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JNCC CORPORATE PLAN 2012-15

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JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

JNCC CORPORATE PLAN 2012-15

Paper by Marcus Yeo and Sue McQueen

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper sets out a provisional view on JNCC priorities and resource requirements for the next three years, as a step towards preparation of a corporate plan for 2012-15.
- 1.2 Key information is contained in the following annexes:
 - i. Annex 1 sets out draft priority performance measures for 2012/13, set within the context of JNCC's strategic objectives;
 - ii. Annex 2 shows provisional annual programme allocations of grant in aid (GIA) for the period 2012-15, split between funding streams. Figures include cash and salary costs. The 2011/12 baseline is also shown;
 - iii. Annex 3 provides a more detailed breakdown of provisional resource allocations for marine programmes.

2. Overview of priorities for 2012-15

- 2.1 The strategic direction of JNCC's work has been developed through Joint Committee discussions in March and June this year. Priorities for the next three years have been identified through consultation with Defra, the devolved administrations and the country conservation bodies. Annexes 1-3 set out a provisional view of the work considered to be necessary to support UK Government and devolved administrations in meeting their national and international obligations over the period 2012-15.
- 2.2 For **non-marine work**, substantial reductions in expenditure have been achieved in recent years. Some areas of work have been cut back (e.g. support for Lead Co-ordination Networks) and others have been stopped completely (e.g. Geological Conservation Review). Efficiency savings have been achieved in back office functions and in some other areas of significant spend, such as species surveillance.
- 2.3 Further reductions and efficiency savings are planned for 2012-15. For example:
 - i. time-limited projects come to an end in several programmes, e.g. data access work to prepare for Habitats Directive reporting concludes in 2011/12;
 - ii. reductions in spend on EU intelligence and the Brussels office have been profiled over the three-year period;
 - iii. management structures and processes will be rationalised, with an associated reduction in costs.

- 2.4 Additional expenditure has been included in the resource allocations in Annex 2 where it is considered necessary to meet Government requirements or to achieve long-term efficiency savings:
- i. under the Surveillance and Monitoring programme additional funding is included in the latter part of the corporate plan period to support development of vegetation monitoring to meet Habitats Directive and other requirements;
 - ii. under the Biodiversity Information and Advice programme provision has been made to meet increasing requirements for evidence management and quality assurance;
 - iii. implementation of new corporate systems for resource planning and management has been scheduled for 2012/13 and 2013/14.
- 2.5 JNCC's *marine work* has expanded over the last few years in response to new commitments such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and domestic legislation. This has been achieved through internal reallocation of resources and provision of additional funding from Defra. UK and devolved administrations' requirements for JNCC advice are likely to continue increasing over the 2012-15 period. However, the nature of the work will change (e.g. as identification of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) comes to an end and the emphasis shifts to site management).
- 2.6 In broad terms, marine resource allocations are based on the following assumptions:
- i. JNCC will maintain its core role in improving seabed habitat maps to meet multiple demands (e.g. monitoring, assessment, planning, management and site protection) and will continue to develop work on pressures and impacts affecting the marine environment;
 - ii. research and development to provide options to Government on a biodiversity monitoring programme for all UK waters will be substantially completed by 2015;
 - iii. JNCC will continue to provide technical advice to support implementation of the OSPAR Convention and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. A key component of this work will be undertaking assessment and reporting of marine ecosystems and offshore MPAs, and developing tools to make the assessment/reporting process more data-driven;
 - iv. JNCC will continue to provide statutory nature conservation advice to offshore industries and their regulators, and there will be an ongoing need for JNCC advice on fisheries;
 - v. identification of marine Natura sites will be completed during the period of the corporate plan – offshore Special Areas of Conservation by 2012, Special Protection Areas by 2015. JNCC's role in relation to offshore Natura sites will gradually become more operational, with a focus on managing, monitoring and assessing sites;

- vi. identification and designation of offshore Marine Conservation Zones and Scottish Marine Protected Areas will be completed during the period of the corporate plan. As for Natura sites, JNCC's role will become more operational;
- vii. there will be an ongoing need for JNCC to provide advice on the UK's MPA network, e.g. co-ordinating UK-level reporting. Effective management of the huge amount of data relating to MPAs will require investment in databases and web-based delivery systems.

3. Funding prospects for 2012-15

- 3.1 GIA funding for 2012/13 and the remainder of the Spending Review period has not yet been agreed by Government. Proposals set out in this paper are based on the following assumptions:
 - i. *Core reserved.* Defra has informed JNCC that core reserved GIA will be reduced by 20% on an even profile over the four years of the Spending Review. A reduction of 5% has been achieved in 2011/12, with further annual reductions of 5%, 5% and 5% profiled for subsequent years (percentages based on 2010/11 baseline);
 - ii. *UK co-ordination.* Immediately following the Spending Review, the devolved administrations were not in a position to provide indicative GIA allocations for the four years covered by the Spending Review. More recently, most administrations have indicated that UK co-ordination GIA should be cut by 20% over four years. A reduction of 6% has been achieved in 2011/12. Further annual reductions of 4%, 5% and 5% have been assumed (percentages based on 2010/11 baseline).
 - iii. *Marine reserved.* Discussions with Defra on future marine funding and priorities are ongoing. In the absence of any better information we have assumed level funding for 2012-15 against a 2011/12 baseline.
- 3.2 The use of each funding stream has come into sharper focus as Government budgets are squeezed. Funding bodies have requested greater transparency as to how money is spent.
- 3.3 Apart from a broad definition of the use of reserved and UK co-ordination funding streams, there is no detailed agreement as to how costs should be assigned to funding streams. Allocation of work to funding streams for 2012-15 (see Annex 2) reflects historical decisions made by Government and JNCC's assessment of the relative benefits of each programme to UK Government and devolved administrations respectively. It is broadly the same as in 2011/12, with minor amendments to rationalise and simplify arrangements. For example, a proportion of Governance and Corporate Services costs has been assigned to core reserved and marine reserved GIA, to reflect the fact that reserved work places additional demands on back office functions.
- 3.4 The funding bodies have agreed that JNCC's funding arrangements should be reviewed and most funders agree this should be done as part of the Triennial Review scheduled for the end of 2012.

- 3.5 Some areas of JNCC work are funded entirely, or largely, by non-GIA income. For example, CITES licensing is funded through a Service Level Agreement with the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency, and DECC and Crown Estate provide funding for advice on offshore industries. Non-GIA income is already coming under increased scrutiny, and this poses potential risks for the future funding of some work.

4. Comparison of JNCC proposals with provisional GIA allocations

- 4.1 For core reserved funding, there is a reasonable match between the projected costs in Annex 1 and indicative GIA allocations. We can be reasonably confident of being able to achieve a 20% cut in expenditure by 2015 while still enabling UK Government to meet its obligations for biodiversity. There are small projected surpluses in 2012/13 and 2013/14, which could be used to support marine activities.
- 4.2 For UK co-ordination GIA, the projected costs for work currently funded by this funding stream are slightly lower than the provisional GIA allocation in 2012/13 but projected expenditure exceeds provisional GIA allocations by £240k in 2013/14 and £560k in 2014/15. The following points are relevant:
- i. over the past five years, the UK co-ordination budget has decreased by 12.3% in cash terms (23.3% in real terms). This has been achieved by rigorous prioritisation and achievement of efficiency gains. We are now reaching the stage where it is difficult to make further reductions without compromising JNCC's capability to deliver some of its core functions;
 - ii. the Governance and Corporate Services budget comprises nearly 40% of the UK co-ordination allocation. There is limited potential for significant further savings in this area, and certainly not without upfront investment, which would be very difficult to find when budgets are declining¹. In areas where benchmarking has been undertaken (e.g. of the finance function) JNCC costs have compared favourably with the Defra network average. As the potential for further savings is limited, reductions in the overall UK co-ordination budget will fall disproportionately on scientific and technical programmes.
- 4.3 For marine reserved GIA, it is clear that the proposed work programme cannot be met unless there is a substantial increase in funding. Obviously this is problematic at a time when budgets within Defra are under severe downward pressure. Even if additional funding is made available, we will need to ensure that any growth within JNCC's marine function is manageable, and does not compromise our ability to achieve existing commitments.
- 4.4 Costs relating to evidence comprise a significant proportion of the provisional marine costs (see Annex 3). For marine protected areas, there are costs associated with collecting survey data to inform site designation and management measures, and to monitor site features. As part of the monitoring R&D project, it is intended to run a habitat pilot in 2013/14, which will cost in the order of £3.5 million. There is potential to achieve considerable

¹ There is a proposal for JNCC to move to shared office accommodation in Peterborough in 2013/14. It is projected that this would generate annual savings in running costs of £190k, but it would require one-off costs of £360k in 2013/14 (not included in Annex 2).

cost savings through a strategic approach to use of the UK research vessel fleet.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 For work funded by UK co-ordination and marine reserved GIA it is clear that more rigorous prioritisation must be undertaken so that work programmes for the next three years match the available funding. Prioritisation will be based on the following criteria:
- i. risk of infraction or not meeting statutory obligations;
 - ii. extent to which JNCC has clear remit and competency relative to other organisations;
 - iii. extent to which financial savings are made by conducting work at a UK scale rather than by individual countries;
 - iv. degree of value placed on work by funders;
 - v. degree of value placed on project by other influential stakeholders;
 - vi. scope for alternative funding.
- 5.2 In the case of marine work, we will also develop options for phasing work so that any increase in resources is realistic and manageable.
- 5.3 Further discussion with funding bodies will then be undertaken to get a clear steer on priorities and the funding available to achieve them.
- 5.4 A draft corporate plan will be presented to Committee for approval in March 2012.

Annex 1. Provisional priority performance measures for 2012/13

Introduction

Priority performance measures (PPMs) are set within the framework of JNCC's six strategic objectives.

Further work will be undertaken following the November Committee meeting to sharpen the PPMs, so that they contain specific outputs with associated timescales and milestones. In several cases, the scope of PPMs will be dependent on funding decisions.

Priority Performance Measures

Objective 1. Maintain and develop biodiversity surveillance programmes, sufficient to achieve policy and statutory obligations cost-effectively

- 1.1 Publish updated trends for bird, butterfly and mammal species
- 1.2 Analyse biological recording information and review long-term monitoring programmes in order to:
 - i. report and provide better information on non-native species
 - ii. support implementation of EU Directives
 - iii. contribute to implementation of country strategies
 - iv. assist assessment of ecosystem services
- 1.3 Facilitate application of remote sensing data and provide advice on how to use it to produce evidence necessary to meet Habitats Directive requirements and other priority needs for habitat information
- 1.4 Undertake research and development work necessary to advise on options for a co-ordinated and integrated system of marine biodiversity monitoring covering all UK waters

Objective 2. Provide access to, and reporting of, information, evidence and knowledge on UK and international biodiversity

- 2.1 Support Defra to achieve a pragmatic evidence-based approach to the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), building on existing initiatives, and facilitate efficient engagement by the UK biodiversity science and policy communities
- 2.2 Provide evidence, analysis of data, and identification of common principles supporting the application of the ecosystem approach and the assessment of ecosystem services
- 2.3 Facilitate two-way links between country environment strategies within the UK and international and European commitments, including EU Directives, EU Biodiversity Strategy and the global Aichi targets

- 2.4 Provide advice to facilitate the application of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), undertake technical development of the NBN gateway and develop interpretation tools for the analysis of biological recording data
- 2.5 In support of Habitats Directive reporting, produce draft conservation status assessments of 77 habitats and 91 species, and a general report
- 2.6 Create and update marine habitat maps and associated confidence layers, including maps produced from surveyed and modelled outputs and habitat vulnerability maps.
- 2.7 Initiate a project² to enhance the UK's ability to respond to major oil spill incidents by updating oil spill sensitivity maps for seabirds and developing JNCC's capacity to provide surveyors in the event of a spill, as agreed as part of JNCC's role in the Oil Spill National Contingency Plan.

Objective 3. Provide advice to enable UK and devolved governments to meet their EU and international obligations for biodiversity and sustainable development.

- 3.1 Provide coordinated input of UK expertise to the advisory groups of the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature dealing with reporting on directives, indicators, green infrastructure and other priority issues
- 3.2 Contribute to the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Biological Diversity's scientific advisory body, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Animals Committee
- 3.3 Support implementation of the UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy and the established regional focal points (Caribbean and South Atlantic) through capacity building, the identification and promotion of research priorities, and provision of the secretariat to the UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group
- 3.4 Provide technical advice to support implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in UK waters

Objective 4. Support UK administrations to substantially complete the UK network of well managed marine protected areas, sufficient to meet national, EU and international requirements

- 4.1 To contribute to the objectives of the Habitats Directive:
 - i. support Scottish Government with public consultation on five potential Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in offshore waters around Scotland and provide final recommendations
 - ii. provide formal conservation objectives and advice to Competent Authorities on [number to be confirmed] European offshore marine sites

² Subject to funding confirmation from Oil & Gas UK.

- 4.2 To contribute to the objectives of the Birds Directive, identify a suite of inshore waterbird Special Protection Areas around the UK on behalf of the country nature conservation bodies
- 4.3 Recommend to Defra in July 2012 a suite of Marine Conservation Zones in offshore waters around England, Wales and Northern Ireland, accompanied by an impact assessment
- 4.4 Advise Scottish Government in November 2012 on possible Nature Conservation MPAs in offshore waters around Scotland

Objective 5. Provide advice on marine biodiversity to enable sustainable management of the offshore environment

- 5.1 Ensure that 95% of requests for statutory advice on offshore industries (including oil and gas, renewables and aggregates) are responded to fully within the relevant consultation period
- 5.2 Assist Defra, devolved administrations and UK regulatory authorities to develop fisheries management measures for offshore marine protected areas through the mechanisms available under the Common Fisheries Policy

Objective 6. Manage and develop the organisation to identify and meet changing demands and opportunities, maximise its effectiveness in achieving our strategic goals and improve operational efficiency

- 6.1 Develop a staffing and accommodation strategy to align with recent and anticipated future changes and begin implementation
- 6.2 Implement evidence quality assurance policies, standards and procedures to ensure JNCC produces robust, high-quality evidence, in compliance with Government Chief Scientific Adviser Guidelines and aligned with the country conservation bodies

Annex 2. Provisional grant in aid allocations for 2012-15

Baseline salary figures for 2011/12 were calculated through making adjustments to a historical baseline. Salary figures for 2012/13 and beyond have been calculated by costing posts to the programmes on which they primarily work to enable spend to be reported quarterly.

Once the current two-year pay freeze ends in July 2013, an annual average salary increase of 3% has been assumed.

Income from non-GIA sources is excluded.

All figures £k	2011/12 baseline				2012/13				2013/14				2014/15			
	Programme	Total budget	UK co-ordination	Core reserved	Marine reserved	Total budget	UK co-ordination	Core reserved	Marine reserved	Total budget	UK co-ordination	Core reserved	Marine reserved	Total budget	UK co-ordination	Core reserved
Global Advice and Overseas Territories	450	0	450	0	380	0	380	0	360	0	360	0	370	0	370	0
European Intelligence and Advice	400	180	220	0	340	160	170	0	290	130	150	0	270	130	140	0
Biodiversity Information and Advice	630	370	260	0	610	450	170	0	670	430	180	60	680	440	180	60
Surveillance and monitoring	1,430	1,430	0	0	1,400	1,400	0	0	1,430	1,430	0	0	1,520	1,520	0	0
Access to Information	620	620	0	0	750	600	0	160	770	610	0	160	790	630	0	160
Marine Monitoring and Ecosystem Mapping	1,500	30	30	1,440	1,970	90	0	1,880	4,820	80	0	4,740	1,130	80	0	1,050
Marine Ecosystem Assessment and Advice	850	60	70	720	830	0	0	830	820	0	0	820	750	0	0	750
Marine Protected Areas	2,420	420	250	1,740												
Natura sites					1,840	360	160	1,320	1,520	330	100	1,090	2,050	230	40	1,780
Marine Conservation Zones					1,060	0	0	1,060	2,660	0	0	2,660	2,810	0	0	2,810
Scottish MPAs					880	0	0	880	1,720	0	0	1,720	1,760	0	0	1,760

All figures £k	2011/12 baseline				2012/13				2013/14				2014/15			
	Programme	Total budget	UK co-ordination	Core reserved	Marine reserved	Total budget	UK co-ordination	Core reserved	Marine reserved	Total budget	UK co-ordination	Core reserved	Marine reserved	Total budget	UK co-ordination	Core reserved
Marine Management Advice	570	150	420	0	680	70	610	0	730	70	660	0	750	80	680	0
Governance and Corporate Services	2,100	2,100	0	0	2,260	1,950	50	270	2,430	1,990	20	410	2,390	2,030	20	330
Total cost	10,960	5,350	1,700	3,910	13,010	5,070	1,540	6,400	18,220	5,080	1,480	11,670	15,270	5,120	1,440	8,710
Provisional GIA						5,130	1,610	3,910		4,840	1,520	3,910		4,560	1,440	3,910
Surplus/shortfall against provisional GIA						60	70	-2,490		-240	40	-7,760		-560	0	-4,800

Annex 3. Provisional GIA allocations for marine programmes

Note that several other programmes also contain elements of marine work, including some provisionally allocated to marine reserved GIA (see Annex 2).

Programme	Theme	All figures £k		
		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Marine Monitoring and Ecosystem Mapping	Seabed mapping and impacts	530	540	550
	Monitoring R&D	1,350	4,200	500
	Seabird colony monitoring	90	80	80
	Total	<u>1,970</u>	<u>4,820</u>	<u>1,130</u>
Marine Ecosystem Assessment and Advice	Advice on OSPAR and MSFD	120	130	130
	Wider ecosystem assessment	190	200	160
	Offshore MPA assessment	170	150	110
	R&D of new assessment methods	350	350	350
	Total	<u>830</u>	<u>820</u>	<u>750</u>
Marine Management Advice	Offshore industries advice	260	270	280
	Fisheries and species advice	420	460	470
	Total	<u>680</u>	<u>730</u>	<u>750</u>
Natura sites	Marine SPA identification	360	330	230
	Offshore SAC designation	160	100	40
	Natura site implementation	150	220	290
	Natura site management measures	90	130	140
	Natura site evidence collection (management)	1,080	740	0
	Natura site monitoring	0	0	1,350
	Total	<u>1,840</u>	<u>1,520</u>	<u>2,050</u>

Programme	Theme	All figures £k		
		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Marine Conservation Zones	MCZ designation	420	170	330
	MCZ implementation	0	160	300
	MCZ management measures	0	70	140
	MCZ evidence collection (designation)	460	510	0
	MCZ evidence collection (management)	0	1,570	1,870
	MCZ monitoring	0	0	0
	MAIA project (MPAs in the Atlantic Arc)	30	0	0
	MPA network advice	150	180	180
	Total	<u>1,060</u>	<u>2,660</u>	<u>2,810</u>
Scottish Marine Protected Areas	SMPA designation	370	300	0
	SMPA implementation	0	80	240
	SMPA management measures	0	70	140
	SMPA monitoring	0	0	0
	SMPA evidence collection (designation)	510	0	0
	SMPA evidence collection (management)	0	1,270	1,370
	Total	<u>880</u>	<u>1,720</u>	<u>1,760</u>