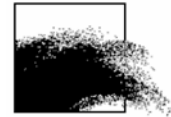


MANAGEMENT UNIT OF THE
NORTH SEA MATHEMATICAL MODELS

BELGIAN MARINE DATA CENTRE



**Data reporting guidelines for the programme
Global change, ecosystems and biodiversity
(SPSD 2)**

April 2004

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1. Introduction

This document is prepared as a basis for the reporting of data to the Belgian Marine Data Centre (MUMM-BMDC) for the North Sea marine projects of the SPSD 2 programme financed by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office.

During the SPSD 1 programme, the laboratories had the choice to report their data in a common layout format or in a free format. Only two laboratories reported their results to the BMDC in the common layout format. The majority of the laboratories reported their results in a free format.

What the BMDC learned out of this was that the results reported in the common layout format were (nearly) complete and could be imported in the IDOD database without significant problems. Those reported in the free format often required a lot of extra investment due to missing or confusing information. These (supplementary) efforts concerned not only the BMDC, but also the data-originator.

The common layout format is an efficient tool for reporting because:

- all information needed is reported;
- all information is in one file for a data type (water, sediment, ...);
- the structure is not confusing;
- it's less time consuming for data-originator and BMDC;
- the data can be imported in a shorter time period;
- ...

2. Reporting format

The laboratories are asked to report their data using the common layout format defined by the BMDC. Laboratories that have their own, comprehensive and well-documented, database are, of course, free to transfer it as a whole to the BMDC or to make a relevant export. In specific cases, the results can be reported in a free format. In all situations, bilateral contacts will be helpful to clarify eventual problems.

2.1. *Common layout format*

The format varies with the data type to be reported, *i.e.* different formats are used for parameters in water, sediment, biota and for e.g. diversity data, ... The format is available as an Excel template with different worksheets (campaigns, stations, samples and results, analytical methods). In the format, some fields are mandatory while others are there for completing the dataset or for a specific set of data. At least the mandatory fields should be filled in by the laboratory.

2.2. *Database format*

Laboratories using a database structure to store their data, can report their data to the BMDC by transferring a copy of the database or an export with the relevant data. The laboratory should make sure that at least all mandatory fields defined in the common layout format are available in their dataset.

2.3. *Free format*

Data in a free format will only be accepted by the BMDC if their intrinsic characteristics make the common layout format inappropriate for reporting them. Anyway, the meta-information like campaigns, stations, samples, *etc.*, should be reported in the common layout format.

3. Some highlights about the common layout format

Results as such are useless without information on place, time, units, methodology ... (so-called meta-information). The common layout contains therefore several worksheets where different kinds of meta-information are to be described.

3.1. *Required information*

A provisional list of the mandatory fields for every worksheet is :

Campaigns

In this sheet, an overview of all campaigns that resulted in the dataset need to be described by the following information :

- campaign code;
- platform used (code and name);
- start and end date;
- area description (*e.g.* Belgian continental platform).

Samples

In this sheet, an overview of all samples taken needs to be identified by :

- unique sample code ;
- station code (with reference coordinates) and/or exact latitude and longitude with position reference;
- start date/time (UTC) and/or end date/time (UTC) of the sample;
- sampling instrument;
- sampling depth;
- species and general information (*e.g.* sampling conditions, problems

during treatment,).

Results

In this sheet, the analytical results are reported :

- unique sample code ;
- parameter;
- value accompanied by a quality flag;
- project.

Analytical methods

This sheet describes the sample handling and the methods used for analysing the parameters in a sample by :

- parameter;
- unit;
- matrix;
- sample preservation, separation, pre-treatment;
- description of the analytical method with detection limits, expected accuracy and precision;
- analytical laboratory.

3.2. *Additional information*

- Information on quality assurance : results of control charts and inter-comparison exercises;
- Reference to published literature.

4. **Deadlines for reporting and importing**

The data-originator reports each year her/his complete dataset before the 31st of March of the year following the year in which the samples were taken. If no data were measured during that year or when it is impossible to respect the deadline, the BMDC should be informed.

The BMDC sends a confirmation of reception of the dataset to the data-originator within one month. In case of an incomplete dataset, the BMDC sends an overview of the missing information to the data-originator before the end of the second month after reception of the dataset.

The BMDC makes sure that the dataset is imported in the IDOD database within the period of 4 months after reception of the complete dataset.

The BMDC informs the data-originator when his/her dataset is imported and thus online available.

4.1. *Updates*

Quite often, data-originators send updates of their originally reported data-

sets. Before sending updates to the BMDC, a personal contact between the data-originator and the BMDC is advisable. Depending of the progress in the import phase, the way of handling updates can be different.

5. **Deadline for reporting datasets 2002-2003**

Common layout formats corresponding to the data type measured by a laboratory will be made available in the course of April 2004.

As a consequence of this delay, it is proposed that datasets corresponding to the years 2002 and 2003, be reported by the end of May 2004 at the latest.

Ⓢ COLOPHON

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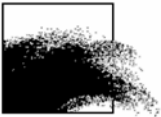
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