented. This did not occur and in retrospect should have happened. The review considered that not as much progress had been made as would be expected within MEDAG which they realised was caused by a lack of staffing. They recommended that a five year plan should be created for MEDAG and that the work of the MED team should be supported by time given over by the sponsors and members of their staff. The Review Team considered that it is important that MEDAG employs new technologies. In</p>	<p><b>TG</b></p>

<p>the IACMST organisation schematic, the Review recommended that MEDAG be represented within its own ‘box’ and the schematic updated. Discussion by reviewers on the future of MDIP and MEDAG elicited the view that they should remain separate. MDIP could move with time into the Marine Management Organisation created by the Marine Bill. MEDAG should remain as it is. In future, invoices for sponsor payment to IACMST should come from IACMST and not BODC as a statement of ownership.</p> <p>BG stated concern that sponsors do not have a voice and that change to MEDAG as a result of the review would appear to be a ‘done deal’. There is a need for a system to allow sponsors to formally respond to the reviewers’ recommendations. JT considered that the senior IACMST member on Plenary should represent the MEDAG sponsors. There are representatives of FRS, Met Office and NERC. TG stated that at the IACMST retreat it was agreed to broaden the membership of Plenary, for example, currently there is no representative from UKHO. The Chair suggested MEDAG sponsors should read the reviewers’ report and the Plenary minutes and then feed back to the next Plenary meeting via Plenary members for each sponsoring organisation.</p> <p>JT suggested that the five year plan could be used to encourage buy in from other sponsors. LJR considered that the recommendation for a five year plan is a good output from the review. Likewise, having MEDAG members do small work packets is a good idea. LJR suggested that herself, GE and MCW come up with a sketch for the plan which could then be discussed with the Chair and TG. The plan could then be taken to the sponsoring organisations for discussion in some depth; visits to organisations are intended this year. JB stated that MEDAG members should own the five year plan so that there is impetus to work through it. BG not sure whether Plenary would have the expertise to comment on a plan. But JB suggested that they may provide a useful overview. TG explained how the annual work plan is put to Plenary each year and how it is endorsed. For a five year plan it must be made clear to Plenary that a certain level of resource is required since these are the people who hold the purse strings. There are organisations represented on the Plenary that do not sponsor MEDAG i.e. DARD. BG was concerned that they have a voice but are not involved in or pay into MEDAG. The Chair noted that even if they are not a stakeholder they are unlikely to vote down a work plan.</p> <p>JB was concerned that the reviewers’ recommendation that MDIP not join MEDAG after a time period needs consideration and more thought. Also, in response to the issue of invoices having been sent out by BODC, JB reminded members that IACMST is not a legal entity and can not issue invoices. It was agreed that in the future, invoices for sponsors would come from TG at IACMST instead of BODC.</p> <p>The Chair expressed concern that MEDAG members had not had the reviewers’ report to read and recommended that this subject is returned to at the next MEDAG meeting. BG requested that the MED team come up with their response and send this to MEDAG sponsors.</p> <p>The Chair asked MEDAG members to consider whether it would be a good idea in terms of connectivity to have the same chair for both MDIP and MEDAG. Currently, this is the case but the Chair reminded members that his position is an interim appointment. TG stated that Graham Shimmiel has been appointed as the new independent member but as yet it is undecided as to which group he will Chair. LJR explained that when GOOSAG and MEDAG have meetings, they invite the opposite chair and coordinator and usually one or other tries to attend to maintain a connection between the groups.</p>	<p>LJR/MCW/GE</p> <p>JB/TG</p> <p>LJR/MCW/GE</p> <p>ALL</p>
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<p><b>4) MEDAG Coordinators' activities (including MEDAG Annual Report) (Lesley Rickards) (Paper B 'National Marine Environmental Data (MED) Coordinator Annual Report 2005')</b></p> <p>The MED Annual Report 2005 includes the proposed plan of activities for 2006. The main activities come under the headings of developing catalogues and inventories, data exchange and publicising MED activities. MEDAG sponsors are requested to comment on progress and suggest future activities.</p> <p>At the last meeting, LJR asked for input into the work plan for 2006 for which nearly all sponsors responded. LJR briefly covered the tasks completed in January and February 2006, including the meetings MCW has attended and given presentations.</p> <p>BG observed that it is very useful to have representation at meetings even though it can be a time consuming exercise.</p>	
<p><b>5) Report on MED activities undertaken by MEDAG members</b></p> <p>BG reported that since the last meeting there has been the wash up meeting for MAGIC which focussed on the upkeep of datasets. BG also reported that the NMMP database is a £500,000 project contracted to IBM. There is a need to think carefully about where it should sit in the UK and who should maintain it.</p> <p>JB gave an update on BODC work. Online delivery of data is progressing and inventory work continues. A significant resource has been set aside to make improvements to the cruise inventory.</p> <p>The Chair introduced David Willis from the Marine Legislation Division, Defra, to provide an overview of the Marine Bill and its current status. The Marine Bill is in its infancy and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) which the bill proposes has not had its roles clearly defined. The Marine Bill Consultation Document will be published at the end of this month, and there will be a 12 week consultation period. JB stated that re-inventing the wheel should be avoided and that part of the remit of IACMST is to prevent this from happening. TG asked whether there is a role for IACMST in being asked to comment during the Marine Bill consultation period.</p> <p>GD has been looking at ice data held at UKHO and as a dataset it is diverse and extensive. GD mentioned that in the future, as the ice at the polar regions declines, the regions may open up to tourism and exploitation.</p> <p>JT emphasised the importance of contributing data to international databases and that this is a specific outer core task of MEDAG.</p>	<p>TG</p>
<p><b>6) Planned MEDAG (and MDIP) promotion activities (Mark Charlesworth)</b></p> <p><i>(Paper C 'Planned publicity activities for MEDAG and MDIP') – hand out in meeting</i></p> <p>MCW stated the intention to do publicity for MDIP and MEDAG together. Paper C outlines proposed publicity tasks. TG mentioned the IACMST stand at Oceanology International (OI) and the opportunity for MDIP and MEDAG publicity. BG will be giving a presentation on MDIP at the IACMST lunchtime event at OI. DC will also be presenting on MDIP at the AGI GIS conference.</p> <p>The websites are currently being updated; the MDIP website will not be completed for OI but a dedicated page about MDIP on OceanNET will be available.</p> <p>MCW asked for comments from members. JT commented that having a similar design theme for MDIP and MEDAG web pages was good idea and shows that they are connected.</p>	

<p>TG explained that the IACMST website is on a different domain and will change as well as it needs modernising. BG emphasised the need to contact Defra logo people as there are strict guidelines for the use of there logo. The Chair suggested that Paper C should be sent for comment from sponsors not present at the meeting. BG voiced concern about more advertising for MDIP given that there are no deliverables at present.</p>	<p>MCW/GE MCW/GE</p>
<p><b>7) Joint MED-MDIP Forum</b> (<i>Lesley Rickards</i>) LJR set out ideas for a joint forum. It was suggested that there should be three presentations on marine spatial planning, NERC Data Grid and either OBIS or EurOBIS followed by updates on other initiatives. The rationale for having a forum is to keep the wider community aware of MEDAG and MDIP activities. LJR envisaged a forum of 30 individuals rather than 100 and it would not be invitation only but should not be widely advertised.</p> <p>The Chair stated that he thought the meeting should be larger. JT understood the need in the short term to keep people engaged with MEDAG but that a larger forum is also required. BG advised that potentially Defra money would be available for a meeting in the next financial year. For information, UKMIC are planning a workshop in the autumn (DC). GD suggested that initiatives that are not presented as talks could be presented as posters.</p> <p>The decision was made to have a forum of about 30 people in May/June. The three presentations mentioned above will be delivered in the morning followed by discussions in afternoon.</p>	
<p><b>8) Collaboration with GOOSAG</b> (<i>Trevor Guymer</i>) Over the last few months, the emphasis for GOOSAG has been on making use of the outcomes of recently completed work, for example, the report by Colin Summerhayes. The Reid and Portman report will be available on the web shortly. BG stated that there is strong objection to putting this report on the web as it currently stands since it is not considered to represent a true picture. TG responded that these objections were news to him and he would look into this. BG stated that objections had been voiced through the correct channels.</p>	<p>TG</p>
<p><b>9) Marine Data and Information Partnership developments</b> (<i>Dave Cotton</i>) [This presentation was given at the MDIP meeting in the afternoon]</p>	
<p><b>10) (a) UK and European marine data initiatives: drivers, timelines and coordination</b> (<i>Mark Charlesworth</i>) <b>(b) Updates on other relevant initiatives</b> (<i>All</i>) MCW gave a presentation on the national and international initiatives that concern marine data and the place IACMST groups occupy within the context of all of these initiatives. BG expanded on the role and recent projects funded by ERFF (Environmental Research Funders Forum) and mentioned a project to put together a database of monitoring metadata. MCW and BG will continue to communicate on ERFF.</p> <p>JT asked if EDIOS will remain as it is or whether an offspring of the database will be developed for UK data sets. MCW responded that there is no move to change the database but maybe additional tables could be added if required. MCW emphasised that there is an accepted need to have metadata in one place and EDIOS could be the place where UK metadata is housed. It would be better to build on EDIOS and not repeat the exercise from scratch to create a new database. BG stated that this could partly fulfil the needs of MARG and ERFF. Consideration should be given to the resource implications of building a Marine</p>	<p>ALL</p>

Monitoring Observation inventory.	
<p><b>11) MEDAG Work Plan for 2006</b> (<i>Lesley Rickards</i>)  <i>(Paper D 'Proposed MEDAG work plan 2006')</i></p> <p>Item 11 follows on from agenda item 4, and includes revision of the work plan for 2006 in the Annual Report in the light of the Report of the MEDAG Review Group. JT suggested that it would be useful to have the plot in Paper D split into different colours to indicate tasks paid for by sponsors and tasks paid for from other sources. Also, JT asked whether there are enough resources to get data to CLIVAR. LJR stated that this job is allotted to different members of BODC but any shortfall in resource to transfer CLIVAR data is passed to MEDAG. LJR added that inevitably different sponsors have different priorities hence the resources are spread across the board. LJR asked members whether in their opinion there was any task that could 'slip' in place of a more urgent task. There were none indicated. BG suggested that MEDAG could bid for funding to work on standards from Defra.</p>	
<p><b>12) Any other business</b></p> <p>LJR informed the meeting of the ICES Annual Science Conference (19-23 September 2006, Maastricht) and the theme session entitled "Environmental and fisheries data management, access, and integration". LJR suggested that a joint MEDAG/MDIP paper should be given as a presentation or at the very least as a poster. LJR has been invited to give a plenary lecture and asked for ideas for this lecture from MEDAG members.</p>	ALL
<p><b>13) Date and arrangements for next meeting</b></p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> June 2006, London</p>	

## MEDAG 22 ACTION LIST

1)	Discuss at IACMST plenary, possible attendance at a meeting between the EC Commission and Met Office.	<b>TG</b>
2)	Arrange payment from GOOSAG and MDIP for OceanNET pages	<b>MCW/LJR</b>
3)	Circulate MEDAG Review Report to MEDAG members	<b>TG</b>
4)	Draw up a draft five year work plan for MEDAG	<b>LJR/MCW/GE</b>
5)	Visits to organisations	<b>LJR/MCW/GE</b>
6)	Adopt procedure whereby MEDAG sponsors are invoiced by Trevor Guymer at IACMST and not BODC	<b>JB/TG</b>
7)	Add subject of MEDAG Review to MEDAG 23 agenda	<b>LJR/MCW/GE</b>
8)	Draw up a draft response to the MEDAG Review Report	<b>LJR/MCW/GE</b>
9)	Consider the advantages/disadvantages of having the same chair for MDIP and MEDAG. MED team to elicit opinion from members	<b>ALL</b>
10)	Establish/consider whether there is a role for IACMST in the Marine Bill consultation process	<b>TG</b>
11)	Check correct usage of Defra logo on OceanNET	<b>MCW/GE</b>
12)	Send out Paper C ('Planned publicity activities for MEDAG and MDIP') to MEDAG sponsors not present at the meeting for comment	<b>MCW/GE</b>
13)	Investigate the objections raised by BG against immediate publishing of the Reid and Portmann report	<b>TG</b>
14)	Consider the resource implications of building a Marine Monitoring Observation inventory to satisfy the requirements of ERFF, EDIOS and MARG	<b>ALL</b>
15)	Contact MED team with ideas for ICES Annual Science Conference joint MEDAG/MDIP paper	<b>ALL</b>