Environmental Observation Activity Catalogue Upgrade

Background The UKEOF Environmental Observation Activity Catalogue was a first attempt to list all UK funded environmental observation programmes and work out who were collecting what data, where, why and at what cost. It contains over 1000 metadata records of environmental observation activities undertaken and funded by public and third sector organisations.

The catalogue provides a unique management tool to underpin the activities and requirements of the environmental observation community. However, the needs of the community have developed since the catalogue's launch in 2009 and it is therefore timely to address these needs.

What will the new catalogue do? When launched in spring 2014, users will be able to find out information such as:

- Which activities are involved in a specific network
- Which organisation operates a particular site
- How many sites collect data for a programme
- Where a site is positioned
- How many sites an organisation operates
- What sites exist near another site

Why is the catalogue being upgraded? The upgrade will allow easier access to more up to date information on the UK's monitoring programmes – helping to facilitate joint working, provide the opportunity for more comprehensive/holistic monitoring activities and where possible drive efficiency through collaborative data gathering activities.

Additional information about geo-location will now be populated and through a map function users will be able to visualise WHERE observations are being carried out. The upgrade will also make it easier and quicker to update information by allowing organisations to update their information themselves using an online editor tool.

What does this mean for the data suppliers? Organisations who currently supply information to the catalogue will be able to continue doing so to provide the UK picture. For the future UKEOF will aim to import information directly from data.gov.uk to save organisations having to update their information in more than one place, but currently not all the information is available.

Why do we need a catalogue when we have data.gov.uk? In addition to the fields held on data.gov.uk, the catalogue documents the costs of observations. It also holds data from organisations that do not have a requirement to publish their information on data.gov.uk. As data.gov.uk holds huge amounts of information, it is not always easy to find specific information in niche areas and it will take time for all public data to be made available and easily discoverable and harvestable. In the meantime the catalogue will continue to provide the observation community access to information about all UK observations in one place. As data.gov.uk develops, the needs of the community will be addressed and the best options for the catalogue considered.

The new catalogue will be INSPIRE compliant and will also provide organisations with a tool to meet their INSPIRE EF theme obligations, and to publish their metadata on data.gov.uk, if required. This will ensure interoperability and encourage data sharing and reuse.

Any questions? Contact the UKEOF secretariat on office@ukeof.org.uk 01793 411999