

Terms of Reference  
Environment and natural resources topic group  
December 2007



## 1 Background

The Regional Data & Intelligence Network (RDIN) is a community of users and providers of information in the West Midlands, and as such represents the primary resource for achieving the purposes of the West Midlands Regional Observatory. Within this wide network, numbering perhaps hundreds of individuals and institutions, can be identified a number of 'clusters' around broad areas of interest.

Each Topic Group is intended to provide a forum for facilitating the processes of sharing, analysis, understanding and dissemination of information - both within the cluster itself and with the wider RDIN. The Topic Group Terms of reference are set within this context

## 2 Scope

The Environment and Natural Resources topic group will focus on information and data issues concerning the region's environment, the pressures on it and processes of change, and on the type, quantity, consumption, quality, indicators and conservation of natural resources. Environment should include the natural and built environment, access to the environment, impact of the built environment on the natural environment.

## 3 Overall Objective

The overall aim of the topic group is to, "*advise WMRO of data and intelligence issues on behalf of the region, to assist in improving the evidence base of the West Midlands, in order to inform and improve development of regional strategy and policy*". This objective can be sub-divided into a number of specific objectives as follows:

### 3.1 Specific objectives

- Identify critical data gaps and needed data enhancements. Agree the priority for filling those gaps and identify appropriate actions and resources to fill them.
- Disseminate good practice information to the RDIN and RDIN topic groups on use of geographical information.
- Advise WMRO on the development of indicators appropriate to measure environment themes.
- Promote and lead the work to share information within the scope of environment and natural resources data and intelligence within the region and other central bodies.
- Actively map information resources to provide effective access to data and intelligence, for the creation of a well organised, comprehensive and easily accessible resource base for Observatory clients

- Review the objective of the topic group over time and evaluate the work of the group on a regular basis to secure feedback for reporting to the User Group and the WMRO Partnership Board.
- Nominate up to three representatives of the topic group to the User Group. The role of the topic group representatives on the User group will be to act as the main conduit between the WMRO Partnership Board and the RDIN.
- The User Group representative will be responsible for identifying collaborative opportunities between topic groups, contributing to the RDIN report to the WMRO Partnership board and reporting back to their topic group, the outcomes of the User Group and the WMRO Partnership board meeting.

#### **4 Administration of the topic group and reporting mechanisms**

- 4.1 The topic group will not be chaired by any staff of WMRO, but will be chaired by an individual nominated by the Group.
- 4.2 WMRO will provide administrative and organisational support.
- 4.3 It will be the responsibility of the Chair and group members to identify items for each agenda.
- 4.4 The RDIN Co-ordinator at WMRO will be responsible for overall co-ordination of the topic group activities.

#### **5 Membership**

- 5.1 Topic group members will be active data and intelligence practitioners or interested in data to inform policy, and will be expected to make a significant contribution to the delivery of the objectives of the group.
- 5.2 Members must reflect the views of their own organisation and that of any networks that they are engaged in.
- 5.3 Benefits to each committed member of the topic group include shared access to data and intelligence between members of the group and a free place at the WMRO annual conference.
- 5.4 Benefits will only be valid if members regularly attend meetings. Non-attendance to three consecutive meetings will prompt a request that members confirm their commitment to the group.

#### **6 Frequency of meetings**

- 6.1 The group should meet quarterly (with support provided by WMRO RDIN Coordinator).
- 6.2 The group should formally review membership and Chair annually.