User Interface Guidelines

When designing user interfaces for EwE you should try to adhere the following implementation guidelines:

Overall Structure

- Triple-dots after a command (?) should only pull up a dialogues, i.e. New Scenario...
- Spelling: Ecopath, Multi-stanza??? QB etc
- Always use wait cursors and status bar messages for lengthy operations
- All texts should be specified in resources, NEVER in the code

Placement of commands

- Module commands, e.g. commands that apply to more than one form, are accessible from the menu.
- Commands that apply to ONE interface only shoud be placed on a toolbar above their form.
- Module commands may be repeated in the toolbar above a form if this aids functionality

Menu Structure

- Every word should be capitalized, except for prepositions and conjunctions
- Every menu item should have a keyboard shortcut
- Module-wide command should be present in specific module menu structure i.e. edit group, edit fleet

Forms

- Forms should have toolbars for native commands, i.e. diet comp ? Sum to one.
- All configuration forms should be based on Ecospace parameters layout
- All configuration forms have scroll bars when too small to fit in docking area (see Ecospace parameters AutoScroll? setting)
- Every form should be resizable; every control should have its anchors properly set (see Ecospace parameters)
- All controls should be consistently aligned and spaced (see Ecospace parameters)
- All controls should be accessible via the [TAB] key in an intuitive order
- Use of form icons should be consistent with the menu item that invoked the form
- There may be no usage instructions on forms or form toolbars; all help text moves to the manual
- Grids should be accompanied by the quick-edit toolbar to export content to CSV for all grids, and read from CSV and set option to input grids only
- Maps should have the quick-edit toolbar to export content to CSV for all maps, and read from CSV for input maps only
- Graphs should have the floating toolbar to zoom in, zoom out and reset zoom, and export to CSV
- Try to refrain from using Group boxes unless strictly necessary. Controls should be grouped using the standard EwE headers when possible (see Ecopath parameters)

Dialogues

- Should be smaller than 600x400 800x600
- Every dialog must have default buttons assigned that consume [ENTER] and [ESC] keystrokes (Accept_button = OK or similar, Cancel_button = Cancel) JS: [ENTER] rule dropped because 1) Grid edit controls need [ENTER] to commit and 2) [ENTER] is too easily pressed. However, [CANCEL] should be quickly accessible
- All controls should be consistently aligned and spaced (see Options dialogue)
- All controls should be accessible via the [TAB] key in an intuitive order (see Options dialogue)
- All controls should have an intuitive and preferrably unique shortcut key (see Options dialogue). This excludes default buttons (see above), default buttons never have keyboard shortcuts other than [ENTER] and [ESC]
- Only Ok/Cancel/Apply? buttons should have three dimensional borders JS: rule dropped; following Windows guidelines
- Dialogs may not have a title bar icon
- Dialogs may be resizable
- There may be no usage instructions on forms or form toolbars; all help text moves to the manual
- Title bar should have the same text as invoking menu item

Grids

- Ability to select range ([SHIFT] click), row, column or all
- Read-only cells should not be modified on delete/backspace/paste
- If grid shows indexed items such as group/fleets it must display an index column.

Navigation

- Only navigation tree leafs should invoke pages
- Only master nodes should be written in bold font JS: rule dropped; following Windows guidelines
- Capitalize only on the first word of tree item texts

Toolbars

- Caps only on the first word
- Shortcut keys available
- Toolbars in EwE cannot be docked and undocked, and should not display a grip indicator
- Toolbars in EwE should not show repeated separators without controls in between

Values

- Whenever an indexed item is displayed by name, the item index must be displayed as well
- All number formatting should follow the number of decimal digits and thousands separator settings as configured by the user
- All values display should follow the colour coding settings as configured by the user