19. DATA STORAGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

19.1 DATA STORAGE

The RHP is an ***information orientated programme***. A large volume of information is generated, to be analysed and interpreted for dissemination to a wide variety of people. Therefore the efficient and effective storage of your RHP information is critical to your programme's success.

19.2 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information management is a very important component of your RHP and begins with the systematic filing of the original SASS and IHAS and other biomonitoring forms. It is important to keep these as these are the original data source which may need to be referred to at a later stage. The results of these need to be captured electronically on a regular basis on to your Rivers Database. Your database periodically needs to be transferred to the National Rivers Database maintained by Southern Waters in Cape Town (Figure 6).

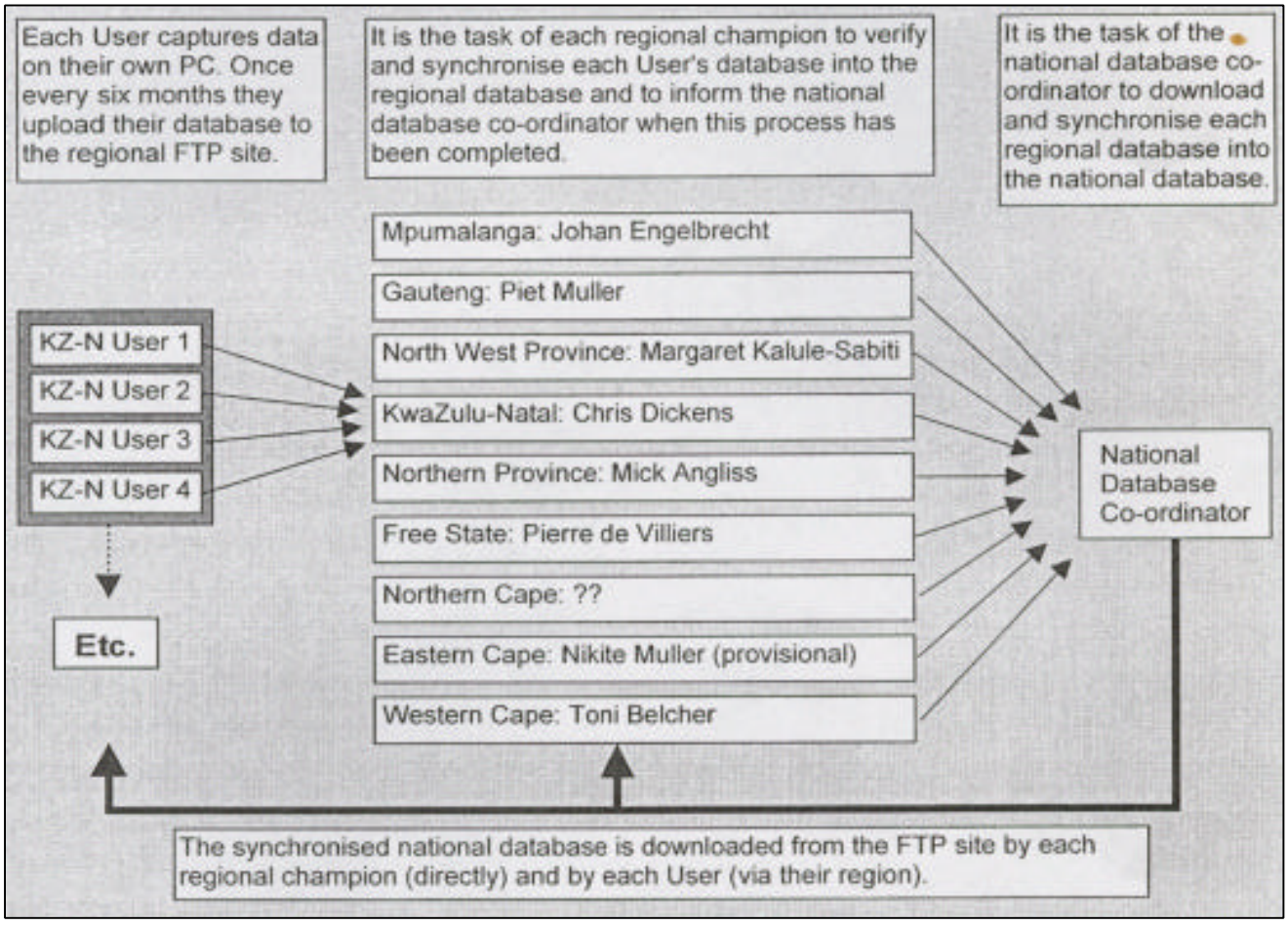

Figure 1. Information transfer using the Rivers Database system (local, regional, national) (adapted from Fowler *et al*.2000).

For information on the use of the Rivers Database see NAEBP Report No.11.

Useful tip!

As most of us have experienced, computers have this innate tendency to crash periodically, often with the disastrous results. To safeguard against losing a lot of hard work, it is important to make regular back up copies of your information. Copying the relevant files to a centralised server, which has a built in tape back-up drive or CD-writer will minimise the chances of a total information loss occurring. The back-up tapes or CDs should be stored off-site, so that in the event of fire, theft or any other "act of God", the information can readily be restored once new equipment has been purchased.

19.3 INFORMATION SECURITY AND USER ACCESS

This is an important consideration, particularly where a number of users are envisaged to be contributing to your RHP database on your server. User rights can be assigned to individual users, such as "read only" or "read and write" or "full control" (for the administrator), as Windows NT has the capacity for sharing of directories and files located on the server. The PIT should decide on the user rights for individuals involved. This is important to prevent accidental (or intentional!) alteration of files as well as ensuring that the information is centrally managed by the systems or database administrator. Your Network Controller will be able to assist with this.