



[REDACTED]

20 October 2022

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2022/00325

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 10 October in which you requested the following:

Your request:

RE: NERC MST Radar Facility at Aberystwyth

Can you please provide the records and/or how I can access them, that show when what and how this facility has been used with regard to the weather and climate since its inception in 1994?

Can you also provide records of how its use is regulated and monitored?

Our response

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold information relevant to your request. Please see the information below.

Before responding to each question in detail it is necessary to put in context the MST management and responsibility timeline. In 2014 the responsibility for governance and management of activities of the MST Radar and the associated Capel Dewi Atmospheric Observatory (CDAO), was taken on by UKRI-NERC ([Natural Environment Research Council](https://www.ukri.org/councils/nerc/)¹). Management of national resources, such as the MST Radar, is delegated to the most appropriate NERC research centre and in the centre providing oversight is NCAS ([National Centre for Atmospheric Science](https://ncas.ac.uk/)²). NCAS manages a range of services and facilities supporting UK science and scientist and MST was incorporated into the Atmospheric Measurement and Observation Facility ([AMOF](https://amof.ac.uk/)³).

Pre-2014, all management and governance responsibilities were performed by UKRI-STFC ([Science and Technology Facilities Council](https://www.ukri.org/councils/stfc/)⁴). It should be emphasised that ownership of the asset still resides with STFC and the lease of the land on which the MST stands is between UKRI-NERC and the University of Aberystwyth.

All responses to the questions below relate to the period post-2014: that is the period for which NCAS was assigned the responsibility for MST governance and activity management.

Can you please provide the records and/or how I can access them, that show when what and how this facility has been used with regard to the weather and climate since its inception in 1994?

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/councils/nerc/>

² <https://ncas.ac.uk/>

³ <https://amof.ac.uk/>

⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/councils/stfc/>

Under Section 21 of the FOIA - Information already reasonably accessible, the information you have requested is already in the public domain at the links provided below. Section 21 is an absolute exemption which means that there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

Data from the MST Radar is "openly-accessible", through an [Open Government Licence](#)⁵ for public sector information. This means that anyone may access the data, through the Centre for Environmental Data Analysis ([CEDA](#)⁶), and use them for any purpose. NCAS has no visibility of who is accessing the data through this route or for what purposes.

Near-real-time data from the MST Radar are sent to the [E-PROFILE](#)⁷ programme: a programme that is part of the [EUMETNET](#)⁸ Composite Observing System, [EUCOS](#)⁹, managing the European networks of radar wind profilers (RWP) and automatic lidars and ceilometers (ALC) for the monitoring of vertical profiles of wind and aerosols including volcanic ash. The data is operationally assimilated by several European weather forecasting agencies for numerical weather prediction.

The main path by which NCAS records the use of the MST is through the publication of peer-reviewed scientific papers. Details of publications from the years up to 2019 can be found [here](#)¹⁰. Details of publications from 2020 onwards can be found on [the publications pages of the AMOF website](#)¹¹. Note that in the latter case the papers relating to the MST radar are reported alongside those related to the other parts of AMOF.

Can you also provide records of how its use is regulated and monitored?

In the UK the use of any radio-transmitting device is required to be either licensed or exempted explicitly from licensing under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 (WT Act 2006). The regulator in this area is [Ofcom](#)¹². The United Kingdom Frequency Allocation Table ([UKFAT](#)¹³) details the uses (referred to as 'allocations') to which various frequency bands are put in the UK. It also shows the internationally agreed spectrum allocations of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The MST operates at a frequency of 46.5 Mhz and the specifics of this bands regulation by Ofcom can be seen in the table below (direct extract from the UKFAT):

46.4 - 47 MHz	Radiolocation (Secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.132A - Stations in the radiolocation service shall not cause harmful interference to, or claim protection from, stations operating in the fixed or mobile services. Applications of the radiolocation service are limited to oceanographic radars operating in accordance with Resolution 612 (Rev.WRC-12) (WRC-12) UK1.6 - Responsibility for assigning frequencies to this Allocation rests with Ofcom for Met Office use. Frequencies in this Allocation are exclusively assigned for civilian use except where permissions for military use are agreed upon with the Ministry of Defence. Further information can be found in the document "Space science and meteorology spectrum allocations in the UK" UK176 - NERC and Met Office may operate wind profiler radar at 46.5 MHz (Aberystwyth) and 64 MHz (South Uist) each with a bandwidth of 1 MHz.
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⁵ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

⁶ <https://www.ceda.ac.uk/>

⁷ <https://www.eumetnet.eu/activities/observations-programme/current-activities/e-profile/>

⁸ <https://www.eumetnet.eu/glossary/eumetnet/>

⁹ <https://www.eumetnet.eu/glossary/eucos/>

¹⁰ https://mst.nerc.ac.uk/publications_by_year.html

¹¹ <https://amof.ac.uk/publications/>

¹² <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/>

¹³ <https://static.ofcom.org.uk/static/spectrum/fat.html>

The AMOF commission is a NERC National Capability award issued to NCAS by the UKRI-NERC National Capability Research Facilities Team. As part of the award terms and conditions, NERC facilities are required to report annually to NERC. NERC Facilities also have their own Steering Committees; for this capability before 2020 this was the NERC Atmospheric Radar Facilities Steering Committee (NARFSC) and post-2020 the AMOF Steering Committee (AMOFSC).

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact:

Head of Information Governance

Email: foi@ukri.org or infogovernance@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,

Information Governance

Information Rights Team

UK Research and Innovation

foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org