

The UKEOF catalogue and the metadata landscape

UKEOF

The UK Environmental Observation Framework (UKEOF) works to improve coordination of the observational evidence needed to understand and manage the changing natural environment. It is a partnership of public sector organisations with an interest in using and providing evidence from environmental observations.

The role of the UKEOF catalogue

The catalogue is first and foremost a mechanism to provide a national overview of environmental observations, looking holistically across all of the environmental domains. The catalogue contains over 1200 metadata records of environmental observation activities undertaken and funded by public and third sector organisations.

The UKEOF community have highlighted the need for the catalogue to be maintained and updated to ensure that decision making is based on up to date and relevant information. The catalogue is therefore currently being upgraded to meet new community needs and take into account the evolving landscape including advances made with data.gov.uk (DGU). The UKEOF catalogue will be fully compliant with the EU legislation INSPIRE Annex III Environmental Monitoring Facilities (EF) theme when launched in spring 2014.

When upgraded, the catalogue will also be a tool for organisations that do not have their own internal systems to create, publish, search and download EF metadata information in INSPIRE EF format. Organisations that have their own capability will be able to supply information, in an INSPIRE format, to the UKEOF catalogue to complete the UK picture.

Public sector organisations have a legal obligation to supply their datasets to DGU¹. UKEOF will add a single entry to DGU to describe the whole UKEOF catalogue.

Keeping up with EU legislation: Developing the INSPIRE Annex III Environmental Monitoring Facility (EF) theme

The INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community) Directive (2007/2/EC), and associated UK Regulations, place legal obligations on public authorities which hold geographical data about the environment and things that affect the environment. The Directive has been put in place to ensure spatial data infrastructure across the EU is compatible to create interoperability and maximise the ability to share environmental data.

The UKEOF community provided significant input into the development of the original UKEOF catalogue specification, making sure that it would meet the needs of the environmental monitoring community. When the INSPIRE EF specification was being developed the UKEOF community, through the Data Advisory Group, were heavily involved in the consultation. As a result the INSPIRE specification was highly influenced by the knowledge and experience gained through the Data Advisory Group and the previously developed UKEOF catalogue and there is therefore considerable commonality between the two specifications.

UKEOF continues to be engaged with the UKLP 'Architecture and interoperability board working group, metadata subgroup', to ensure efficiency of implementation of INSPIRE EF in the UK. Through the Data Advisory Group UKEOF have supported the UKLP community and continue to engage them, for example, by jointly (with UKLP) hosting a successful INSPIRE EF themed workshop "Sharing environmental monitoring data" 2013. The Data Advisory Group have also been identified as the UK lead for INSPIRE EF.

¹ See UKLP 'Guide 0: UK Implementation of INSPIRE' <http://data.gov.uk/sites/default/files/UKL-Getting-Started-Guide-0-v2-0.pdf>