

# THE PRIME DATABASE

## Introduction

The PRIME database contains all the data collected during the PRIME field programme except for the underway data. This is a large and complex data set, which inevitably leads to some complexity in the structure of the database. However, tools have been provided to ease the task of getting what you need from the database.

The database is presented on the CD-ROM in both ASCII 'kit form' (directory DBKIT) and as a complete implementation in Microsoft JET 3.0 and 3.5 formats (directory DBJET). The JET formats are fully compatible with Microsoft Access 7.0 and 8.0 (*Office97*) respectively. An earlier JET format may be used with a later version of Access providing that the database file is copied from CD-ROM onto a disk that isn't read-only and that database objects are not redefined. JET format may also be read by many other packages, either directly or through Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) interfaces.

This document is designed to lead you to the data you require in the database. We will therefore start by telling you what is there in terms of types of data stored, followed by a description of the tools you may use to obtain the data. The information is presented in the following series of documents.

### Database Contents

This provides an overview of the types of data held within the database and should be the starting point for any user of the database.

### Database Data Documentation

Extensive documentation has been compiled on the protocols used in the collection of the PRIME data set together with issues of data quality. This information is vital. The quality of the PRIME data is variable and the protocols used by the different partners vary significantly. The burden of deciding whether the data you extract is 'fit for purpose' for your application is placed on you, the user. Ignore this documentation at your peril.

### Structure of the Database

The database is relational and therefore consists of a series of tables. Documentation is provided summarizing what is held in each table, defining the table fields and specifying the relationships between the tables.

### Using the BODC Database Explorer

The BODC Database Explorer is a *Windows95* application that provides easy access to the database contents. Documentation is provided on what this program can do and how to use it.

### Using Microsoft Access to Explore the Database

A copy of the database is included in Microsoft JET 3.0 and 3.5 formats. This document explains how users who have a copy of Access available may use this package to interrogate the database.

## Using the 'Kit Form' Database

The 'kit form' database concept has been a feature of project data sets electronically published on CD-ROM by BODC. Essentially, it is a relational database dumped as a set of flat ASCII files, including all the key fields that link the tables together. The 'kit form' database is designed to accommodate those users who wish to import all or part of the database into their own relational database management system.

# The BODC Database Explorer

The BODC Database Explorer is a *Windows* application that allows data from the database to be retrieved in a grid format that may be exported to other applications, such as spreadsheets. It has been tested successfully under *Windows95*, *Windows98* and *Windows NT 4.0*.

The program is designed to support one or more BODC CD-ROMs containing JET 3.0 (*Access 7.0*) databases providing the project-specific installation program has been run for each CD-ROM to be used. It includes full information on its use through an on-line help system, including functional descriptions of all the menu options and control buttons. However, a brief description of how to get started is included here.

When the program is launched through either the BODC entry in the Start menu, a shortcut or *Windows Explorer*, a splash screen is briefly displayed followed by the opening of the program control window. The following actions are then required to display data.

- Select the Open Project option from the File menu and choose the project appropriate to the CD-ROM currently loaded.
- Click on the Define option in the Data menu and choose the type of data required.
- Use the Selection dialog presented to choose the subset of stations you want and the header fields that you require on each row of the grid.
- Click on the Show option in the Data menu.
- Use the dialogs provided to select the parameters you wish to include in your grid. These cover three hierarchical levels that describe the parameters in increasing detail. If you are unsure which of the higher-level categories to include, then err on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion. You can always reject unwanted parameters at the more detailed levels that follow.
- The header parameters included in the grid may be modified, if required, by choosing the Index Fields option from the Data menu.

This is all you need to do to access the data. Control over how the data are presented is provided through both the menus and the toolbar buttons. Consult the on-line help or simply experiment to discover what these can do.