

MINUTES OF THE WASTEDATAFLOW OPERATIONAL GROUP
MEETING HELD 12th March 2008
13:00 Room 6.02 ERGON HOUSE, LONDON

Attendees:

Jane Hinton	Defra ESI
Isabella Hayes	Defra ESI
Vicki Hook	Enviros
Gary Armstrong	Enviros
Alex Ross	Wales
Roy Thompson	EA
Adrian Fitzpatrick	EHSNI
Silvia Cagnoni (phone)	SEPA
Julie Laing (via phone)	SEPA
Stephanie Sinclair (via phone)	SEPA
Rosaleen Ball	East Sussex
Abigail Foster	Wales
Frances Howe	Hampshire
Michael Laverty	NI LA rep
Andy Mackenzie	North Lanarkshire

Apologies:

Sophie Easteal	GLA
Kate Thompson	Enviros
Tina Benfield	CIWM

1. Minutes from last meeting

Auto upload – The auto upload system went live in early February. By the end of February only 3 people had used the system. There had been 10 helpdesk calls about it and 3 or 4 local authorities had used it or shown interest in it.

Northern Ireland CA site question – there has been a mixed response to the new question which was being developed for NI. For the time being it was agreed that the question will not be rolled out in the other countries.

Report definitions – plain English definitions of the reports need to be available so that the public can interpret the reports correctly.

- **Action for Isabella: to circulate the England report definitions to OG.**
- **Action for Scotland, Wales and NI: to produce similar report definitions for their reports.**

Newsletter - the February newsletter is now live.

2. New question

The new question will record the material composition of the tonnages sent for recycling after treatment/sorting of residual waste with the subtotal included at the bottom of each column. This will not be a compulsory question.

All the group were content with the new question layout. The destination is not to be included, but this can be put in the comments.

The question should be ready for use on the system by 1st May, although each country will have the option as to when to make it live for data entry.

3. SEPA process document

To ensure the smooth running of the development of the WasteDataFlow system across the different countries, SEPA have produced a document to agree a procedure for dealing with any changes, planned or unplanned.

It will be useful for everyone to have a plan of what will be happening in the year ahead with notifications going out to all countries of any changes occurring.

Enviros have a responsibility to inform all countries of the impact of system changes, e.g. changes to column IDs. Each country will then be responsible for ensuring their own tools (e.g. for validation) are appropriately updated.

We need to be careful when changes are made as some changes need to be made simultaneously for all countries and we could encounter problems then. Some changes can be made on different dates for different countries.

The destinations list needs to be updated, but the update will need to occur at different times for different countries.

- **Action for Abigail: to send Wales comments to Sylvia who will then re-circulate to the group.**

4. Development

Gary presented the detailed list of development items that had been compiled based on feedback from national authorities, the Helpdesk, users and meetings with GOs etc. The following points were made by the group on each item:

CSV generation – it was agreed that the process should be similar to the reports process with associated options.

Destination lists – agreed that the ability to search/filter by licence number, postcode etc would be a useful function to have.

Help system – this will need to be kept up to date to ensure that it is at its most useful.

Interface improvements – the log on screen is to be brought forward so that users log on first before navigating through menus. This will also mean that users only see menus that they are authorised to use.

New reports – reports to show a breakdown by material type. It was suggested that there be an xml output to reproduce the data for users.

Andy Mackenzie disagreed with the layout of the mock up of the new Q19 page as Scotland inputs its data by processor, not by material. There were several others who agreed with Andy and it was suggested that there should be a choice of layout of the page.

Adding more materials to the list – there was discussion of adding materials such as foodwaste, Tetrapacks and tyres to the 31 already listed, but this would not be a simple job.

Reports generation – there will be predefined groups and users will also be able to create their own groups.

Roll up process – there have been requests for the ability to produce reports monthly and annually as well as quarterly. There was a general agreement that this would be useful. The validation would still be carried out quarterly, but the data could be seen as monthly/annual reports instead of only quarterly.

Mass balance report – it won't hold landfill allowances so it is simply a way of pulling out information on lots of authorities at the same time. If authorities can download landfill allowance information then they can combine this with EA LATS information and produce their own Excel reports.

Prioritisation of development – NI agreed with Defra's/Enviros' prioritisations and would like to see the questions on fly tipping and ELV's retained, but Wales and Scotland wanted a bit longer to decide.

- **Action: for any feedback on the developments to be sent to Gary by Friday 28th March.**

5. Developing WDF as a modelling tool

It has been suggested that WDF could be developed to provide a basis for forecasting future waste arisings and composition. The group agreed that WDF should continue have it's primary function as a data collection and reporting tool, rather than as a yet another modelling tool. To assist others in modelling, Jane suggested that we could write a report that brings data out in the correct format to be put into MBeam/WRATE etc rather than producing our own model.

6. Collecting financial data through WDF

CIPFA has a very low response rate so that there is now very little financial data available. It was suggested that we collect financial data through WDF instead. Wales – there has been very large effort of ‘benchmarking club’ spent collecting data. Abigail thinks that collection of financial data will be more successful if it is collected through WDF.

But if financial data were collected on WDF it would need to be unavailable to others and need a separate module on WDF. It would also need to be authorised by senior finance officers before it was made available.

➤ **Action for Abigail: to speak to Gary about the technicalities and report back.**

Scotland – Audit Scotland is Scotland’s system to report waste financial data, therefore entering financial data on WDF would be duplication.

England – waste officers don’t deal with financial data. This could lead to errors as waste officers wouldn’t know if what they had entered looked correct or not.

Northern Ireland – although some financial data has been collected through WDF for 05/06 and 06/07 it hasn’t been validated due to different accounting practices employed by district councils and confusion over the lines of responsibility within DoE. EHS have been trying to link it with Best Value reporting (non-statutory) to DoE Local Government Branch. Also, EHS are trying to establish the responsibility for the financial KPI’s since the handover of the Waste Management Strategy to DoE Planning and Environmental Policy group in April 2007.

7. Progress reports

England:

Validation of Quarters 1 and 2 is complete.

Quarter 3 – 67 are at level 35, 122 returns are at level 30.

This is a better response rate than last year.

National indicator methodology documents will be on the WDF website by Friday 14th March.

Wales:

Currently finishing Quarter 3 validation. 60% of returns were on time in Quarter 1, 86% in Quarter 2.

➤ **Action for Alex and Gary: to resolve double counting of residual MRF (Q64).**

Northern Ireland:

Quarter 3 – 100% are at level 30 and 85% are at level 35.

Scotland:

Quarter 3 deadline was 11th February. Currently finalising Quarter 3.

8. AOB

NI – Green waste was collected from one authority, but was never composted from the commencement of NILAS in April 2005 to date. The authority has been told that as it hasn’t been composted it now has to go to landfill by HM Revenue & Customs. EHS will consider this disposal and will require them to report it as being landfilled in the last quarter of the year which will lower their recycling rate for 2007/08. Adrian wanted to know if this is occurring in other authorities? Jane hadn’t heard of this happening in any English authorities and added that once the scheme year has ended that data cannot be changed.

SEPA – Who owns the data on WDF? Jane said that there is no notion of ownership per se in WDF, but the data is public information. This needs to be balanced against the data being of suitable quality and so returns are only available in reports once submissions have reached level 40. ,

**Date of next meeting:
Wednesday 11th June**