

Duty Of Care Package

In the six months since Resource Futures took on the role of managing edoc – the four governments' online Waste Transfer Note system – there has been plenty of activity behind-the-scenes, as **Bernie Thomas** explains (with commentary from CIWM)

It has been six months since Resource Futures took on the role of managing edoc (electronic duty of care) on behalf of Defra, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Irish Executive. If you haven't encountered it before, edoc is an online system to help support businesses, local authorities and other organisations fulfil their Duty of Care obligation and complete waste transfer notes. It was developed over the last three years with funding under the European Commission LIFE+ programme.

Management and development of edoc is overseen by a Management Board and a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and Resource Futures provides secretariat support to both groups. The TAG's role is to improve the use and uptake of edoc through providing regular user experience feedback and acting as a sounding board. Amongst others, the TAG includes CIWM (CEO, Steve Lee, chairs the group), Zero Waste Scotland, the Forestry Commission, FCC Environment, Viridor, William Tracey Group, Helistrat, Reconomy and Aberdeenshire Council.

The Management Board is responsible for delivery of edoc and oversees progress across all of its components, while the executive members are the government organisations listed previously. The Environment Agency, which previously led the European project, is a non-executive member of the Board, alongside the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Focus On Engagement

FOLLOWING THE launch of edoc, the Environment Agency focused on raising awareness of the opportunities of the system and developing a community of users, whilst refining the system through user feedback. With the transfer of responsibility to the four UK governments, edoc has now moved into its second phase, with a strong focus on engagement. That is, to provide targeted support for existing and new users increasing the conversion rate of registrant to user, and to deliver enhancements to improve the usefulness and usability of edoc.

At present, an estimated 1.4m tonnes of waste is recorded on season tickets and this is set to rise. As more users record

actual weights of tickets, rather than estimated weights, the edoc system will become an increasingly important tool in providing information to participants.

CIWM Says...

"From the very beginning it was considered edoc would enhance the user experience by having a number of videos available. There are videos to help users get the most out of their registration; from simple registration to those users incorporating a number of different sites and wishing to monitor each site separately. These videos are available on the home page and take the user through a step by step process. The more information that is incorporated during registration helps users gain a fuller picture of their overall waste management. If you are operating a permitted facility, edoc can also help with the data for your quarterly returns to the regulator.

"There are a number of quick and easy aspects of managing waste data in edoc. Estimates are made on the quantity of waste produced using standard density ratios – for more detailed reporting edoc has a facility that allows each pick up on a season ticket to be entered, along with the actual weight collected. This is a useful feature if the user is a company producing small amounts of waste – certainly less than the estimated weights based on container size."

A number of communication activities are underway with edoc partners, including a webinar which took place in December with the Environment Agency on Duty of Care, which demonstrated the edoc software. User support and guidance is also available to organisations that are actively considering using edoc, or electronically integrating the system with their own.

A number of companies are already working with edoc and their clients and contractors to implement the Application Programming Interface. This allows data systems to talk to each other and exchange relevant data,

and so edoc can be integrated with registrant data management systems to exchange data automatically. There are a number of enhancements planned to improve edoc's functionality and usability.

CIWM Says... "During the development time of edoc it was determined important to have waste management contractor systems, that already collect waste data from customers, to be able to export relevant waste transfer data to edoc. Edoc was never developed to replace sophisticated data systems that dual as invoicing, it was designed to complement them. Data from all commercial and industrial transactions is recorded on edoc and collated to give an overall picture of commercial and industrial waste management by all edoc users.

"To encourage users to be more familiar with edoc before they roll the system out within their organisation, there is a test system that mirrors the live database. The test system allows users to build their organisation profile in a way that delivers the data in the required way. So if your organisation is based on a head office with a large number of satellite offices this can be mirrored in edoc to allow reporting from each office separately, without having a separate entry for each office."



Governments' Approaches

THE FOUR governments in the UK have a shared commitment to promoting, developing and supporting edoc. The Scottish Government has recently consulted on a proposal to make edoc mandatory, in the context of supporting towards a more circular economy.¹ In Wales, the current consultation on a proposed Public Sector Waste and Resource Efficiency Plan includes a question on whether use of edoc for managing Duty of Care transactions should be made mandatory in the public sector.² That consultation closed at the start of December 2015.

So what about local authorities? They are beginning to embrace edoc, with many trialing the system and a number of authorities moving towards fully integrating it into their operational systems. The benefits of edoc for the public sector are similar to those for business: reducing costs associated with using and archiving waste transfer notes and strengthening reporting, and the aforementioned webinar was all about mitigating the risk of waste crime for local authorities.³

The Future

LOOKING INTO the future, our focus for edoc is twofold: working with edoc registrants and active users to enhance the effectiveness of edoc and its user functionality; and improving the utility of the data that is compiled in edoc by identifying how it can be used to inform strategic planning and resource efficiency programme development and monitoring.

The latter aim is critical to help pinpoint inefficiencies and inform where resource efficiency measures are needed across materials, sectors and geographical areas. ■

CIWM Says... "One of the key aspects of edoc in relation to duty of care are the requirements incorporated into the electronic waste transfer note. None of the legally required aspects of duty of care paperwork can be ignored, deliberately skipped over or forgotten – unlike the paper versions. So if you are looking for compliance with duty of care, edoc ensures your customers are fulfilling their requirements."

References

1. www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/08/2820/317520
2. <http://gov.wales/consultations/environmentandcountryside/the-public-sector-waste-and-resource-efficiency-plan/?lang=en>
3. <https://cossprereg.btci.com/prereg/key.process?key=P8DQ7H3GK>



The Author

Bernie is a principal consultant for Resource Futures with over 15 years' experience in the waste sector. He is a Prince 2 qualified project manager and life cycle practitioner, specialising in data collection and Life Cycle Assessment of waste management processes, products and waste prevention activities. Bernie has worked extensively with public and private sector clients including WRAP, Defra, Environment Agency, Sita and Tesco.