

*Confirmed Minutes*

**Twenty-first Meeting of the IACMST Marine Environmental Data Action Group (MEDAG)  
IMarEST, 80 Coleman Road, London  
Wednesday 14th December 2005**

**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 Jason Scholey (JS) UKHO (for John Pepper)  
Mr George Slessor (GS) FRS  
Dr Bill Turrell (BT) Fisheries Research Services  
Mr Jon Turton (JT) Met Office

**Apologies:**

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

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| <p><b>1) Welcome and introduction; apologies</b> (<i>Peter Liss</i>)<br/>The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and ‘round the table’ introductions were given. Apologies received were read out. Jason Scholey was attending MEDAG on behalf of Jon Pepper (UKHO).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                |
| <p><b>2) Minutes of last meeting/matters arising not dealt with below</b> (<i>Peter Liss</i>)<br/>(<i>Paper A ‘Minutes of the Twentieth Meeting of the IACMST Marine Environmental Data Action Group (MEDAG)’</i>)<br/>JT noted an inaccuracy in the previous meeting’s minutes and requested that in section 5 (‘Update on GOOS AG activities and Action Plan’) the words ‘through consultation’ are changed to ‘through stakeholder groups’. BG remarked on the good quality of the minutes.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | GE             |
| <p><b>3) Review of MED AG activities/MED Annual Report</b> (<i>Lesley Rickards</i>)<br/>(<i>Paper B ‘Progress on MED Coordination Milestones January – December 2005’</i>)<br/>LJR explained that currently there is a shortfall in the funding of one of the MED posts. The NERC funds the MED coordinator post and the combined contributions of Defra, EA, FRS, Met Office and UKHO are intended to cover the other MED post. Rising costs however have meant that the costs of this MED post are not being financially met. The options here are for the contributions to be increased or other funding organisations to be sought.<br/><br/>LJR showed a series of slides outlining the duties of the MED Coordinator and the breakdown of inner and outer core work in terms of specific activities and time required for these activities. Members were re-familiarised with the metadata catalogues and inventories maintained by MEDAG. UKMED is a discovery metadata inventory and data sets currently number 700 and come from 100 UK organisations. All environmental parameters are represented within this inventory including biological parameters. It is not an exhaustive catalogue but includes a wide variety of organisations and parameters. This inventory has been revised and updated in 2005 and feeds into the European</p> |                |

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| <p>directory - EDMED. The cruise inventory contains research cruise metadata for 6200 cruises from 1960s onwards. Old cruise reports have this year been scanned and attached to the inventory. It also holds information about research cruises undertaken by non-UK vessels in UK waters. The UK inventory of marine monitoring measurements which was originally compiled and maintained for GOOSAG has been updated and it now feeds into EDIOS (European Directory of the Ocean-observing System).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                     |
| <p>BG asked if NMMP metadata is included in the inventories and MCW responded that it has been recently included. BT asked if fisheries data are included and LJR replied that it is if it has been sent to the MED team for inclusion. DC asked what the difference between UKMED and EDIOS was, to which LJR responded that UKMED includes all data sets whereas EDIOS relates to regular and repeated observations (e.g. monitoring data) only, but it includes more detailed information than EDMED. GS advised that the Current Meter inventory is not working. JB explained that the web access is being updated and will be active soon and apologised for the inconvenience.</p>                                                                                                                                                         |                     |
| <p>LJR informed the meeting of the MEDAG organised workshop held in November 2005 entitled 'Coastal morphology, marine ecology, underwater geology and biology photographs and videos: their availability, uses and curation'. This brought together a disparate group of people from different disciplines and organisations. The plan is to collate the presentations and publish them as an IACMST reference document. A recommendation that came out of the workshop was that MDIP should carry the work forward and utilise the new Data Archive for Seabed Species and Habitats at the MBA (MCW).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>LJR, MCW, GE</p> |
| <p>LJR advised members that the MED team would appreciate receiving information about new datasets, CD-ROMs or any newsworthy item from members for advertising on the OceanNET. OceanNET is an information resource. Currently, OceanNET is shared between GOOSAG, MEDAG and MDIP and the space given over to MDIP is small but this will increase as website redesign is continued by MCW. OceanNET is an important way of getting information out but the website needs to be advertised so more people know about it. A consultant was employed earlier this year to address the advertisement of OceanNET and the MEDAG. Amongst other advertising activities, Bev McKenzie of IMarEST was approached about having a regular advert in the 'Marine Scientist'. This is still an option and will be pursued.</p>                             | <p>ALL</p>          |
| <p>Meeting members were updated on the UK Moored Current Meter data product. This is due to be run through de-spiking software and there are 4000 data series held in BODC. Some of the data sets are restricted and licences will be needed for the DVD. This product will initially be available on DVD but will be web delivered in the future.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>LJR</p>          |
| <p>LJR advised members that the work done by the MED team requires guidance from MEDAG members. The Chair noted that, in the schema illustrating the make up of IACMST, it is not obvious where guidance should come from. The Chair considered that sponsors should have the role and responsibility for such guidance. GD advised that middle level guidance would be a good idea rather than plenary driven guidance. LJR suggested that this is an issue for all to think about. BG saw MDIP as the overarching framework for MEDAG work. BT considered that MARG (Marine Assessment and Reporting Group) should be included somewhere in the schema. MARG is a newly formed Defra group with members invited from monitoring agencies. They will decide how best to meet policy demands by advising on monitoring programmes and review</p> |                     |

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| <p>the outcomes and assessments from monitoring data. MARG is ecosystem based whereas GOOSAG is sector orientated. BT considered that one criticism of MEDAG is that it is still focussed on physical oceanography and has not expanded into ecosystem data. LJR responded that this is an impression only and is not based on fact. The Chair remarked that this group here today is not represented on the schema. Further, there is a need to decide on the channel through which LJR and her team receive criticism and guidance. TG noted that the sponsors' board is composed of decision makers who can make decisions concerning resource but that they are not necessarily data managers, whereas the project board is the other way round. These individuals however are often one and same person. BT said that he thought that this morning's MEDAG meeting was about guiding LJR and the MED team and that this afternoon was concerned with issues of funding. BG stated that the MDIP meeting in the afternoon was the MDIP Project Board meeting with the MDIP Project Manager. The Chair cut short the discussions and considered that the issues raised could not be resolved and that discussion was needed outside of the meeting. TG told the meeting that the MEDAG review will report to Plenary on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2006.</p> <p>The Chair asked for any other questions. JS asked about links to the GI Gateway. LJR responded that they are not as good as they should be and that links should be improved. BG suggested that there are methods of improving Google hits for the OceanNET website. MCW remarked that in his experience OceanNET can be found towards the top of a Google hits page but then this is dependent on the search words used. [Post meeting note: If the terms 'marine', 'data' and 'UK' are used in a Google search OceanNET is in the top 5 returns.]</p> | <p>LJR, MCW, GE</p> <p>MCW</p> |
| <p><b>4) Report on MED activities by undertaken by MEDAG members (All)</b><br/> GS reported that updated FRS records have been sent to MCW for UKMED.</p> <p>BG reported that the MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) project for marine data has now completed and the Coastal and Marine Resource Atlas can be found at <a href="http://www.magic.gov.uk">www.magic.gov.uk</a>. The NMMP data will be housed in an IBM designed database which should go live in April 2006.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                |
| <p><b>5) EU INSPIRE (Mark Charlesworth)</b><br/> <i>(Paper C 'INSPIRE drafters meeting 5<sup>th</sup> December, Defra, London')</i></p> <p>MCW briefed members about the INSPIRE drafters meeting that took place on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Representatives on the drafting team meet monthly to assess that developments in the drafting of INSPIRE rules meet with UK policy. This meeting attended by MCW was extra to these monthly meetings and was meant for a wider group of people. The European Commission visited Defra in October to discuss INSPIRE and is visiting other main EU Member States. The UK stance is that of pushing to use the standards already in use for different themed areas as opposed to the notion of 'one size fits all' standards being applied across all data areas. Academics are pushing for the latter approach.</p> <p>JT remarked that it would be disastrous for the contact that the Met Office has with non-EU organisations if the EU did not accept international standards. The Met Office has requested a meeting with European Commissioners to discuss INSPIRE and MCW proposed that the oceanographic community should also attend this meeting to voice its views.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                |

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| <p>It was felt that an appropriate way forward would be to discuss these issues at IACMST plenary and, if agreed, contact the Defra lead (Niall Watson) and Met Office (John Ponting) to communicate the oceanographic community's desire to attend a meeting with the EC and Met Office.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>TG</p> |
| <p><b>6) Marine Data and Information Partnership developments</b> (<i>Dave Cotton</i>)<br/> <i>Brief discussion of plans of how the MED Coordination Team will work with the MDIP Project Manager</i></p> <p>DC briefed members on the two year work plan for MDIP. Phase 1 would be programme development and initial outputs (6 months). Phase 2 pilot/product testing (12 months) and Phase 3 implementation (6 months) and how then MDIP can best be rolled out to provide a long-term service. DC considers that MEDAG and MDIP can work together with MEDAG focussing on the existing system of providing datasets and MDIP addressing user needs and how best to meet them. Ultimately, it would make more sense for the two groups to merge after two years. The role of MDIP is to crystallize what the problems are and come up with solutions. The Chair asked whether the implementation of the 'solutions' would move to MEDAG or remain with MDIP after two years. DC responded that this is an unknown at the moment. DC showed a schema outlining his understanding of the relationship between MEDAG and MDIP which he ran through. JT remarked that it was a very good schema for elucidating MEDAG and MDIP work. DC remarked that the visibility of OceanNET is a problem and cited the example that having visited many individuals in various organisations many had flagged the requirement for metadata standards and yet had not known that this information was already available on OceanNET. In fact, they had not heard of OceanNET. BT noted that within the schema it is not implicit that MARG is the main user, to which BG and JB responded that there are a wide variety of users. JT remarked that he definitely agreed with the need to join MEDAG and MDIP.</p> |           |
| <p><b>7) MED Forum</b> (<i>Lesley Rickards</i>)<br/> <i>At the last MEDAG meeting, it was agreed that a MED Forum should be established. Before the first meeting, it is necessary to plan the format and mode of operation of this, and appoint a chair.</i></p> <p>LJR put forward three different options for the format of the MED forum. Option 1: 'MEDAG-like' meetings similar to previous meetings, Option 2: as in Option 1 but including MDIP, Option 3: workshops such as the marine samples workshop or the recent marine photograph curation workshop. Also, at what frequency should the meetings be held (six monthly?) and who should be the chair.</p> <p>TG considered that a workshop can be very useful but can make people feel disenfranchised if it is not their area of interest. Likewise, if the scope of a workshop is broadened too far individuals would not wish to attend for a small fraction of the day that is of relevance to them (BG). The Chair noted that universities are not involved at all (with reference to the 'Other Groups with MED interests' box in the IACMST connections schema). GS and GD consider that there should be both a forum and workshop as discussions in a forum should probably direct what subject is covered in a workshop. The Chair suggested that what is important is the need to reach as far a field as possible with publicity for meetings/workshops.</p> <p>Agreement was reached that Option 2 would be preferred (with invited speakers). The Chair noted that considering biology is not well represented in MEDAG or MDIP then</p>                                                                                                                                                                                   |           |

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| <p>biologists should be favoured for invited speakers. Workshops could be once a year but there should be flexibility i.e. where topics for workshops come up then more than one a year and conversely less than one a year where topics are not obvious. It was suggested that it was important to have a good first forum meeting agenda and exciting speakers. BT advised that a speaker on spatial planning would be very opportune. TG stated that IACMST is having a stand at Oceanology International (21-23 March 2006) and will be having a lunch event. It was agreed that this event should be used to publicise MEDAG and MDIP. BT pointed out that Oceanology International is a good forum to use but by no means engages the broader community.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>LJR, TG,<br/>MCW, GE</p>               |
| <p><b>8) Work plan for 2006</b> (<i>Lesley Rickards</i>)</p> <p>LJR detailed the inner and outer core tasks that are the backbone of MED team work. Against each task, the required staff resource in months/annum was given. The inference from this was that decisions concerning the tasks to be incorporated into the 2006 work plan needed to be made, for example, if metadata catalogues were updated only, this would take 11 months and no other tasks would get done. There are certain priority work areas however. Visibility is low and work needs to be done on this. The GOOSAG have requested an update to their part of OceanNET for this year (for which they will have to provide funds). Visiting organisations is a useful 'raising visibility' exercise and should also happen in 2006. LJR understood that this information would require consideration on the part of members. With respect to funding, the answer is to either increase subscriptions or recruit more funders.</p> <p>GS remarked that he is in broad agreement with the work tasks but considers the current meter data product needs to be delivered without delay. JT noted that International data exchange needs to have some time allocated in 2006. BG suggested that 'Publicity' is a confusing term (on the final slide, 3rd bullet point) and should be changed to 'Communication'. The Chair noted that some funding is available from other pots (e.g. MDIP and GOOSAG). BG asked what data would be asked for from visited organisations. LJR corrected BG stating that MEDAG does not request data rather gets information to update its metadata catalogues. MEDAG does not hold any data. JB raised the issue of funding stating that in some respects funds are being siphoned to MDIP. Presumably sponsors do not want to see subscriptions increased so the answer would be to get another sponsor. At the moment, it is not easy to sell MEDAG to potential extra sponsors as it costs 5k per annum to join MDIP or 8k per annum for MEDAG. TG suggested that LJR circulate the presentation for members to deliberate. The Chair asked how we should get other sponsors involved. LJR suggested that either herself or another member of IACMST visit organisations. BT stated that the intention to visit organisations could be a good chance to recruit extra sponsors but would need a very good presentation and a very clear idea of the differences between MDIP and MEDAG. DC noted that not all MDIP money is committed and some could be transmitted from MDIP to MEDAG for improvements in the MDIP section of OceanNET. JT remarked that it is important for MDIP to have a web presence and profile so it should therefore pay for it.</p> | <p>MCW</p> <p>LJR, MCW</p> <p>DC, MCW</p> |
| <p><b>9) Any other business</b> - None</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                           |
| <p><b>10) Date and arrangements for next meeting</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> March 2006 – MEDAG funders meeting [Post meeting note: This meeting is likely to be held at CEFAS, Lowestoft.]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                           |

## MEDAG 21 ACTION LIST

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| 1)  | Amend MEDAG 20 minutes as requested by J Turton changing the words 'through consultation' to 'through stakeholder groups' in section 5 ('Update on GOOS AG activities and Action Plan') | <b>GE</b>                |
| 2)  | Collate the presentations from the marine photographic curation workshop in November 2005 and publish them as an IACMST reference document                                              | <b>LJR MCW<br/>GE</b>    |
| 3)  | Send information about new datasets, CD-ROMs or any newsworthy item to the MED team for advertising on OceanNET                                                                         | <b>ALL</b>               |
| 4)  | Contact Bev McKenzie of IMarEST about having a regular MEDAG advertisement in the 'Marine Scientist'                                                                                    | <b>LJR</b>               |
| 5)  | Improve links to the GI Gateway                                                                                                                                                         | <b>LJR MCW<br/>GE</b>    |
| 6)  | TG to discuss at IACMST plenary possible attendance at a meeting between the EC Commission and Met Office.                                                                              | <b>TG</b>                |
| 7)  | Look into the need for improving GOOGLE hits for the OceanNET website                                                                                                                   | <b>MCW</b>               |
| 8)  | Arrange lunch time publicity event for MEDAG and MDIP at Oceanology International, 21-23 March 2006                                                                                     | <b>LJR TG<br/>MCW GE</b> |
| 9)  | Negotiate payment by the GOOSAG for redesign of their part of OceanNET                                                                                                                  | <b>MCW</b>               |
| 10) | Visit marine organisations to publicise the work of MEDAG and scout for further MEDAG sponsor(s)                                                                                        | <b>LJR MCW</b>           |
| 11) | Negotiate payment by the MDIP for redesign and expansion of their part of OceanNET                                                                                                      | <b>MCW DC</b>            |