Service Level Agreement between the Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory (POL) and the British Oceanographic Data Centre (BODC) in respect of the management of data generated by POL's programmes.

Introduction

1. This document outlines a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between The Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory (POL) and the British Oceanographic Data Centre (BODC) in respect of the management of data generated by POL programmes. It refers specifically to the management of data and does not cover POL's responsibilities to NERC in providing the necessary infra-structure to host BODC. The latter is covered by a separate Memorandum of Agreement.

Background

2. NERC requires that those in receipt of funding have in place a data management plan that ensures that data and the necessary metadata are passed to its Designated Data Centres for longer term curation and distribution on request. An outline of the principles and responsibilities can be found in the NERC Data Policy (www.nerc.ac.uk/data/policy.shtml). This ensures that the information that forms the basis of NERC's research and understanding is readily available, at known standards, for scrutiny and future interpretation. The policy helps fulfils a key element of NERC's mission to "disseminate knowledge of, and engage society in, the environmental sciences".

3. The Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) mean that NERC and its research centres are legally required to ensure that data collected through NERC funding are readily available to individuals and companies on request.

4. Other public bodies funding data collection and research (e.g. DEFRA, DTI and the EU) will have similar requirements to make data available.

5. As part of its core funding from NERC (2001-2006), BODC has set aside one person year per year of baseline effort for each of the four NERC Marine Research/Collaborative Centres (SOC, POL, PML, SAMS). This funding also includes a resource to support the basic IT infra-structure necessary to maintain and update BODC's databases and data delivery systems.

6. If Research/Collaborative Centres generate data at a rate above that which can be managed within the baseline level of effort, then the present expectation is that this must be met from within the resources of the relevant Science Programme. The POL Science Plan document already explicitly recognises this fact.

BODC's responsibilities

7. BODC will designate a Laboratory Liaison Officer (LLO) to manage the SLA between POL and BODC within the limits of the staff resource detailed in paragraphs 5 & 13 (i.e. three person years effort annually). The broad responsibilities of the LLO are:

- To maintain contact with the POL scientists in order to understand scientific activities, potential data generation and requests.
- With POL, to identify activities (past, present and future) that require data management.
- Advise on and manage the delivery of data, its assembly, curation and future dissemination.

8. BODC's primary responsibility is to ingest all (excepting the gravity GPS data) POL's calibrated data for longer-term curation and subsequent distribution such that the data should be readily useable without reference to the originator.

9. In addition to the basic management responsibilies of a Designated Data Centre, it will be most efficient for BODC to undertake calibration and quality assurance for a number of data sets and types (e.g. CTD & shipboard underway). The quantity and nature of such additional work will be determined by the available resource (the residual of three man years effort after the responsibilities outlined in paragraph 8 have been fulfilled) and based on priorities determined by POL, but in discussion with BODC.

10. As part of the role as a National Data Centre, BODC will undertake to service requests for POL data from organisations outside POL (given that data is lodged with BODC). BODC will also service requests from within POL for data. However, activities such as the compilation and ingestion of data from multiple external data providers (e.g. for model validation) will be the responsibility of POL unless specifically agreed otherwise.

11. Once the existing backlog of Coastal Observatory cruise data has been cleared, BODC undertake to deliver calibrated CTD and shipboard underway data within 20 working days of receipt of the data, cruise reports and CTD log sheets and salinities, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

12. BODC guarantee that POL will normally have sole access to their data for a period of 2 years following their collection unless specific exceptions are agreed between BODC and the appropriate programme leader. In this respect, the data gathered under the Coastal Observatory banner are an exception, with the data being served via the POL Web site.

POL's responsibilities

13. To provide the necessary resource over and above that available as part of BODC's core funding (see paragraph 5) to ensure that POL meets its obligations under the NERC Data Policy. In the first instance POL will provide £60.8k (no overheads) for FY 2005/06 to cover the costs associated with two posts at BODC (1 Band 6 and 1 Band 7). This figure will be indexed for pay, national insurance and pension inflation in succeeding years.

14. POL undertakes to deliver all data to BODC, whether processed or raw, in a form agreed with BODC. This will include the necessary metadata, fieldwork/cruise documentation and instrument information.

15. POL will undertake an audit of data collected since 1 January 1995. This information will be compared with BODC's current data holdings in order to asses the extent of the unmanaged data. The audit will also consider the potential for BODC to manage and serve a number of "ideal" data sets from hydrodynamic models.

16. BODC's LLO will be invited to attend the appropriate science planning meetings in order to discuss data collection and management activities.

17. When bidding for contracts in addition to POL's core science programme, POL will consult with BODC to ensure that appropriate measures and funds are included to guarantee full management of the resulting data. POL also undertakes to provide BODC with regular progress reports on such bids.

Scope of Data

18. As a minimum, management of data is to include all that collected since the start of the Coastal Observatory and the data collected during the current science programme (start April 2001).

19. Following the POL data audit (paragraph 15), the POL Director and Science Area Leaders, in conjunction with BODC, will consider the appropriate action in respect of unmanaged data.

20. An inventory of data will be maintained, summarising the status in terms of "awaiting management", "managed" and "forthcoming/expected work".

21. BODC and POL are committed to developing a mutually acceptable approach to the maintenance of an appropriate inventory of raw unprocessed data (observational and models) and the storage of the data.

This SLA agreed between:

Dr A.E. Hill (Director POL) ..... (31/03/2005)

Dr J. Brown (Director BODC) ..... (31/03/2005)