

UK Overseas Territories Training and Research Programme Steering Group

Minutes from meeting¹ held 20th January 2010

1. Work programme

Since the OT workshop in September 2009 a small group met² to update the work plan drawn up at the workshop. This is a rolling document, regularly reviewed and updated by Steering Group members. The plan identifies priorities for action, who will take the lead and when the action will be complete. It will be available on the JNCC website in spreadsheet format and will be refined and converted into a word document in the next few months for wider use by all members.

Objective 1. Training and capacity building for individuals and organisations in the OTs.

All members agreed to keep funding a scholarship for BSc, MSc and PhD as a priority. It was suggested that members look at the prospectuses for Reading and Exeter Universities and identify which courses and levels are of most interest to their territory.

ACTION 1.1 – All OTs look at prospectuses for Reading and Exeter Universities and identify which courses and levels are of most relevance to their territory. Send information to Tara and Elizabeth at JNCC by 26 Feb 2010.

It was noted that there needs to be flexibility from the University in terms of entrance requirements since some students from the territories do not have the pre-required qualifications however they are able to come and study in the UK and do well. This flexibility needs to be built into the relationship with the respective university.

ACTION 1.2 – Cayman to circulate information on Mangrove and Coral Reef Programme to JNCC for adding to website by 26 Feb 2010.

ACTION 1.3 - TCI to forward information on National Trust to JNCC for adding to website by 26 Feb 2010.

JNCC noted that they are working up a programme to provide financial support for OTs to attend short training courses. This is currently under development and full details will be sent to members shortly.

ACTION 1.4 – JNCC to circulate information about programme to support OTs to attend short training courses, by 31 March 2010.

ACTION 1.5 – Any OT wishing to attend a specific training course to notify Elizabeth Moore at JNCC as soon as possible with details of the course including cost.

¹ See Annex 1 for attendee list

² Planning group meeting on 12th Jan 2010 consisting of Ken Norris, Univ of Reading, Samia Sarkis, Bermuda, Tara Pelembe and Elizabeth Moore, JNCC

ACTION 1.6 – All OTs to identify short training courses that already exist of interest to the OTs. Please send information to Elizabeth Moore at JNCC to be added to the website. Ongoing.

Objective 2. Access to research and advisory expertise and Objective 3. Activities to enhance knowledge transfer between OTs

Members agreed that it was appropriate for JNCC to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Reading in order to strengthen the relationship between the University and the Steering Group and establish a clear set of responsibilities. It was stressed that this MoU would not exclude any relationships OTs may have with other universities in the UK, but that it would build on existing links. It was agreed that a further MoU should be established with the University of Exeter since this would ensure that marine expertise in the UK could be accessed in the same way as terrestrial expertise.

It was noted that there may be a possibility for OTs to get access to electronic journals. Ken Norris had previously suggested that if the OTs could nominate one person per territory the university could set that person up as an associate for the faculty and thereby allow access to the university catalogue for scientific journals. There was much interest in this concept which was agreed to be very valuable for the OTs.

It was also noted that information sharing should be two way and that students from the Universities of Reading and Exeter could do research in the territories.

ACTION 1.7 - JNCC to draft MoU for University of Reading and University of Exeter. MoU to include agreement about access to scientific journals and establish process for UK students to do research in the OTs – by 31 March 2010.

There was further discussion on information sharing between the OTs and some actions were noted for attention later in the year and the following year since they were of lower priority than some of the other actions discussed, e.g. list of consultants to follow up research priorities, standardisation of assessments etc. It was agreed that it would be valuable to have a complete picture of skills available within the OTs in order to facilitate information sharing.

ACTION 1.8 – All OTs to send details of skills/expertise available on island to Elizabeth Moore at JNCC using skill audit form initiated by Samia Sarkis³ - by 26 February 2010.

The group discussed the website. Currently JNCC is building a number of pages on their own website to support the programme and they will continue to add information and links (e.g. the Flicker bulletin produced by the Cayman Islands). JNCC will also start discussing with the University of Reading options for setting up a website hosted by the University with links to UK academic expertise.

³ <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=5124>

ACTION 1.9 – All OTs to send documents to Elizabeth Moore, JNCC for upload onto the website including EIA and economic valuation case studies (Bermuda, TCI and Montserrat) and beach profile monitoring methodology (BVI, TCI and Anguilla) – by 26 February 2010.

There was general support for the idea of a National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) for the Overseas Territories, possibly drawing on the methodology that is being used for the UK NEA⁴. Some OTs felt it might be wise for one OT to take the lead, trial the approach and look at the issues, or possibly it might work better for a group of OTs with similar issues to run a process. However there would be a considerable amount of co-ordination required between OTs and the cost of the exercise might be a restraining factor. It was agreed that a NEA would be useful to raise awareness of the value of ecosystems which could be used for better enforcement procedures.

2. Research Priorities

The OT research priorities are used by the JNCC to inform funding decisions. In recognition of the fact that research priorities change quite regularly JNCC is setting up a process to annually update the OT research priorities. All OTs were sent a template⁵ for research priorities (18 Jan 2010). This needs to be completed for the territories 2010 priorities, including information about how the priorities were arrived at (i.e. are they the National Government's priorities or have they been consulted on) and whether permission is given to add these to the JNCC website.

ACTION 2.1 – All OTs to send their top 3 research priorities to Elizabeth Moore using the template provided by 26 February 2010. JNCC to collate the research priorities and upload the information (where permitted) onto the JNCC website by 31 March 2010.

3. Membership of the OT Steering Group

All members approved the JNCC's document clarifying the role and responsibilities of members and it was agreed that this would be added to the Steering Group's Terms of Reference.

ACTION 3.1 – JNCC(EM) to add details about role and responsibilities of Steering Group members to the ToR by 26 February 2010.

All members agreed to invite the Crown Dependencies to become members of the Steering Group. JNCC will follow this up and invite them to the next Steering Group meeting. Furthermore, everyone was happy to strengthen links with the University of Exeter (see above) and the University of the West Indies as noted at the OT workshop in September 2009. JNCC will follow up with a MoU for the University of Exeter. It was noted that there were a number of other organisations who may be interested in joining the group, therefore some thought needs to go into defining criteria for membership of the group.

⁴ <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/>

⁵ <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=5131>

JNCC suggested that it would be valuable to set up a small working group to take forward issues between meetings and invited all members to send expressions of interest to Elizabeth Moore.

ACTION 3.2 – JNCC to set up small working group to take forward issues between main Steering Group meetings. First issue: to establish criteria for membership of the Steering Group.

4. Feedback on OTCC meeting and studentship

Kedell (UKOTA) noted that unfortunately the Forum meeting which preceded the Overseas Territories Consultative Council (OTCC) meeting in December 2009 was not discussion based. There was a section on environment at the OTCC meeting but there were no formal actions or outputs on environmental issues. UKOTA made the statement that the work done through the JNCC on OTs was very valuable and the Defra Minister Huw Irranca-Davies was there and appeared to be supportive.

Discussion followed on ways to get environmental issues onto the OTCC agenda and it was suggested that the OTs need to lobby their Chief Ministers and Premiers to add it since the Territories can add items to the OTCC agenda at this level. Tara mentioned that there is an interdepartmental group on OTs where this issue could be raised. Members include JNCC, Defra, DfID, UKOTA and FCO. The interdepartmental group meets every four months to discuss progression of the Defra OT Biodiversity Strategy.

ACTION 4.1 – UKOTA to ask for a discussion on the UK OT Training and Research Programme to be added to the agenda for the interdepartmental group on OTs. UKOTA to report back to OT Steering Group at next their meeting.

Kedell provided an update on the studentship. Helen Larzleer (Bermuda) has settled well at Reading University and will shortly provide a first assessment report. UKOTA have expanded their scholarship working group to include other territories, namely Montserrat, Bermuda and TCI.

5. Biodiversity in the UKOTs – updating the JNCC 1999 publication

JNCC produced a report on biodiversity in the UKOTs in 1999 and is looking to update this in 2010 to mark the International Year of Biodiversity. OTs are encouraged to co-author or lead on the section on their territory in the report.

ACTION 5.1 – JNCC(TP) to send further details to the OTs including a copy of the 1999 report and timescale/requirements for the OT sections updates. All OTs to indicate whether they are able to lead or co-author the section on their territory.

6. JNCC research contribution contracts – updates

TCI said their project “Increasing biodiversity on coral reefs by creating an *Acropora* nursery”⁶ had commenced. They built a steel frame and placed it in the sea and put *Acropora* corals onto the frame. Unfortunately there was a very high mortality rate due to

⁶ <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=5105>

the current. With modifications to the current they have achieved greater success and are now putting more *Acropora* onto the structure. They will prepare a report which will be added to the JNCC website.

Cayman reported on the survey of the booby colony on Grand Cayman using an over flight which was thought to be less invasive than ground level survey. Everything is in place to run the fly over in February and the data from this will be correlated with the walk-through survey to ascertain accuracy. A report will be sent to JNCC and added to the website on completion of the project.

Anguilla reported on the ecological assessment of Little Scrub Island. A preliminary assessment has been made to scope the island and prepare for the main research. They are waiting now for the right ecological conditions in order to start the main assessment and hope this will be possible in February. A report will be sent to JNCC and added to the website on completion of the project.

ACTION 6.1 – TCI, Cayman and Anguilla to submit a final report⁷ (and where possible photos) on completion of their contribution contracts. Reports and photos to be uploaded to the JNCC website.

JNCC will issue the next call for proposals for contribution funding to all members in March 2010.

Funding Issues – Nikki Chapman (Chair)

7. Update on DfID contribution to funding role

Nikki reported that DfID will contribute to provide funding for half a post for 2010, and this enable Nikki to continue providing specific support to the OTs on funding issues. Nikki will spend the other half of her time providing marine advice to OTs.

8. European funding bid (ENRTP)

Nikki is working closely with a group of Caribbean OTs to submit the second stage of the bid for the thematic programme ENRTP. The first stage was completed in September 2009 and was successful; the second stage is now underway with the deadline of 10th March 2010.

9. Training packages and opportunities

Nikki is providing a two-day training course for OTs on completing funding applications. This is being delivered to OTs in the form of a highly participatory workshop. At the end of the workshop participants will have completed a funding application for funds such as Darwin and OTEP. The training includes budgeting and report writing and is applicable to all type of funding applications. Nikki can train OT representatives to train colleagues within their territories and this can be done to a group of OTs or individual territories. So far training has been delivered to the Falkland Islands and St Helena (where 20 people participated). Nikki encouraged members to let her know if they would like to receive this training.

⁷ Using the report template which can be found at : <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=5105>

The group agreed that this was very useful training and there was discussion about the best way of delivering the package. DfID and FCO noted that since the training course the number and quality of Darwin and OTEP bids had improved.

Nikki noted that there is up to £25,000 in Darwin Challenge funds currently available for OTs to do a scoping study. The closing date for applications is 19th February. Nikki offered to assist OTs who are interested in making a funding bid.

Annex 1

Attendees at UK OT Training and Research Programme Steering Group meeting 20th January 2010

Name	Country/Organisation
Karim Hodge	Anguilla
Rhon Connor	Anguilla
Samia Sarkis	Bermuda (Chair – Training & Research)
Bertrand Lettsome	BVI
Tim Austin	Cayman Islands
Matt Cottam	Cayman Islands
Pantelis Charilaou	Cyprus (SBA)
Wesley Clerveaux	TCI
Marlon Hibbert	TCI
Kedell Worby	UKOTA
Tara Pelembe	JNCC
Elizabeth Moore	JNCC
Nikki Chapman	JNCC (funding only)
Ann Brown	Falklands Conservation (funding only)
Anna Balance	DfID (funding only)
Heather Christie	FCO (funding only)
Alison Copeland	Bermuda (funding only)