Developing the NERC Data Policy

Benefits to NERC of a data management policy.

Mark Thorley
NERC Data Management Coordinator
NERC Data Policy

• NERC.
• Drivers.
• Policy – history, elements, obligations & infrastructure.
• Benefits and lessons learned.
Natural Environment Research Council

- Science budget c.£370M
- Mission – research, survey & monitoring
Why Data Management?

- NERC must have data available to support its mission.
- Many environmental data irreplaceable.
- Supports science base sustainability.
- In short - NERC’s data holdings are one of NERC’s core assets.
Other Drivers

- OECD Principles.
- Science base sustainability and exploitation.
- Good scientific practice.
- But, must reflect the scientific need.
NERC Data Policy - Background

• Policy and guidance as a handbook.

• Brought together and formalised good practice already within NERC.

• Covers life-cycle of data from collection and exploitation to disposal.
NERC Data Policy – Elements

• Plan data management before doing the science.
  – The bigger the project the more this must be demonstrated.

• Data collected under NERC funding must be offered to NERC at end of project.

• PIs allowed a reasonable time for first use.

• NERC will licence and charge for data depending on use.

• Support for *bona fide* academic and public good use.
Obligations

• PIs expected to manage their data effectively during the life of their project to enable appropriate exploitation.

• NERC will manage the data for the long-term, post project, to enable effective, post project exploitation.
Infrastructure to Support Policy

• Designated data centres responsible for NERC’s “data assets”.

• AEDC, BADC, BODC, EIC/NWA, NEODC & NGDC.

• Plus programme centres, eg. NEBC.

• Long-term commitment supported by Science Information Strategy.
User Benefit

• Nationally consistent data sets:
  – eg. geological hazards, flood risk.
• Provision of data to the community:
  – eg: BADC access to Met Office data.
• Time series for studies of change:
  – eg: temperature & oceanographic profiles.
Benefits to NERC

• Senior management - recognition of value of data and information.
  – Support for ‘information’ activities.

• Provides foundations to support:
  – Knowledge transfer and exploitation.
  – Support of FoI / EIR requests.
  – Linking of data to publications.
Lessons Learned

• Writing the policy is the easy bit.
• Will require:
  – Senior management ‘buy in’;
  – Community ‘buy-in’;
  – Understanding of the ‘value’ of data;
  – Resources to implement and monitor.
• Can take time – but will deliver benefits.
Further information

- NERC: [www.nerc.ac.uk](http://www.nerc.ac.uk)
- Data Centres & Data Policy: [www.nerc.ac.uk/data](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/data)
- NERC Data Grid: [ndg.badc.rl.ac.uk](http://ndg.badc.rl.ac.uk)
- Mark Thorley, NERC Data Management Coordinator. [mrt@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:mrt@nerc.ac.uk)