

Welcome to the November 2006 edition of the BlueNet Newsletter. Since the last newsletter a lot of work has been done to get the basic infrastructure for the BlueNet project in place, and the system will be up and running soon for the input of marine data from Australian Universities into secure repositories.

Work has focused on:

- Recruiting staff for the BlueNet Project Office, for placement into member universities and into AODCJF host agencies
- Development of the Metadata Entry and Search Tool [MEST]
- Development of contracts;
- Participation in testing and further skills-building in relation to the Oceans Portal, and other activities related to the development of the Portal;
- Development of hosting guidelines;
- Development of training material, and other support;
- Exploration of IP issues, authentication and access;
- Continued development of communication and outreach streams, including relationship-building with BlueNet stakeholders;
- Participation in development of the NCRIS-eMII proposal;

Staffing

Four employees now work at the Project Office at the University of Tasmania – [Kate Roberts](#) (Project Director), [John Gibson](#) (Executive Officer), [Kylie Cahill](#) (Administrative Officer) and [Regina Magierowski](#), who has recently been appointed to provide training and support for university-based employees. For further contact details, please refer to the BlueNet website at www.bluenet.org.au

Selection and appointment of university-based Marine Data Facilitators is well underway, with appointments made at James Cook University, Sydney University, University of Western Australia, Australian National University and University of Tasmania. Two further positions will soon be filled.

The BlueNet Project Office is negotiating with other universities to bring them into the BlueNet community. The role of the university Marine Data Facilitators is to identify marine data resources within the university sector and to facilitate their inclusion into BlueNet, to build a culture of data-sharing, and to ensure that processes and support are in place to ongoing submission of data into the future. They work closely with BlueNet Champions, who are senior members of Academic Staff who have agreed to promote and support BlueNet within their university communities. Regina Magierowski from the BlueNet Project Office is responsible for providing training and support to the Marine Data Facilitators. Regina will

visit all data Facilitators on a regular basis to assist the facilitators and to assess progress of the project.

Appointment of Data Administrators at BlueNet hosting nodes (currently the AODCJF agencies) is also progressing rapidly, with staff appointed to 4 of the 6 agencies (Australian Antarctic Data Centre, the Royal Australian Navy - Directorate of Oceanography and Meteorology, CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research (CMAR), and Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)). Selection is underway for positions at Geoscience Australia, and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. The role of these staff is to ensure that facilities are in place for the receipt and storage of BlueNet data using data management best practice, and also to facilitate easy discovery and recovery of BlueNet data curated by them, in part through development of web services.

These staff will also be engaged in activities related to the further development of the Marine Information Infrastructure, as well as in data archaeology activities within the agencies. They will be tasked with finding and incorporating into BlueNet data that is ranked by the community as high-priority, but would otherwise remain unavailable.

Metadata Entry and Search Tool (MEST)

Development of the metadata entry and search tool, commonly referred to as the MEST, is a central component of the BlueNet strategy. The descriptive information gathered by this tool is based on ISO19115 for the development of geo-spatial metadata records, but also includes many marine-specific fields, as well as controlled subject-headings which are broader than marine.

The software will be used not only by BlueNet but also by other institutions in the marine research community, and development is being performed on behalf of this broader stakeholder group.

A Hobart company, Geometry Pty Ltd, has been contracted to progress development of this tool. MEST development is staged, and is using a rapid prototyping methodology. The first version, to address immediate BlueNet needs, is based on Geonetwork, an open source metadata entry and search package developed by the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation. Project management for this development was initially outsourced, but is now managed by the BlueNet Project Office, and is overseen by a reference group sourced from marine data centres throughout Australia.

Oceans Portal

BlueNet remains heavily engaged in the development of the Department of the Environment and Heritage's Oceans Portal web interface. BlueNet is making sure that its community will be able to fully utilise and build on the Oceans Portal once it becomes generally available.

Planning and Coordination

Good progress has been made in the development of Guidelines that will ultimately address end-to-end handling of any dataset (from its initial identification within the university community through the deposition at a hosting agency, application of curatorial practice, and delivery of that dataset in various forms and iterations). A draft version of Guidelines

(including a decision-tree and scenario-based workflows) for the Universities, is now in place. Use of these work flow principles, which have been agreed to across the project, will facilitate smooth and transparent flow of data from researchers to the host-node databases.

BlueNet has developed step-by-step guides for its employees that cover many contingencies. If unforeseen problems are encountered, referral back to the BlueNet Project Office will soon result in modification/extension to the guidelines, so that particular problems can be dealt with promptly. Development of an FAQ has commenced, and a secure website area for various group-activities is provided. Community-building is also via a discussion-list. Evaluation of the support mechanisms is ongoing, to ensure that these are robust enough for researchers to engage in data-sharing practices in the post-funding period.

Communications

The BlueNet website (<http://www.blunet.org.au>) is undergoing continual development. Please check back regularly for new updates, news items and other features.

A brochure detailing the rationale and role of BlueNet can now be downloaded from the website, and printed copies are also available from the BlueNet Project Office. Contact [Kylie Cahill](#) (Ph: 03 6226-1927) for copies.

Further Information

If you would like further information on any of the topics covered in this newsletter or have any other questions, email info@blunet.org.au or call John Gibson on 03 6226 7488.