



‘Name our Storms’ pilot project – improving communication of severe weather

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The way in which we consume weather information is changing, and so communication with the public to optimise or mitigate against the impact of weather in their daily activities must also change.

During autumn and winter 2015-16, the Met Office and Met Éireann, the Irish Met Service ran a pilot project to name wind storms that were expected to affect the UK and Ireland; the ‘Name our Storms’ project.

Over the past few winters the unofficial naming of wind storms that affected Ireland and the United Kingdom has demonstrated the benefits of establishing an official system for the naming of mid-latitude storms. The lack of an official naming process potentially undermines the authoritative voice of the National Met Services.

EUMETNET recognised that introducing a single Europe-wide storm naming system was impractical, greater integration through ‘building blocks’ of regional schemes by adjacent nations was recommended. The ‘Name our Storms’ pilot is one of these building blocks.

The naming process was linked to National Severe Weather Warnings with storms being named when they were forecast to have medium or high wind impacts. The aim of the project was to aid the communication of approaching severe weather and so help the public keep themselves, their property and businesses safe.

Public engagement at an early stage was important and the Met Office invited them to put forward storm names using social media. Together with Met Éireann an alphabetical list of storm names was compiled.

Following the completion of the project we’d like to share our experience. There were challenges associated with officially ‘naming’ each storm and managing the media messaging, but equally we were satisfied that storm naming helped to raise the profile of severe weather and increase public engagement and action.