



Meeting 3

**JNCC-NGO Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Group**

12<sup>th</sup> September 2014

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<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=4079>

**JNCC/NGO Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Group**

**Draft Note of meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

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**Cover note**

- This is not intended to be a comprehensive minute of the meeting, it is a summary note.
- In the spirit of collaboration – the points included are not attached to individuals or organisations.
- The note has not been produced in order of discussion, but rearranged to collate discussion by ‘topic’ and by agenda item.

1. **Welcome and introductions by the Chair**
2. **Update on actions from the last meeting**

Updates on actions from the last meeting given as outlined in the attached action tracker.

- *General point: It was reaffirmed that the focus of the meeting and the group was on the strategic focus of activities in the UKOTs and in particular working towards the identification of strategic priorities. It was noted that the Defra gap analysis would be important to feed into this thinking.*

3. **Paper 1: UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Data Access Project – Discussion paper**

Discussion on the paper confirmed that access to biodiversity data is crucial for a wide range of purposes and is important also for setting conservation priorities. The initiative was supported with the following thoughts/suggestions to feed into the development of the project:

- We should consider looking at trends in biodiversity status (where they are known) and providing some measure of confidence in the data - as this will be important for directing further research.
- The recent call for Darwin Plus projects highlighted data management and data systems as a priority area and some project proposals (including one on invertebrates) have been submitted under this category. Such projects, if successful, could feed into the wider data access project.
- It would be useful to use examples to test the system and demonstrate (or question) how the data will be used. It is important that this is more than just a compendium of information i.e. it also needs to be useful. It needs also to fit into existing initiatives within the OTs.
- The recent publication of a paper on priorities for invasive species eradications<sup>1</sup> is a good example of useful collection and collation of data to identify priorities.
- The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) is being proposed as a mechanism for making the data available globally. There are however uncertainties around its future. JNCC sits on the executive board of GBIF, and will report back on this uncertainty at the next meeting.
- JNCC has considerable expertise in the area of biodiversity data access and management.
- The project needs to focus on practical outcomes. There are opportunities for 'quick wins' that are low cost e.g. bringing together well-managed data sets. Data sets that aren't well managed could be addressed separately. i.e. the project can be set up in 2 phases.

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<sup>1</sup> Dawson *et al.* (2014). Prioritizing islands for the eradication of invasive vertebrates in the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. *Conservation Biology*.  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.12347/abstract>

- Maintenance of systems is a real issue – history has shown that, even if there are systems set up, they are often difficult to maintain in OTs and in UK governmental bodies over a long period. It is therefore recommended that the data systems that are established are ‘mirrored’ in an institution that has long term, sustainable expertise and support for this. It was noted that GBIF has a back-up system.
- It would be useful, if, as the data are being collated, anything that appears to be a strategic/immediate priority is flagged up.

4. **Paper 2: Report on proposed {NGO} priority actions for the UKOTs/CDs. collated and previously circulated by UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum – Mike Pienkowski.**

The Chair thanked UKOTCF for their work on compiling the paper.

In introducing the paper, UKOTCF’s Honorary Executive Director said:

This item refers to what is called paper 2 in the agenda but is labelled paper 3 on the document itself. Apologies. This is simply because the paper was issued before numbering in a draft agenda was changed to the one issued.

As I said at the time of circulation, I do not intend to read this paper here. This would be impossible, and you have all had it for over a couple weeks anyway.

By way of introduction, I can say that this paper, in accordance with what we agreed at the second meeting of this group, simply collates the views supplied by partners in the meeting (in some cases incorporating the views of member or associate bodies also) and attempts to give them some sort of structure. It was not intended that UKOTCF would then integrate them in a draft framework of priorities. Starting that off is the purpose of this meeting, using the inputs which we have collated.

There is obviously a challenge in that there has been good involvement from the NGOs in our group but not as yet from JNCC and other governmental bodies. Unfortunately, JNCC has not had a chance to produce its intended analysis of where it would welcome assistance from other organisations, although that is implied to some extent in the data access paper we have just seen. I, and I am sure others, look forward to hearing in the next item of progress in Defra’s inter-departmental gap analysis

Looking at the present paper, I guess it would be fair to say that the main areas identified by various combinations of the partners are:

- developing a strategic approach (of which are current meetings are important components)
- strategic physical planning
- large marine protected areas
- coastal zone management more generally
- invasive eradications, in at least one case combined with addressing legal taking of wildlife
- getting users of the environment, rather than just regulatory bodies, to become champions of the environment
- data gathering and handling

- management planning and implementation
- monitoring progress
- environmental education and awareness
- capacity building
- filling gaps in legislation

We need to note also that different organisations adopt different approaches, at least partly related to their underlying roles. Some focus primarily on limited-term projects of various sizes, whilst others maintain a wider suite of longer-term support on a range of issues. And of course there are various mixtures along this continuum

Trying to classify identified priorities in another way:

There are some big projects where major progress has been made, with others being clear priorities that are being planned or proposed. These tend to be limited-term projects, although almost all of them have ongoing implications. The big invasive removal and large marine protected areas projects can be looked at within this category.

Using this simple and alternate way of classification, there is another category of projects on which a great deal of work is being done but the need will be almost continuous, even if it is divided into projects for convenience. These include environmental education and awareness, capacity building, and survey and data handling.

The last of these merges into another category. This is one of major challenges and opportunities that have been identified but for which a huge amount of work is still required. So, amongst those areas identified in the collation, this will include:

- building common data systems, the subject of the early agenda item;
- monitoring, both in terms of the wildlife resource itself and in terms of progress of commitments to conserve this; and
- developing the interest of, and championing by, commercial environmental users to maintain the natural resource on which they depend.

Just before the meeting, it was pointed out to me that there is a fourth group, which does not appear in the ideas put forward for self-evident reasons: urgent projects arising from “fire-fighting” needs in relation to unforeseen threats to important biodiversity interests.

So, that is the collation as well as a couple of ways of classifying responses. Of course, there may well be areas that none of us have yet flagged up in this exercise. And we need to think as to where we go next in moving towards a framework of shared priorities for support by British-based bodies to conservation in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

Discussion around the paper and next steps included the following key points:

- It was acknowledged that the list was not one that was intended to identify areas where everyone needs to input, but is rather a look at what NGOs have identified as actions that need to be undertaken, providing an opportunity for seeing which can be worked on collaboratively, and which will be undertaken independently. It provides a basis for further prioritisation.
- It was noted that this is an incomplete list in that it doesn't include contributions from all NGOs – whilst major time should perhaps not be invested in getting a more

comprehensive picture, the opportunity for continued input should be maintained. However it was acknowledged that the majority of the NGOs active across all OTs had inputted.

- Blue Marine's objective is to 'sell' projects, and this list provides a good foundation for identifying which projects are required, and funding can be sought on this basis.
- The paper is very useful for Defra to see what the priorities are for the NGO community, and as a way of establishing partnerships between organisations within the UK for projects. It will also be useful when looking at cross-government working.
- There needs to be thought around how to obtain resources for 'fire-fighting' (ad hoc issues that require immediate attention).
- It is important to match NGO priorities with HMG priorities to see where they marry together. There are some areas where clearly JNCC would have a keen interest in collaborating with NGOs on the issues identified – particularly biodiversity data and monitoring which is a core area of JNCC's work. There is also the possibility that JNCC could collaborate on some areas of marine work as JNCC have a lot of expertise in this area. However resources are limited, and anything that JNCC takes forward needs to link clearly to UK government priorities including those identified in the Defra gap analysis.
- It was noted that JNCC had yet to add its priorities which were being held over pending the outcome from the Defra gap analysis.
- JNCC could coordinate JNCC input along with that from Kew, NHM and other statutory bodies, to map the statutory bodies' areas of priority focus, and will report these ideas at the next meeting. This could also feed into the overall OT target mapping project that JNCC will be initiating and implementing in partnership with other government bodies, NGOs and others this year.
- The collated information from statutory bodies and NGOs could be compiled in a spreadsheet format that can be searched and sorted by end users. Thoughts on the format of the spreadsheet included.
  - Column headings need to be useful for interrogation – some thoughts on additions include
    - Scale of the cost
    - Territories to which the action applies
- It was agreed that the actions should be categorised using a simple classification system and JNCC staff would consult with UKOTCF to identify an appropriate format for the spreadsheet. A draft would be prepared in time for the next meeting of the group.
- UKOTCF had incorporated in its web-database (originally part-funded by HMG), a module on conservation priorities. This had been based on a survey across Territories in the 1990s. Once computerised, some UKOTs updated their data in the early 2000s. This had not been updated since because it had been thought that HMG would use the Environment Charter process to maintain this function. This module remained available mainly as a historic record.
- UKOTCF has a currently useable module of its web-database on Projects. This had been used, amongst a range of other purposes, to provide an information dissemination service for the FCO/DFID OTEP grant programme, until HMG stopped using external web-sites. It does, however, probably have the capability to hold the information we are discussing now in an accessible and interrogatable form. UKOTCF would investigate.
- Ownership and perception of ownership of the 'priorities' needs to be carefully and sensitively managed and clarifications and caveats embedded in any publishing of the 'maps'.

5. *Update on Defra gap analysis – Clare Hamilton*

Defra have now managed to go through the internal procurement steps for tendering for this piece of work and have a final meeting next Wednesday to finalise the contract specification. Currently the anticipated timetable is that bids will be submitted by the end of October 2014 and the start date will be in November 2014. The duration of the study has not yet been finalised.

In addition, there is a top-down process looking at the overarching government strategy for OTs Biodiversity and a paper is being put together and going to ministers which will set the foundation for what will be done by UK governmental bodies.

6. *Paper 3: Life Lionfish project update. Information paper*

Discussion around the paper included the following points:

- It would be useful for the paper to include a brief summary of the science and strategic importance of the project, outlining the strengths and the transferable technology. This should be included in future papers presented on specific projects.
- It would be useful if there were a section outlining where NGO collaboration would add value.
- The project was seen as a means by which JNCC's limited resources could be used to lever large funds to address an important regional issue in the Caribbean. For a project of this nature, the mapping exercise would be useful to feed into an assessment of the relative importance of projects of this nature.
- It was noted that the challenge of this project would be to secure EU LIFE funding despite the restrictive eligibility criteria, utilising the links to Outermost Regions. Defra had not secured any view on this from EU institutions.

7. *Update on Gibraltar conference – UKOTCF: Mike Pienkowski*

A conference for practitioners in OTs will be held from the 11<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup> July 2015 in Gibraltar. The conference is to be organised by the UKOTCF and hosted by the Government of Gibraltar, which is the main funder alongside UKOTCF. A smaller but welcome grant from Defra was also acknowledged, and UKOTCF is collaborating with JNCC on the costs of representatives from UKOT governmental conservation bodies. Other funding sources continue to be explored. The conference will shortly be announced on the UKOTCF website and by email, and booking forms will be circulated shortly. In addition to sessions for practitioners, a high level event for ministers is planned.

8. *AOB and date of the next meeting*

- A new EU funding stream will be open to OTs. It has been confirmed that OTs will be eligible for B4Life funding. Defra will be supplying details as they become available.
- It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in late November/early December after the consultants for the Defra gap analysis had been appointed. NGOs will confirm who will chair the meeting.

## Summary of actions

Agenda item	Action Number	Action	Topic	Lead
1.	1	<i>Housekeeping: All papers will have a unique number.</i>	Housekeeping	JNCC
3.	2	<i>The points raised in this discussion will feed into the development of the holistic data access project proposal. Consultation with other groups of stakeholders will be held (as outlined in the paper) and a further developed project proposal will be shared with the JNCC-NGO meeting and other stakeholders by March 2015. In the interim, a scoping for a 'phase 1 quick win' project, and 'trial example' using existing systems will be developed and shared with to the JNCC-NGO meeting in November /December 2014.</i>	Data access	JNCC
3.	3	<i>JNCC to investigate and report back on the future prospects of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).</i>	Data access	JNCC
4	4	<i>JNCC to consult with UKOTCF and to prepare for the next meeting a spreadsheet (including search functionality) which maps statutory bodies (and academia's) targets, the NGO targets and wider HMG targets as outlined in current policy documents. UKOTCF will examine the potential of using its existing web-database module on Projects for this purpose.</i>	Mapping UK organisations areas of focus for OT work	JNCC (with input from UKOTCF)  UKOTCF
6	5	<i>Lionfish Recipe book to be given to the Chair</i>	information	JNCC
8	6	<i>Defra will supply details as they become available on a new EU funding stream, which will be open to OTs: B4Life funding.</i>	AOB	Defra

*Attendees*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>Present</b>	
Bob Brown	JNCC
Catherine Wensink	UKOTCF
Chris Gilligan	JNCC (Chair of the meeting)
Clare Hamilton	Defra
Jonathan Hall	RSPB
Marcus Yeo	JNCC
Mike Pienkowski	UKOTCF
Paul Rose	JNCC
Tara Pelembe	JNCC
Tim Stowe	RSPB
Tom Appleby	Blue Marine Foundation
Vicky Kindemba	Buglife
<b>Apologies</b>	
Alison Neil	South Georgia Heritage Trust
Charles Clover	Blue Marine Foundation (Tom Appleby attending)
John Croxall	Birdlife
Kedell Worboys (Mrs)	St Helena Gov Representative
Nicole Leotaud	CANARI
Sarah Brennan	Falklands Conservation
Tony Gent	ARC Trust (Roger Mitchell was to have attended on Tony's behalf, but was unable to do so)