Glossary of Terms

This glossary of terms has been developed to assist discussions relating to OSPAR topics therfore ensuring a common understanding of key terms. This is an open list so will be updated and added-to as required.

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| Term | Explanation |
| Datastream | Category for data supporting a single topic e.g. benthic habitat distribution. A datastream can be formed of a number of datasets. |
| Dataset | Any organised collection of data. ‘Dataset’ is a flexible term and may refer to an entire database, a spreadsheet or other data file, or a related collection of data resources. |
| Structured data | Data that adheres to a pre-defined data model, conforming to a tabular format e.g. excel files or SQL databases. |
| Unstructured data | Content maintained outside of databases without a defined data model. |
| Processed data | The output of cleaning and manipulating raw data.  |
| Unprocessed data | Data which has not been changed since its acquisition. |
| Data product | The output from data processing, e.g. including recalculated values using an agreed conversion factor or interpolated missing values. |
| Snapshot dataset (or frozen dataset) | A specific instance of a dataset e.g. covering a specific time period, which is isolated from any further change. |
| Data standards | Define the structure of the dataset, e.g. specifying the units in which a parameter is to be reported and what coordinates to use. |
| Metadata | Information about a dataset, typically including data source, spatial and temporal scope and any use restrictions. e.g. ISO19115. |
| Data model | Description of data standards and structure |
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| Database | A software system for processing and managing data, including features to extend or update, transform and query the data. Examples are the open source PostgreSQL, and the proprietary Microsoft Access. |
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| Data call | Official call to data providers to submit a specific dataset. |
| Data source | The source of a dataset, e.g. a national database. |
| Data provider | Similar to ‘data source’ but referring specifically to the actor, e.g. national institute hosting a database. |
| Data host | Organisation/Institute/Persons responsible for data management and storage.  |
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| Reporting format | Explicit data structure to be used when reporting data. |
| Quality control | One or more data quality tests/checks performed during the data production process to measure and ensure the dataset integrity. |
| Quality assurance | A data management workflow that combines standards, guidelines, technical procedures, human resources, hardware and software resources designed to meet the data product specifications or/and the user requirements [or the stated and implied needs]. |
| Data screening | Quality Control protocols checking e.g. the completeness and correctness of a submitted dataset before acceding it into a database. |
| Data quality | The state of the data based on factors such as accuracy, completeness, consistency and reliability.  |
| Data resubmission | The data provider reports the dataset a second time, e.g. including a correction  |
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| Data flow | The agreed route through which data are transferred in an agreed data management procedure. |
| Data flow diagram | A schematic representation of the data flow, typically showing actors, formats, databases and agreed protocols. |
| Data management | The policies, procedures, and technical choices used to handle data through its entire lifecycle from data collection to storage, preservation and use. |
| Data arrangements | Synonym of ‘data management’. |
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| Data portal | A web platform for publishing data. The aim of a data portal is to provide a data catalogue, making data not only available but discoverable for data users. |
| Web Services | Mechanisms for exchanging data between systems in a machine-readable format, examples include:WMS – Web Mapping Service – a service that allows for spatial datasets to be shared as an image.WFS – Web Feature Service – a service that allows for spatial data to be shared as interrogable content, i.e. allowing queries in order to retrieve results or answers. |
| Interface | Tool presenting data from a store e.g. a website data portal. The interface can allow interrogation of data. |