

### Background to the need for waterway data and statistics

There is an urgent need to improve the collection and communication of good quality baseline data and statistics pertaining to navigation authorities and their waterways. AINA wants to ensure that it provides key statistical information that the inland waterways sector needs. Such information helps navigation authorities and waterway stakeholders to benchmark activities and to better understand the performance of the sector generally.

The *Waterways for Everyone* project has demonstrated that there is need to assemble data on inland waterways to:

- quantify the scale of the sector for advocacy purposes;
- support bids for funding; and
- monitor progress with the implementation of *Waterways for Everyone*.

Some data may be available for individual navigation authorities, but there is no comprehensive data from all inland waterways.

This problem of a lack of basic statistics at a national level was recognised in recent research sponsored by Defra into the economic benefit of waterways (Jacobs, *The benefits of inland waterways*, 2009). Such information is required for aggregating economic data. Addressing this deficiency was one of the four recommendations in the Jacobs study.

AINA has begun to redress this issue, through its report of the 2008 survey on the numbers and type of boats on the inland waterways, broken down by navigation authority which was issued in July 2009.