



Frequently asked questions

Index of Marine Surveys for Assessments

Below are answers to some frequently asked questions about the Index of Marine Surveys for Assessments (IMSA). These should be read in conjunction with the IMSA information page on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's (the department) website, and the IMSA instructions and templates available on the Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) website.

IMSA requirements

Am I required to submit data to IMSA?

If you are submitting a marine survey report to the department or the EPA to support the assessment process or post-assessment requirement under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act), it will need to be accompanied by an IMSA data package that has been prepared according to the IMSA instructions and templates.

What type of marine survey data is captured by IMSA?

IMSA captures all marine survey data generated to support assessment processes or meet post-assessment requirements under the EP Act including bathymetric; hydrodynamic; benthic communities and habitat; marine environmental quality; and marine fauna data.

I have a marine survey report, but it was not generated for an assessment process under the EP Act. Can I submit this to IMSA?

Yes. You can still submit this information if it can be used for future assessment purposes under the EP Act. However, if you have a significant quantity of information that was not generated to support the department's and the EPA's assessment processes, please contact imsa@dwer.wa.gov.au for further information.

Does my post-assessment, ongoing monitoring or compliance process require an IMSA data package to be submitted?

Any time a marine survey report is submitted to the department or the EPA to meet requirements under a Ministerial Statement or Part V approval, licence or permit under the EP Act, it must be accompanied by an IMSA data package. Environmental monitoring for compliance purposes – for example, to monitor potential impacts from a discharge or activity – does not require a marine survey report or data package to be submitted to IMSA at this stage. However, this may change in the future if there are clear benefits

to stakeholders such as analysis of cumulative impacts or to understand changes to environmental baseline conditions. Further consultation will be required before IMSA starts to capture compliance monitoring data.

Approvals under the EP Act often require the periodic submission of reports to demonstrate compliance with conditions of approval, such as compliance assessment reports and annual environmental reports. These reports are not marine survey reports, so do not require IMSA data packages.

Should I submit data associated with desktop studies to IMSA?

Yes. All data that is used to support assessment processes under the EP Act must be provided to IMSA. It may be that only metadata can be provided in relation to some marine surveys that are referenced within desktop studies.

Is all marine survey information provided for assessment automatically made public in IMSA?

No. The intellectual property owner decides whether the IMSA data package submitted to support an assessment process will be made public. If a licence to publish is not granted, the IMSA data package will be archived at the department and not made public. For more information, refer to the IMSA instructions and templates and the explanatory notes in the IMSA metadata and licensing statement.

NB: Survey reports may still be made publicly available, outside of IMSA, because of the assessment process itself (for example, to support public comment).

At what point during the IMSA process are data packages made publicly available in IMSA? Can I amend a data package once it has been submitted?

Only once the receiving agency has made and published its final decision or recommendation on the assessment process will IMSA make the relevant data packages publicly available (in accordance with the terms of any licence that has been granted by the intellectual property owner). Until then, the data packages remain in a quarantined environment at the department – this means that during the assessment process, via the relevant assessment officer, the submitter can provide corrected or updated data packages if there is a need to do so.

Can I change my mind about making my data publicly available in IMSA, or change the type of licence that I have granted, once my data has been uploaded to the IMSA web portal?

No. For technical and resourcing reasons, the department is unable to amend metadata and licensing statements or process requests to change the public availability of data packages once they have been finalised and uploaded to the IMSA web portal.

How do I upload my data to IMSA?

Proponents and applicants do not upload data directly to IMSA.

IMSA data packages are submitted as electronic appendices to marine survey reports, via existing channels, as part of the department's and the EPA's assessment processes under the EP Act. Once the assessment officer has confirmed that the IMSA data package has been prepared in accordance with the IMSA instructions and templates, they will forward it to the IMSA team at the department.

Is IMSA part of the shared location information platform (SLIP) or data.wa.gov.au?

No. SLIP and data.wa.gov.au contain curated, general-purpose datasets. Reports and datasets in IMSA are not curated, and were prepared for supporting specific assessments. The collation of this material in IMSA, for use beyond these specific assessments, is done voluntarily as a public service as per the IMSA disclaimer.

Will government agencies have unrestricted access to the data packages I supply for IMSA?

No. Data packages that have been licensed to be made publicly available on the IMSA web portal, including all survey metadata, will be accessible to anybody – including government agencies. However, non-public data packages, that is those that have been archived at the department but have not been licensed by the intellectual property owner to be made publicly available, will only be available to the original receiving agency.

For example, a non-public data package that was received by the department to support a native vegetation clearing permit application or licence application would remain available to the department for future review, but would not be available to the EPA.

Where cross-agency access to information is requested, it will be facilitated by the public IMSA web portal, not by the IMSA team at the department. In these cases, government agencies will have the same level of access to information, the same options for acquiring datasets based on metadata and the same conditions for using information that other IMSA users have.

Using the IMSA website

How do I access IMSA data packages (including marine survey reports and associated data)?

To access data packages:

1. Visit the main IMSA information page on the department's website and click on the link to the IMSA website.
2. Browse the surveys or use the filters on the left, including the geographic filter, to find the surveys you are looking for. Please note, the individual surveys displayed in the map, list and tile views (to the right of the filter panel) will be constrained by the number you have set to display per page (20, 50, 100 or 500).
3. Click on a survey title to go to the page for that survey. Here you can view basic details of the survey under the 'about' tab, and see the metadata and licencing statement (and any available reports and data files) under the 'resources' tab. Survey reports and data files will only be

present if the intellectual property owner has licensed them for publication via the metadata and licencing statement.

How do I log in to the IMSA website? Are there fees for using it?

You do not need to log in to the IMSA website. Although there is a 'login' button in the top banner, this is only for IMSA site administrators. IMSA users can access all IMSA's functionality without requiring an account or paying any access fees.

How do I know whether I have permission to use reports and data I have found in IMSA?

Review Sections 3 and 4 of the metadata and licencing statement, available under the 'resources' tab for the relevant survey in IMSA. These sections show what type of licensing has been allowed by the intellectual property owner. Users of IMSA must adhere to the terms of these licences, as well as the general terms detailed in the IMSA disclaimer. If you download survey reports or data files from IMSA, you should also download the relevant metadata and licencing statement and retain it alongside the downloaded information.

Is the 'project area', shown under the 'about' tab for a survey on the IMSA website exact?

No. This project area boundary is approximate and is intended to facilitate geographic searching in IMSA and give a general overview of the area covered by a marine survey report. If it is important that you know the exact boundaries of a survey, you should examine the survey details spatial dataset provided under the 'resources' tab (if available).