

## OASIS Final Project Report

Catherine Hardman and Mark Barratt  
Archaeology Data Service and English Heritage (NMR)

June 2008.  
Version 1.2

### Key Points (see separate list of recommendations)

- OASIS Form developed and extended in accordance with requests from NMR and HER community to provide a stable, flexible, means of disseminating reports of fieldwork in a timely manner.
- Training of 49 HERs and 56 archaeological units undertaken either within the context of jointly (ADS/NMR) run training sessions, or undertaken by the NMR as requested.
- Extensive publicity of the OASIS form in a wide range of archaeological communities in the UK.
- Establishment of an SLA on OASIS maintenance with EH NMR.
- Development of a Scottish version of the OASIS form has enabled additional enhancements to the form in England, e.g. the development of a sub-form specifically to record Geophysical Survey techniques, and the uploading of boundary files and the extension of the form for use by DES.
- Grey Literature Library established and numbers of reports growing.

### Project Overview and Background

The aim of English Heritage funding of OASIS was to pilot the recording and notification methodology developed as part of the RSLP-funded OASIS project across the English Heritage regions. The most recent phase of the project aimed to roll out the use of the form across England in 2003/4, with a series of training days for HERs and Units planned for that winter. The project also involved the continued development of the OASIS on-line data submission form, the investigation of the development of import scripts, endorsement of the OASIS form by key national and regional bodies, the development of training materials and the delivery of nine training days across the nine English Heritage regions.

This final report summarises achievements against each of the actions outlined in the original project design (June 2003) in Section 1. It also covers enhancements funded by Historic Scotland under a separate project and the subsequent adoption of the form in Scotland. Section 2 attempts to measure the success of the project by

assessing the take up of the OASIS online form and how it is being used across the country.

## Section 1

### Project management

The ADS has undertaken project management of OASIS on a daily basis and, in conjunction with the NMR, ADS staff have provided helpdesk facilities.

The ADS has taken the lead role in dealing with enquiries of a technical nature and the NMR has primarily dealt with those about how to use the form. The ADS has dealt with some 400+ enquires in the time period 01 April 2004 and 01 April 2008, including dealing with mistakes made in uploading Grey Literature to the form.

In addition the ADS has continued to develop and modify the form as requested and after consultation with the appropriate bodies.

The ADS has also agreed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the EH NMR to maintain helpdesk facilities and undertake small modifications to the form as required. A SLA with the NMRS is currently under negotiation.

The OASIS Management Group has met regularly at 6 monthly intervals since the beginning of the project. Since January 2006 the Management Group has included representatives from Scotland, reflecting the change in geographical scope of the OASIS form.

### Consultation and Endorsement of the project

Members of the ADS and the NMR have delivered presentations, written articles and consulted with many archaeological communities.

#### Papers and Articles

Conference	Venue	Date	Author
Grey Literature Conference EH	London	October 07	CSH
ICT Methods Network	Sheffield	April 06	CSH
IFA	Winchester	March 05	CSH/JLM
CAA UK	Southampton	January 05	JLM
OU DCE	Oxford	September 04	WGK
DRH	Newcastle	September 04	CSH
Survey Day	Edinburgh	June 04	CSH
CAA	Prato	June 04	CSH
IFA	Liverpool	April 04	CSH
OASIS Training days	York (2) London (2) Newcastle Salford Coventry Bedford Swindon	Jan - May 04	CSH/MB
RCAHMS NMRS Seminar	Edinburgh	November 03	CSH
Metadata Workshop	York	September 03	CSH
HER Forum	Manchester	July 03	CSH
Metadata workshop	Glasgow	June 03	CSH

HER Forum	Bristol	May 03	CSH
EH and Exegesis demonstration	Bristol	May 03	CSH
CAA	Vienna	April 03	CSH/JPC
OASIS workshop	York	February 03	CSH/JDR
CAA	Heraklion	April 02	CSH
SMR User Group	York	May 01	DJR
ALGAO	York	Feb 01	DJR

Article Title and Author(s)	Source and Date
Crossing the Void: Sharing Information across the Profession Catherine Hardman	<i>Forthcoming</i> SMA Newsletter
Stepping back from the trench edge. An archaeological perspective on the development of standards for recording and publication. Julian Richards and Catherine Hardman	<i>Forthcoming</i> Mark Greengrass (ed), (2008) Ashgate Press
OASIS: sharing information across the profession Catherine Hardman	Conservation Bulletin 51 Spring 2006
It's the Small Things that Count: Digital Preservation and Small Scale Research Projects in the UK William Kilbride and Catherine Hardman	CSA Newsletter Vol. XVII, No. 1 Spring 2004
OASIS Training update Mark Barratt	HER News 3 February 2004
Comprehensiveness for All: The OASIS Project and Research Values in the Digital Age JP Clarke, CS Hardman and WG Kilbride	CSA Newsletter XV, 3 Winter 2003
Latest News from the OASIS project: towards implementation Catherine Hardman	ADS News 13 Spring 2003
OASIS: Dipping Our Toes In Catherine Hardman	HER News 1 February 2003
Dealing with the digital revolution: the OASIS project Catherine Hardman	ADS News 12 Autumn 2002
OASIS: Dealing with the Digital Revolution Catherine Hardman and Julian D Richards	M Doerr and A Sarris (eds) (2003) <i>The Digital Heritage of Archaeology: Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology</i> Archive of Monuments and Publications, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 325-9
Dealing with the Digital Revolution: What do we want, how do we want it, and how can we join it all up? William Kilbride	SMR News 11 August 2001
Piloting OASIS in the English Heritage regions Damian Robinson	ADS News 10 Autumn 2001

OASIS: Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations Mark Barratt	ADS News 8 Autumn 2000
--	---------------------------

The project has also received endorsement from ALGAO, ALGAO (Scotland), AAF and APPAG

An OASIS User e-mail forum has been established and has been used to canvas views on proposed changes to the form and also to notify users of changes and downtime, and significant additions to the grey literature library.

### **Revisions to the OASIS form**

During the course of the project many developments and enhancements to the form have been made. The major developments have included:

- a. The development of a range of internal administrative pages for use by ADS, NMR, EH, NMRS, DES and AIP.
- b. Development of a tool to switch recorded co-ordinate systems between Lat-Long and NGR.
- c. Development of a range of export scripts, OASIS XML, MIDAS XML, html and csv.
- d. Changes to the form to incorporate the recording of maritime events.
- e. Made changes to allow multiple file uploads to the form.
- f. Development of an additional set of forms to record Geophysics events.
- g. Allow upload of a boundary file.

### **Liaison about development of import scripts**

The ADS and EH have liaised with ExeGesIS and the HBSMR User Group in the development of import scripts to be used with OASIS data. The script to be made available to HBSMR users has been delivered with the role out of HBSMR 3.5.

### **Identification of resources necessary for the development of an import script for use by NMR to import the OASIS data**

The FISH Interoperability Toolkit used OASIS data to show how the FISH Toolkit can be used to take data from OASIS and import it into the Worcestershire HER. ADS have developing an XSLT from OASIS to the MIDAS XML schema. Testing of the script has successfully taken place.

### **Development of training course and delivery of the training**

ADS wrote materials to be used in the training days, including a User Manual (available in pdf form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/downloads.cfm?country=england>). The user manual is now out of print, but the online help files are continually updated. In

addition the NMR and DSU were involved in the design of the training days. Following the completion of the 9 group training days within the EH Regions the NMR (Mark Barratt) arranged training for units and HERs as requested; this is an ongoing process. The list below shows units and HERs trained to date (April 2008).

Units receiving training	
AC Archaeology	Headland Archaeology Ltd
Alan Williams Archaeology	Herefordshire Archaeology
Albion Archaeology	Humber Field Archaeology
AOC Archaeology	Lindsey Archaeological Services
Archaeological Investigations Ltd	M & M Archaeological Services
Archaeological Project Services	MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd
Archaeological Research Services Ltd	Matrix Archaeology Ltd
Archaeological Services, University of Durham	MoLAS
Archenfield Archaeology	Network Archaeology
Avon Archaeological Unit	Norfolk Archaeological Unit
Berkshire Archaeological Services	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Birmingham Archaeology	Northern Archaeological Associates
Border Archaeology	On Site Archaeology
Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	Oxford Archaeology
Cambridgeshire CC Field Unit	Peter F Ryder
CFA Archaeology Ltd	Sandwell HER Fieldwork
CgMS Ltd	South West Archaeology
Chester Archaeology	Stratascan Ltd
Chester City Council Archaeology Service	Tees Archaeology
Compass Archaeology	Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Cornwall Historic Environment Service	The Brigantia Archaeological Practice
Coventry HER Fieldwork	Tyne & Wear Museums Fieldwork
Dartmoor National Park HER Fieldwork	University of Leicester Archaeological Services
Dudley HER Fieldwork	University of Manchester Archaeological Unit
East Sussex HER Fieldwork	Wessex Archaeology
English Heritage Research Department	York Archaeological Trust
Essex CC Field Unit	
Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd	
Gifford & Partners Ltd	
GSB Prospection Ltd	Total 56

HERs receiving training		
Bath & NE Somerset	Gloucester City	South Gloucestershire
Bedfordshire	Greater London	South Yorkshire
Berkshire	Hampshire	Southwark Borough
Birmingham City	Herefordshire	Staffordshire
Black Country	Heritage Trust Lincs	Tees
Bristol	Humber	Tyne & Wear
Buckinghamshire	Kent	West Berkshire
Cambridgeshire	Lake District NP	Worcestershire
Cheshire	Lancashire	York City
Chester City	Leicester City	
Cornwall	Leicestershire	

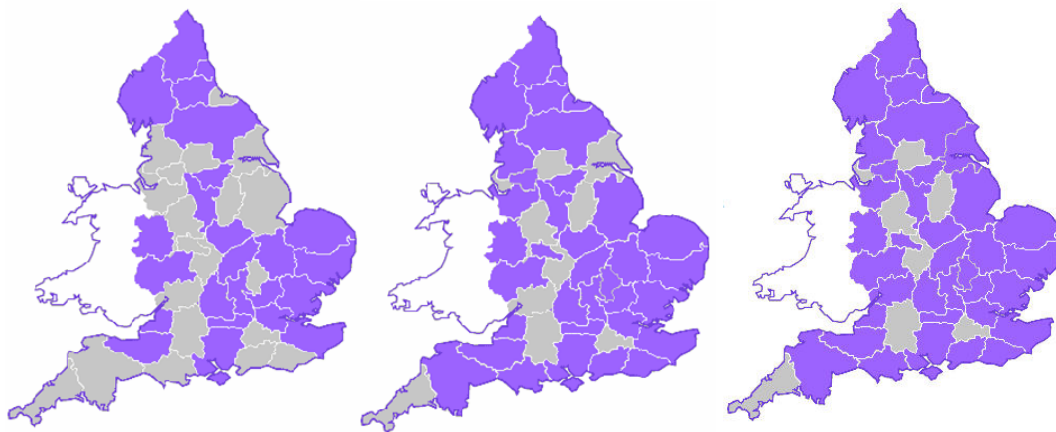
Coventry City	Lincolnshire	
Cumbria	Merseyside	
Dartmoor	Milton Keynes	
Devon	Norfolk	
Dorset	Northumberland	
Dudley Borough	Nottinghamshire	
Durham	Sandwell Borough	
East Sussex	Shropshire	
Essex	Somerset	Total 49

## Review and Monitoring

The NMR has produced ten monitoring reports, already circulated, see <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>

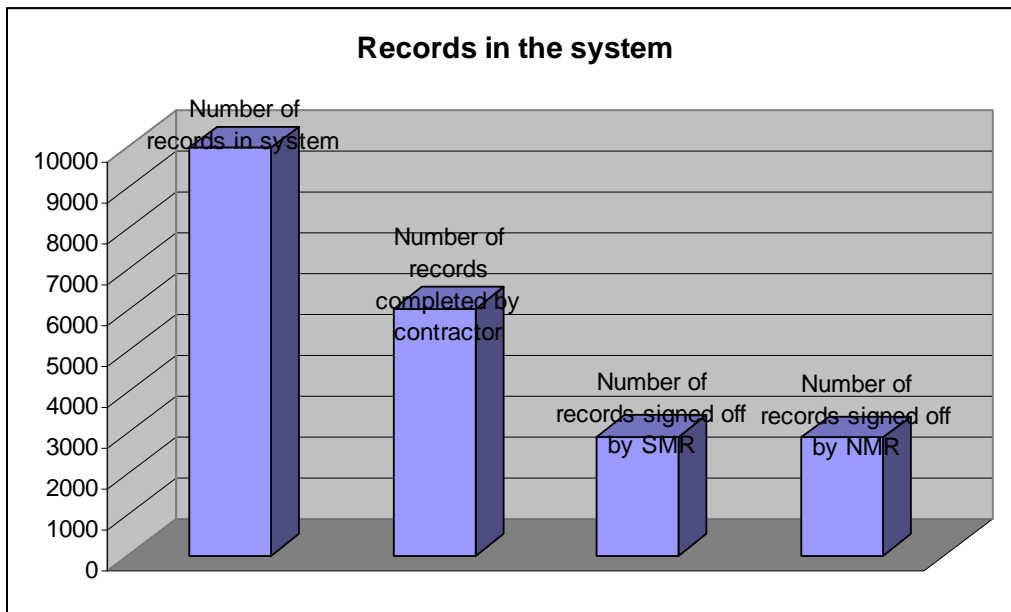
## Section 2

### Assessment of success of the form



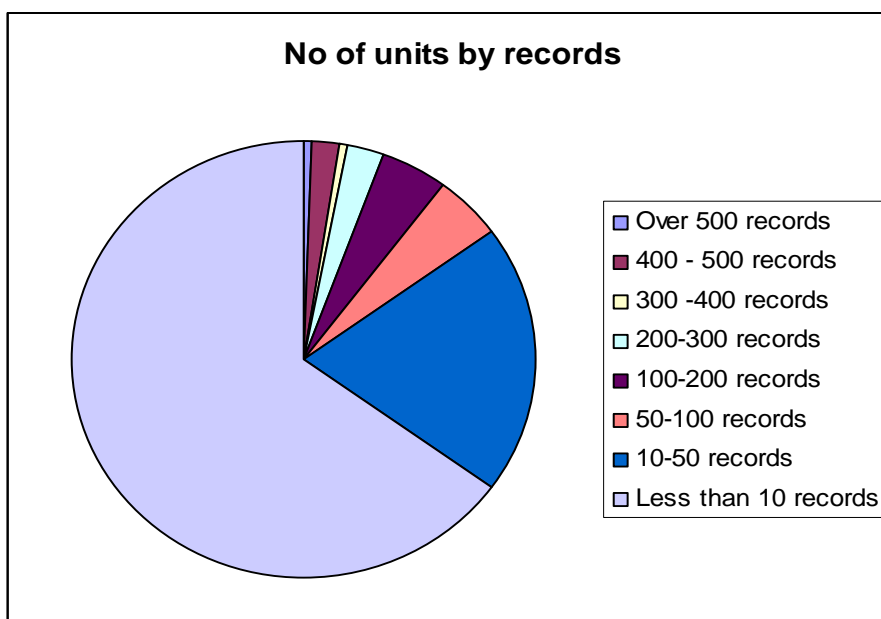
**Fig 1: Showing the spread of OASIS uptake by HERs across England in, from left to right, April 2005, April 2006 and April 2008.**

Since the official launch of the OASIS system on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, 6040 records have been completed by contractors; nearly 50% of these have been approved or signed off by the relevant SMR/HER and the NMR. 3855 of the OASIS records have had Grey Literature reports attached to them, of these over 1,500 have been released on-line.



**Fig 2: Showing the number of records in the OASIS system (as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008)**

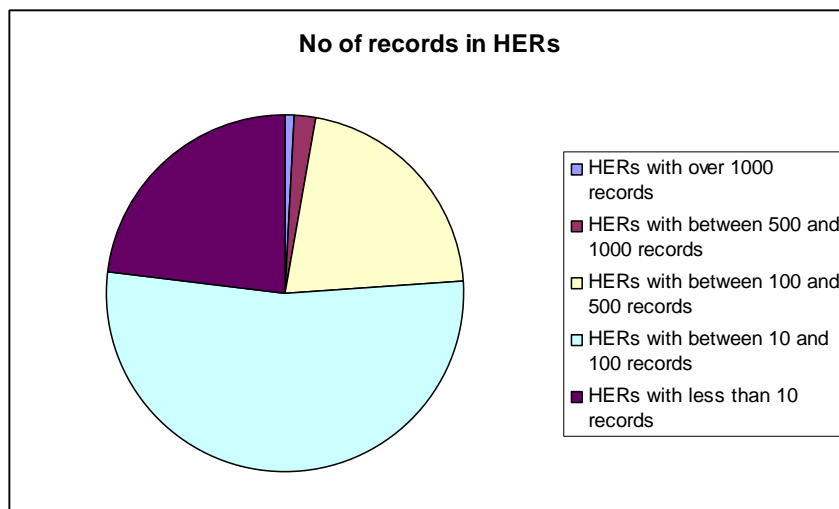
It should be expected that there would be quite a difference between the number of records in the system and the numbers completed by the contractor; many contractors start the OASIS record at the beginning of fieldwork and only complete it as part of the post-excavation process. There is, however, a disappointing gap between the number of records completed by contractors and those validated by the relevant SMR/NMR. This has been an issue identified by the project board as one which needs addressing. The main reasons for this gap have been identified as being due to the need for an import script and/or lack of resources in the HER to enable the validation. In order to alleviate this the project has provided a range of import scripts, has looked into the possibility of running some 'importing' workshops and the NMR has offered to undertake validation on behalf of the HER, where appropriate.



**Fig 3: Showing the number of units by number of records created**



The above chart reveals that the majority of units have created less than 10 records. These figures may be slightly skewed as they include units working in Scotland, i.e. they have only been using the system for a little over a year. However, it also shows that a good proportion of contractors are regularly using OASIS to record their fieldwork events.



**Fig 4: Showing the number of HERs by number of records in their areas**

The above chart shows that the majority of HERs have less than 100 records assigned to them, but a significant minority have between 100 and 500 records in their systems. Given the gap identified in Fig 2, it is heartening to note that very few HERs are having to deal with a huge number of records, (creating a potentially large backlog) but with the correct help in the form of import scripts and training and some additional resources, most HERs should be able to cope with clearing less than 100 records.

**The Grey Literature Library** (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit/>)

**ads**  
ArchSearch

**Unpublished Fieldwork Reports (Grey Literature Library)**

Grey literature reports: [Introduction](#) | [Browse by contractor](#) | [Search the Reports](#)

**Information** **Introduction**

The aim of this resource is to make available unpublished fieldwork reports in an easily retrievable fashion. There are **currently 1772 reports available** and this number is increasing steadily through the **OASIS** project in England and Scotland.

Through this resource it is possible to list the reports by contractor, using the **browse by contractor** option and also to do a more advanced search filtering these reports by period, monument/artefact type and location using the **search** option. These unpublished reports cover archaeological interventions such as: watching briefs, excavation reports and building surveys. Desk-based assessments and specialist analysis are also included.

**ahds**

© ADS 1996-2008 Created by **Jo Clarke**, email Last modified Wednesday 12 March 2008  
Cite only : <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit/index.cfm> for this page  
ADS hosts **AHDS** Archaeology

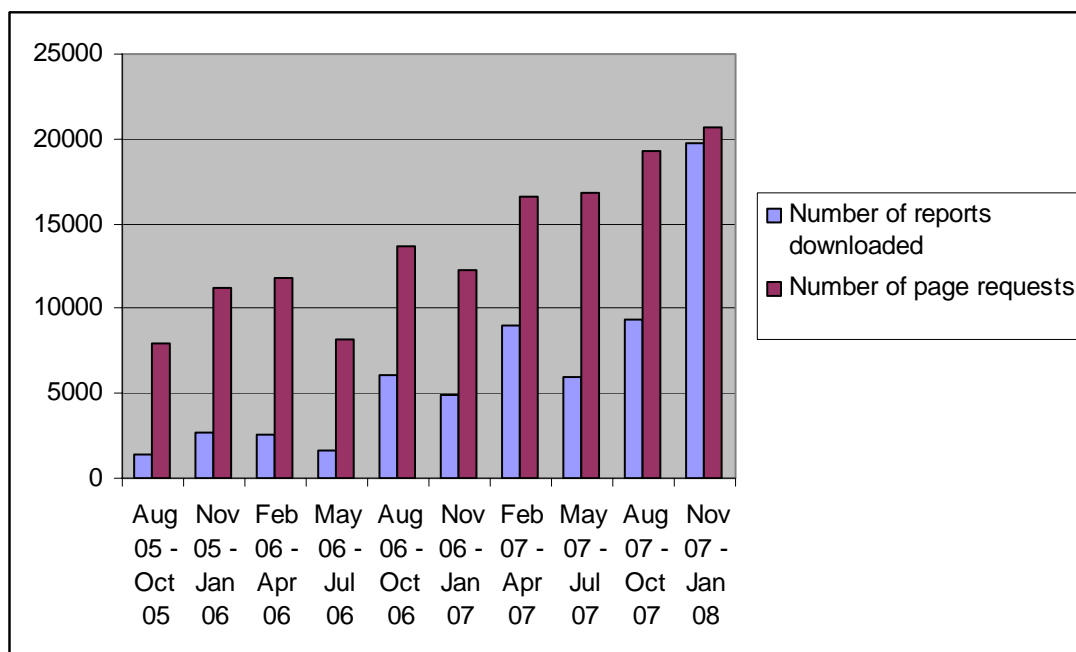
**Fig 5: Showing the front web page of the Grey Literature Library**



1716 grey literature reports have made their way through the OASIS form and most are now (1<sup>st</sup> April 2008) available to download through the ADS library of unpublished fieldwork reports. The 1534 reports available represent contributions from the following 51 units or individuals (including units working in Scotland):

Albion Archaeology	Foundations Archaeology
Allen Archaeological Associates	Framework Archaeology
AOC Archaeology	Gardens Archaeology Project
Archaeological Investigations Ltd	Geophysical Surveys of Bradford (GSB Prospection)
Archaeological Project Services	Greenlane Archaeology Ltd
Archaeological Research Services	Headland Archaeology Ltd
Archaeological Service Suffolk County Council	Heritage Network
Archaeological Services University of Durham	Humber Field Archaeology
Archaeological Solutions Ltd	Ian Farmer Associates
Archaeology South East	John Samuels Archaeological Consultants
Archenfield Archaeology	L - P : Archaeology
ASC Ltd	Museum of London Archaeology Service
Bamburgh Research Project	Norfolk Archaeological Unit
Biblioresearch	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Birmingham Archaeology	NPA Ltd
Border Archaeology	P F Ryder
CAM ARC	Rathmell Archaeology Ltd
Canterbury Archaeological Trust	South West Archaeology
CKC Archaeology	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Claire Feldkamp	Sutton Archaeological Services
Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group	Tees Archaeology
Compass Archaeology	Thames Valley Archaeological Services
East Sussex County Council	ULAS
Elphin Watkin	Wessex Archaeology
Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit	Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service
Exeter Archaeology	

The Grey Literature library is growing by about 50-100 reports per month. The ADS aims to release reports in batches, once every six weeks. Since the creation of the Grey Literature Library in September 2005, the number of page requests and reports being downloaded each quarter has grown, peaking in the quarter November 2007 – January 2008 at 19,738 downloads. Whilst page requests may indicate users simply browsing the catalogue of reports, the number of reports downloaded represents the number of time a user has downloaded a complete PDF or other text file onto their computer. The dips in use in the May – July quarter follows the ADS' overall trend in web usage in the summer months. The overall rate of growth, in line with the growth of the grey literature library, is extremely encouraging as an illustration of the demand for access to grey literature and how this is being met by the OASIS project.



**Fig 6: Showing the number of pages requests and reports downloaded from the Grey Literature Library over time**

**List of Action from PD (October 2005) and status of deliverables**

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Notes</b>	
A1	Project Management of technical aspects		
A1.1	Daily project management tasks	On the basis of an 11 month project, including project board meeting attendance	Delivered
A1.2	Providing Help Desk facilities (2004-2005)	Since the launch of the OASIS form in April 2004 the ADS have answered many queries about the form. These have ranged from minor queries about how to use the form to solving more substantial problems thrown up by the use of the form.	Delivered
A1.3	Providing Help Desk Facilities (2005 – 2006)	It is anticipated that further support will be required in the maintenance and running of the system.	Delivered
A2	Consultation		
A2.1	With AiP	Arrange and attend meeting	Delivered
A2.2	With Maritime	Arrange and attend meeting	Delivered
A2.3	With BIAB	Arrange and attend meeting	Delivered
A3	Revision/development of OASIS form		
A3.1	Development of AiP interface	Allow bulk upload as .csv and MIDAS XML	Delivered
		Amend validation flow to allow AiP as	In

		a user	development
		Amend validation flow to include AiP download after NMR sign off	In development
		Design interface for AiP to search/order by start/end date	In development
		Review scope notes with AiP	In development
A3.2	Development of Maritime element	To investigate the technological issues surrounding the collection of this data	Delivered
		Design a pilot interface to allow EH to collect this data as a default position (where appropriate)	In development
A3.3	Additional file upload	Develop the facility to upload more than one file with an OASIS record	Delivered
A3.4	Additional file formats for download.	ADS are to include a download in MIDAS XML (for use by those SMRs/units/agencies who are using the FISH Interoperability Toolkit). In addition we can construct a download as a series of access tables and csv files.	Delivered
A3.5	Development of BIAB interface	Amend validation flow to include BIAB download after NMR sign off	Development suspended while new BIAB database developed
A3.6	Creation of a generic upload		Delivered
A3.7	Create management level login for EH and ADS	Read only access	Delivered
A3.8	Develop interface to manage large numbers of records (especially for NMR and AiP)		Delivered
A3.9	Accessibility	Ensure the OASIS web pages adhere to the WAI standards	Delivered
A3.10	Enhancements	Undertake technical enhancements to the form as requested by the NMR	Delivered
A4	Widening the knowledge of the OASIS project		
A4.1	Continued liaison	ADS will continue to liaise with potential OASIS users. This often involves travel to meetings and giving presentations at seminars.	Delivered
A5	Review progress and monitoring		
A5.1	Arrange and deliver interim project meeting	ADS	Delivered
A5.2	Write progress report	ADS	Delivered
A5.3	Arrange and deliver final project meeting.	ADS	Delivered
A5.4	Contribute to final report	ADS	Delivered

## Recommendations for future work (Client Report)

1. Import scripts: while the project has delivered a range of import options (.csv, OASIS XML, MIDAS XML) and Exegesis has designed and implemented an OASIS import script for HBSMR users, it has been identified that the HER community rarely use these facilities. It is recommended that future work should concentrate on the reuse of the data; a number of data import workshops should be arranged and in order to show potential users (HER) how the import scripts can best be utilised.
2. The original users' manual is out of print (although the pdf is available on line). The original manual is also somewhat dated and does not reflect the changes made since the development of the original form and the training days in 2004. It is recommended that the project concentrates on continuing to develop and update the online help facility.
3. It is recommended that resources be made available for the continue work in training both units and HERs in the use of the form.
4. Similarly, it is recommended that resources be made available for the continued promotion of the system; for the production of leaflets, article writing, conference and meeting attendance.
5. It is recommended that the ADS continue to work with the AiP in order to ensure that the AiP data can be incorporated into OASIS and vice versa.

### **MAIN RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that English Heritage consider the funding of the redevelopment of OASIS using different technologies, within a suite of historic information tools – see Wyvern outline.