

Meeting 1

JNCC-NGO Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Group

8th January 2014

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

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Final agreed note of meeting

8th January 2014

Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, Westminster, SW1P 3RB. 14:00 – 16:30

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.
- Additional points that were raised during discussion have been summarised in item 6.

Welcome and introduction

Peter Bridgewater welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided an introduction to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) including clarification around the distinction between, and differing roles and responsibilities of, the JNCC Committee and the JNCC support company. He highlighted that this meeting would be a good opportunity to talk through how to maximise the effect of the resources available for conservation work in the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories (UKOTs) collectively.

1 Aims of the meeting

Marcus Yeo outlined the background to the meeting, the impetus being the outcomes of a recent government review of JNCC. The outcomes of the review provided positive endorsement for the work that JNCC does. There were 6 conclusions identifying areas where JNCC could improve and these have been taken on board and JNCC are committed to implementing them. One of these conclusions was around working with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) '*JNCC will build on its current partnership working with stakeholders and in particular improve engagement with civil society, including with the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies*'. As a result of this, two groups have been proposed and initiated by JNCC.

- (1) A group for liaison between JNCC and NGOs working in nature conservation in the UK which met at the end of last year
- (2) This group for liaison between JNCC and UK-based NGOs working in nature conservation in the Overseas Territories.

A conscious decision was made to recommend separating the 2 groups acknowledging the range and diversity of issues that JNCC considered needs to be addressed by both groups.

Some NGOs indicated that they had reservations about the presumptions within the agenda, but were content to resolve these during the meeting.

2 Organisational roles and priorities.

2.1 Clarification around JNCC's role and the parameters within which it works.

A number of points were raised and addressed clarifying JNCC's roles and responsibilities, funding sources etc¹.

2.2 Existing and future ways of working

In addition, there was general discussion on existing and future ways of working that focussed primarily on the following points:

- NGOs (both in UK and in UKOTs) would welcome consultation by JNCC.
- It needs to be acknowledged that there are sensitivities and tensions e.g. between NGOs and governments, between UK government and UKOT governments, between UK government and its agencies, and that there are a number of views on what JNCC is there to do e.g.
 - Her Majesty's Government's (HMG) view on JNCC's role
 - UKOT Governments' views on JNCC's role
 - JNCC's (as the Joint Committee) view on JNCC's role.
 - UK NGOs' views on JNCC's role which can be summarised as:
 - JNCC should work across all UKOTs
 - JNCC should be clear on how it engages with UKOTs, governments and NGOs

¹ Detail on these roles and responsibilities is available on JNCC's website at {web link}

- JNCC should coordinate, in consultation with the other partners, a long-term conservation strategy for the UKOTs in the way it does for UK (including collating data, prioritisation etc).
- JNCC have what others don't have i.e. they are an arm's-length government entity. A framework for helping to determine UK priorities in supporting OT conservation, collated by JNCC in consultation with other parties, would be very useful for UK government and NGOs to enable/support decisions on where to focus effort and for funding applications.
- There is a commitment between UK NGOs to work together on UKOT nature conservation issues. Chagos Marine Protected Area (MPA) is one of many good examples of how this has worked in practice.
- This meeting creates a new opportunity to do things in a different way. A collective approach is required to agree priorities and principles. An evidence-based strategic plan would be useful – a basic knowledge of the status of biodiversity and trends of biodiversity over time is missing. NGOs can contribute to this but don't have the capacity or mandate to bring this together – this is potentially a role for JNCC. Without this information governments and NGOs are unable to be confident about where the priorities are.
- Clarification is required on what “legally binding” means in the context of Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and how this translates into HMG's legal commitments with respect to UKOTs. How HMG's commitments to CBD (including the Aichi targets) translate into (all) UKOTs and how we measure whether these are being achieved or not also needs to be clarified.

4 Terms of reference for the JNCC-NGO Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Group

This new joint group was agreed only for its initial purpose of developing a shared framework of priorities, not as a continuing general purpose meeting. Any discussion as to whether to continue the meetings with a wider purpose would not be taken until this initial business had been addressed.

4.1 Links with other groups/membership

- It was agreed that there should be cross-over between the UK NGO (UK) group and the UK NGO (UKOT) group. This will help to overcome the tendency for UK-wide issues to be based on considerations in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, without taking adequate account of the Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies.
- It was agreed that the UK Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA) would be invited to future meetings to provide links with UKOT governments.
- It was suggested that there be a link between this group and the IUCN EU Overseas Territories Group in Brussels.
- Links to Territory-based NGOs also need to be fostered, as most UK-based NGOs do not speak on behalf of relevant Territory-based organisations.

4.2 Chair

- It was agreed that chairing should be on a rotational basis. The chair for the next meeting will be confirmed to the CEO of JNCC by the NGO members.

4.3 Frequency of meetings and distribution of meeting note

- The next meeting would take place in April or May 2014. It is hoped the new JNCC Chair will be able to attend.
- The note of the meeting will be made widely available.

- Following establishment of the framework discussed in 5.1 the need for continued meetings of this group will be re-evaluated.

5 Topics for future discussion

5.1 The framework

- The key point that emerged from the discussion was that there was a need for a strategy or framework to enable more effective collaboration and more effective focus of collective effort by UK-based organisations in UKOTs. It was agreed that the next meeting would focus primarily on the development of ideas and parameters for this concept.
- Points made at the meeting that input into this concept included:
 - The complexities of varying views on what JNCC should do outlined in 2.2 need to be taken into account and should lead to a clarification of JNCC's role in the context of the OTs.
 - JNCC's work has to fit within existing frameworks such as the UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy and the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. It would be helpful for JNCC to suggest how it might work with NGOs in the context of the OTs Biodiversity Strategy
 - The process for drafting, nature, description, title and content of the 'strategy/framework' needs to be carefully considered so that it is conducive to collaboration.
 - This could be a strategy for deployment of UK resources to UKOTs (not a strategy for the UKOTs per se)
 - The strategy could be focused around themes/geographical areas.
- JNCC will draft, for circulation before the next meeting, a document to inform discussion on the development of this framework

6 Other points raised

In addition to the agenda items there were other points raised

6.1 Principles for nature conservation work in UKOTs

There was discussion around basic principles for nature conservation work and there was a consensus that:

- Protected areas are an important component of nature conservation in UK Overseas Territories.
- Advice and support should be (and is) equally available regarding inhabited and uninhabited UKOTs.
- NGOs have distinct and very valuable roles in influencing government about priorities and policies in UKOTs.
- JNCC considers that the UKOTs biodiversity strategy is the overarching HMG policy document (along with the OTs White paper) for its approach to nature conservation in the UK Overseas Territories. The role of UK government in UKOTs and OT governments varies from OT to OT. Others noted that these are important documents but need to be complemented by a framework and other elements which normally form part of a strategy in order to constitute a meaningful policy.

6.2 Opportunities

- Several NGOs have funding available and/or can lever funding for large scale projects in the Overseas Territories.

6.3 Marine Protected Areas

- The JNCC's response to the Chagos consultation was raised by a number of NGOs, since this had come as a shock. It appeared to them from this and other

communications, that JNCC had a bias against the establishment of IUCN category I or II protected areas and this was impeding trust and collaboration where NGOs were involved in such areas or proposals. The Chair assured the meeting that JNCC had no such universal bias, and would support whatever categories were apposite where protected areas were proposed and it was appropriate for JNCC to comment

6.4 Thoughts for future discussion.

- Availability of funding from other non-government sources.
- JNCC Committee needs to make space and time to talk about the UKOTs.
- It would be good to look at how the country conservation agencies could provide skills and advice for conservation work in the UKOTs.

6.5 Additional information

- Additional information on the roles, functions and funding for JNCC can be found at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=5287>
- Report on the OT Aichi targets can be found at http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/ot_AICHIREPORT17-07-2013-14-04-submitted.pdf

Summary of Actions

Action	lead
Develop ideas for the framework concept and JNCC's role in relation to the OTs and circulate to group members	JNCC
Clarify the legal status of CBD and of UK's commitments to UKOTs under CBD	JNCC
Make the meeting note and reports of the meeting widely available	ALL (JNCC website?)
Confirm chair for next meeting	NGOs
Confirm the date of the next meeting	JNCC, after consultation
Invite UKOTA to the next meeting	JNCC

Attendees

JNCC

Peter Bridgewater
Bob Brown
Marcus Yeo
Paul Rose
Tony Weighell
Tara Pelembe

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust

Tony Gent

Army Ornithological Society

Lt Col Roger Dickey

Blue Marine Foundation

Charles Clover
Kate West

Buglife

Vicky Kindemba

Chagos Conservation Trust

Simon Hughes

Falklands Conservation

Sarah Brennan

IUCN National Committee UK

Chris Mahon(by phone)

Pew Trusts

Alistair Gammell
Elisabeth Whitebread

RSPB

Tim Stowe
Clare Stringer

Royal Zoological Society of Scotland

Sarah Robinson

South Georgia Heritage Trust

Alison Neil

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

Chris Tydeman
Mike Pienkowski

World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Lucy Wilson

Zoological Society of London

Matthew Gollock

Apologies were received from the Alderney Wildlife Trust, BirdLife International and the Marine Conservation Society.