

Data collection, monitoring and research

Keeping data up-to-date

Data collection, monitoring and research are vital if understanding of maintenance dredging and its possible environmental implications is to continue to improve, and if decisions on maintenance dredging are to be well-informed. As demonstrated by the wide range of data which forms the information exchange system, relevant data might be collected from various sources. Data might be collected by organisations as a result of routine monitoring of background or baseline parameters (eg. water quality information collected by the Environment Agency). Targeted monitoring of specific initiatives may be required by the PLA as part of the consenting process for dredging (eg. to determine whether mitigation or compensation measures are performing as required). Relevant data may also be produced as an output of research projects.



Figure 17 "Research." Copyright TEP

In all cases, the monitoring data need to be fed through into the IES to ensure that the system is - and remains - as up to date as possible. Further, to ensure that the data is and remains of maximum value, the regular or occasional review of the information is essential. Such a review may aim to ensure data accuracy or identify possible changes in the way data is collected; to confirm predictions, or to identify trends. Particularly in the case of data which are being collected to determine the effectiveness of predictions or mitigation measures, a further commitment to act on any significant or atypical findings is also vital. The PLA will continue to endeavour to ensure that such reviews take place, involving appropriate third parties.

The PLA is actively involved in the TEP's Thames Estuary Research Forum and it is anticipated that dredging associated research will be identified both through the DLG and the Thames Estuary Research Forum. In addition, the PLA is undertaking specific research that is considered necessary to inform its maintenance dredging decisions.



Figure 18 "Commercial trade in the Port of London." Copyright PLA