11th OTBG Meeting

Meeting of the Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group

Held at Nobel House

17 Smith Square

London SW1P 3JR

Wednesday 23 October 2013 14:00 am - 16.00pm

Attendees Apologies Richard Findon (Defra) Tina Blandford (Defra) Siôn Griffiths (FCO) Nicola Clarke (Defra) Clare Hamilton (Defra Chair) Colin Clubbe (RBG, Kew) Robert Hitchen (Defra) Jeremy Eppel (Defra) Razi Latif (DfID) Darren Freezor (DECC) Tara Pelembe (JNCC) Helen Stevens (FCO) Samia Sarkis (JNCC) Mark Stevenson (Defra) Tony Weighell (JNCC) Sally Cunningham (Defra)

Main Business

Kedell Worboys (UKOTA)

1. LIFE Plus

Richard Findon (Defra) summarised the situation with regard to the new LIFE Plus funding scheme for 2014-2017. As discussed at the OTBG meeting in July, the new scheme is expected to provide conditional access for the Overseas Territories to Life Plus funding. The final text is not yet available, however, as it is not due to be voted on by the European Parliament until November. . Multiannual Work Programmes will be adopted to provide for a more strategic planning of funding and it is expected that the draft work programmes will be available toward the end of the year with a view to adoption by the relevant EU level Committee in January 2014. Once the work programmes have

Stacey Hughes (Defra)

been finalised, the Commission will propose draft scheme rules for consideration. It is only once both the work programmes and scheme rules have been adopted that we will have a definitive view on types of projects in the OTs that might be successful and the impact of the conditionality requirements. However we expect the environmental priorities to largely reflect those in the 7th Environmental Action Programme. A key challenge will be to demonstrate EU 'additionality' – ie show how projects contribute " ...to the development, implementation and enforcement of Union environmental and climate policy and legislation...".

Richard provided the following additional information about the operation of LIFE Plus:

- 'Nature and Biodiversity' is identified as a priority area with 55% of the project budget earmarked for projects supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity;
- OTBG members have identified sustainable fisheries management; climate change adaptation; seed collection and native plant restoration; and control/eradication of Invasive Alien Species as areas that could potentially be covered by LIFE plus and be relevant to the OTs;
- LIFE PLUS will fund between 60% and 75% for a biodiversity or nature project.
- The scheme is likely to open for 2014 bids by mid Summer/Autumn 2014;
- 'Traditional' projects typically last 2-4 years involving 1-5 million Euros. Applications for less than Eu 1 million are not seen as worthwhile. Above Eu 5 million applications are more suited to longer term 'integrated' projects.

Future Defra support for potential OT applications and applicants will include:

- Provision of a 'concept form' to gather ideas on possible projects;
- Advising the OTs of the timetable for LIFE bids when the Commission formally agrees programme timings and details (possibly January 2014); and
- Hosting a workshop of OT, NGO and other stakeholder representatives to provide details on the application process and discuss potential projects. The OTBG will meet shortly after the workshop to consider its outcomes.

ACTION: RF to circulate concept form to OTBG to gather ideas on possible projects.

ACTION: Defra to set date and ToR for OT LIFE PLUS workshop March 2014

ACTION: Defra to Invite Commission representative to March workshop.

2. OT Climate Impact Reports

Sion Griffiths (FCO) provided an update on the Dfid/FCO sponsored climate change needs assessments completed in 2012. The project output comprises a report for each OT on climate change issues. SG emphasises that these documents were not designed to be a definitive review of climate change needs for each OT but provided an overview for each Territory. DECC have reviewed and approved the documents.

Dfid/FCO will now distribute the reports via the OT representatives that provided input to the original work.

ACTION: SG/RL to distribute as agreed.

3. UKOTS follow up (progress with document and web pages)

Clare Hamilton (Defra) introduced the OKOTS follow-up document which represents a snapshot of actions taken by Government Departments and agencies in implementing the Biodiversity Strategy. It should not be taken to be a report on all actions taken. The document structure reflects the layout of the original Strategy document to ensure the links between actions and Strategy priorities are clear.

The document aims to address comments made by NGOs and the recent Environment Audit Committee that suggest that HMG has not adequately communicated the breadth and depth of its biodiversity work in the OTs.

The group felt that the document provided a good summary of recent actions by HMG in supporting the OT Biodiversity strategy and also approved the format.

Defra advised that the UKOTBS document will be posted on the OT pages on the 'dot gov' domain and would be updated at regular intervals. UKOTA suggested that the document could also be circulated through the UK OT representatives as a preparatory input for JMC and for territory leaders' meeting with the EAC on 27th November.

The new information will, if permissible, initially include the UKOTBS along with the follow-up document and a link to the report of the Kew meeting; links to relevant consultations (i.e. CBD 5NR); a forward look calendar of international meetings of interest to the OTs; and links to the mainstreaming reports. The pages will be further developed with time and Defra will explore the possibility of including links to other relevant sites along with information from other government departments and agencies such as DECC, JNCC and Kew.

ACTION: All to advise Defra (Clare Hamilton) of any proposed amendments/additions to the document by 31 October.

ACTION: JNCC to provide a brief paragraph in respect of the proposed Lionfish case study (which will also be used at the JMC meeting) by 31 October.

ACTION: Defra to include information on the OTBS on the .gov domain

4. Joint Ministerial Council preparations

Sion Griffiths (FCO) summarised preparations for the late November $(25^{th} - 27^{th})$ JMC meeting as follows:

This year will see a plenary session entitled: *Renewable Energy: the economics, the environment and energy security.* The panel for this discussion will hopefully include a DECC Minister and representatives from the Carbon Trust, British Photovoltaic Association and the Government of Guernsey. This session will take place on Tues 26th.

This will be followed on Wed by a non-plenary environment session. The objective of this session is to have a number of 'stalls' to provide discussion opportunities for Territory Government officials with the corresponding UK experts. We are hoping to have representation from a number of departments and organisations including Department of Energy and Climate Change, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, National Maritime Information Centre and the Food and Environment Research Agency.

5. Updates:

Environmental Audit Committee

Siôn Griffiths (FCO) reported that Territory leaders would be having an informal meeting with the EAC in the afternoon of Wednesday 27th November. The final report is expected to be released in early December. HMG will have 60 calendar days to respond to the reports findings.

It was also reported that the UK OTCF intends to hold a workshop to consider the EAC report.. EAC representatives will be present at the meeting.DfID and UKOTA have been invited and will attend to represent and observe on behalf of the OTBG. The timing of the workshop precludes the possibility of a cross-government response having been agreed by Ministers .Departmental representatives attending the workshop will therefore be able to attend in an observer capacity only.

Kedell Worboys (UKOTA) gave a brief report on PWP3. Most of the work of Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTA) in the field of Environment and Climate Change is channelled through the Partnership Working Party on Environment. This provides for a broad-based dialogue between the Commission and the OCTs and the related Member States on specific issues related to environment and climate change.

ACTION: UKOTA will circulate minutes from the recent PWP3 meeting

Europe Overseas Roundtable

Clare Hamilton (Defra) gave an overview of the IUCN's EU Overseas Roundtable meeting. The IUCN organised the meeting to review the BEST proposal to set up a new process which does not provide for direct project funding in the OTs themselves. The Roundtable meeting involved a presentation of what is proposed rather than an active discussion of options. The next step will be a report to the Commission.

ACTION: Defra will circulate the papers for the roundtable to any interested OTBG members.

There was also discussion of a proposed follow-up meeting to the Reunion Conference. Location and date have yet to be decided.

Dfid visit to St Helena

Razi Latif (DfID) will circulate his report on his visit to St Helena.

6. AOB

OTBG TOR

Clare Hamilton (Defra) raised the question of possible updates to Terms of Reference for the OTBG. She also indicated that Defra had invited other Departments (DfT, DCMS and MoD).

ACTION: Defra to circulate the OTBG ToR to the group for comment until end November. A revised ToR will be prepared on the basis of the comments received and circulated before the next OTBG meeting.

Annual stakeholder meeting

Clare Hamilton (Defra) asked for comments on a possible annual event organised by OTBG to involve stakeholders, including NGOs and academic institutions involved in OT work. The Group unanimously endorsed the idea with spring 2014 being suggested as appropriate timing for the meeting.