

OTBG 18

Meeting Note

18th Meeting of the Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group
Held in Room 213, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London
19th November 2015 - 1100-1300

Attendees:

CH Clare Hamilton (Defra)
TP Tara Pelembe (JNCC)
SG Stewart Guy (MOD)
AE Alan Evans – NOC
KS Kate Salmon (Met office)
PD Paul Deverill (DFID)
CC Colin Clubbe – (Kew)
KB Kylie Bamford – (FCO)
CL Chris Lyal – (NHM)

By phone

SH Stacey Hughes (Defra)
MB Mark Baxter (Defra)
SC Sally Cunningham (Defra)
NL Natasha Lewis (Defra)

For Specific agenda items

AG Alan Gray (CEH) – by phone

Apologies

KW Kedell Worboys (UKOTA)
LK Lesley King (DFID)
NM Nicola Molloy
TW Tony Weighell (JNCC)
RS Richard Snow – MOD
NA Nick Andrews-Guavain – MOD
PN Paul Newbegin- MOD

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1. Introductions, apologies and review of actions from previous meeting

2. Cross-Government Working

a. JMC Preparations (including JMC Communiqué updates) –Kylie Bamford FCO

Updates and discussion JMC preparations included the following:

- The OTs requested a session on the environment where the focus will be on **climate change and energy**.
- The preparation for the Communiqué is going well, and language around environment, climate change and blue belt has been agreed.
- There have been discussions around an OT environment ministers meeting and there might be a call for a Defra minister to be involved.
- OT ministers have requested a session with the Environmental Audit Committee, but the timing has not yet been finalised.

The group then discussed the OT road maps:

- Background on the roadmaps was outlined i.e. JMC agrees communiqué every year which sets out what the OT governments and UK government agree to work on every year. Road maps were a means of monitoring progress by HMG and OTs. There has not been full OT engagement in the reporting process.
- How the UK government reports on progress against its JMC commitments needs to be considered, and a potential framework for this has been circulated for discussion. The framework outlines the JMC priorities from the last 3 communiqués, grouped by similar areas, with proposed lead departments.

The group was asked to decide whether this reporting format is useful for FCO needs. Discussion included:

- This provides some means of finding out what has been done in relation to JMC priorities
- There is the potential for JMC reporting to be the driver for the OTBS update document
- Matching and reporting against both sets of targets simultaneously will give a focus to the report and enable us to narrow down the content to focus on the issues that OTs decide are important via the JMC process.
- It was decided that we would focus on the key headlines with everyone to submit by the end of next week – 27th November to feed into JMC. To include anything since 2012.

3. Engagement

a. OTBG Stakeholder meeting (to follow) – Clare Hamilton

The OTBG annual stakeholder meeting will be held after this meeting. The agenda of the meeting was discussed, with other government departments who weren't able to attend providing relevant updates.

b. Response to UKOTCF letter – Clare Hamilton

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UKOTCF wrote to ministers to ask for their views on the recommendations from the July conference that related to UK government. A response has been sent indicating that this has been passed on to officials for comment. There was a discussion around the recommendations that raises the following points:

- The breadth of the support for the recommendations is caveated in the conference report in that not all participants signed up to the recommendations.
 - It was agreed that the NGOs would be consulted in the stakeholder meeting to see which of the recommendations they saw as priority.
- c. UK government report on OTBS implementation – **Clare Hamilton**

The Overseas Territories Biodiversity strategy sets out different strategic priorities for work within the OTs. In 2014 Defra published an update document to coincide with EAC inquiry into Sustainability in the OTs which has been successful, and were intending to publish update before the election which wasn't able to happen. The timing has further been affected by the spending review which will determine the level of resource available for delivery. The intent is still to publish a report, and a draft format has been circulated for comment.

d. OT student Conference – **Tara Pelembe**

TP provided an update on the OT student conference which is to be held at UCL on Sunday 29th November. There have been 137 registrations from students from across the OTs and across academic disciplines. The conference aims to provide networking opportunities and to develop thinking about sustainability among young future leaders of the OTs. The Conference is being organised through a JNCC, UKOTA, UCL, University of Exeter partnership. More information, programme and registration details are available online <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-7077>. UK organisations are invited to host a stall/stand at the event.

e. Blue Belt group update – **Kylie Bamford**

KB gave an update on the Blue Belt. A separate Blue belt group has been formed by FCO. It has a balance between stakeholders and OT representatives. It has held one meeting and is scheduled to meet every 6 weeks. Updates will be given to OTBG.

The first meeting set out the government's position in regards to delivering the blue-belt. It was explained that the blue-belt policy is considered a two track process, the first track focuses on Pitcairn and Ascension whereby large scale MPAs are to be considered. The second track process covers the other OTs, identifying bespoke solutions to the long-term protection of the marine environment.

4. **Funding**

a. Update on Darwin Plus – **Sally Cunningham**

SC told the group that the Darwin Plus advisory group had meet yesterday and produced a prioritised list of projects. It is unlikely that outcomes will be announced at JMC as this will be too close to the spending review announcement for internal departmental budgets to have been determined.

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MOD gave an update on their conservation stewardship fund which is available for work on defence estate. It is a pot of c. 1.5 million.

b. Update on Best – Simon Smith

The Best Portal can be found here <https://portals.iucn.org/best/>

c. Update on NERC Green Infrastructure (GI) Call – Tara Pelembe

TP gave the group a brief overview of the NERC GI call. This was probably the first time that NERC had mentioned OTs in one of their calls. There were c. 5 expressions of interest in OT projects, one of which resulted in a submission. Some of the EOIs resulted in the creation of new partnerships which are now being developed even though GI projects weren't submitted.

5. Research

a. Update on Defra OT gap analysis project – Alan Gray (by phone)

Alan Gray gave an overview of the OT gap analysis project. Discussions around the presentation included:

- The level of input from OTs – the study had been presented to OTTRSG in Gibraltar and was circulated by email.
- NL outlined the next steps i.e. the report will go through Defra internal clearance systems, and then be made available online.

b. DFID/Met office OT climate project – Kate Salmon (Met office)

Paul Deverill (DFID) and Kate Salmon (Met office) gave an overview of their OT climate change project.

They will present outcomes to the group at the next meeting in February.

6. AOB

SG shared Sanctuary magazine which has articles on OTs – if any OTBG members would like something to go in the Sanctuary magazine, get in contact SG.