

## Meeting note

15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group  
To be held in room 204 Nobel House - London  
8<sup>th</sup> December 2014 1100-1300

### Welcome, apologies and introductions

#### Attendees:

CH Clare Hamilton (Defra)  
TP Tara Pelembe (JNCC)  
NC Nicola Clarke (Defra)  
DB Dick Beales (DfID)  
SG Siôn Griffiths (FCO)  
AE Alan Evans (NOC)  
SG Stewart Guy (MOD)  
PN Paul Newbegin (MOD SBA Cyprus)  
RS Richard Snow (MOD)  
NA Nick Andrew-Gauvain (MOD)

AS Andy Stott (Defra)

#### By phone:

SH Stacey Hughes (Defra)

#### Apologies

TW Tony Weighell (JNCC)  
CC Colin Clubbe (Kew)  
KW Kedell Worboys (UKOTA)  
MB Mark Baxter (Defra)

### Outstanding actions – See action tracker.

#### 1. Funding

- a. Update on Darwin Plus **Clare Hamilton**;

CH reported that the Darwin Plus advisory group met in September to consider the latest round of applications to Darwin. Last year 14 projects were funded and this year a further 11 were recommended for funding. Successful applications were announced at the 2014 [Joint Ministerial Committee \(JMC\)](#) reception on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December and cover range of issues from species protection to habitat restoration.

All unsuccessful applicants receive feedback and can reapply if they wish the following year.

- b. Update on DCI and B4Life **Simon Smith** (via) **Siôn Griffiths**

Although the [B4Life](#) has published its leaflet introducing the programme, with specific mention of support to OCTs, there is no clarity around how funding can be accessed. Simon Smith will raise this question with B4Life and feed back to the next meeting.

- c. Update on Biodiversa3 **Andy Stott**

A consortium of UK research funders submitted a bid to [Biodiversa 3](#) and it has recently been announced that it is successful. The consortium also includes members who were previously part of [NetBiome](#) (which focussed on OTs). The successful bid is essentially a research programme on Biodiversity and ecosystem functions, with a specific focus on Green and Blue Infrastructure and Soils. The Funding 'pot' will be c. €30 million. Final decisions on contributions from prospective UK co-funders are expected in January 2014. If the UK is part of the research call, then there will be the opportunity for a research

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consortium to submit bids (minimum of 3 Member States) to the call which will be launched in summer 2015.

Life funding: The [Message from Guadeloupe](#) contains reference to OCTs and Life i.e. Acknowledge the legal eligibility of ORs and OCTs to LIFE+ funding, to ensure the effective participation of all of them;

### 2. Research

- a. Cefas presentation – to be arranged for the next meeting
- b. Update/consultation on OT data access project – **Tara Pelembe** (paper attached)
- c. Update on OTRTSG meeting 4 December – **Tara Pelembe**

TP gave a brief overview of the OT data access project, and updated the group on where the project was at. TP also updated the group on the last OTRTSG meeting which also focussed on data access.

- c. Update on Defra OT research project – **Clare Hamilton**

CH informed the group that call announced last month and expecting applications to come in during the course of this week with the tender to be awarded at the end of next week. More information is available [here>>](#). The expected output will help to develop a more coherent strategy about what is being funded and why. It will cover marine as well as terrestrial research and a project steering committee will be created.

### 3. Cross-Government Strategy

- a. Discussion of revised paper (to be circulated) **Clare Hamilton / Mark Baxter / Siôn Griffiths**;

In the absence of MB (apologies due to illness), the principle of a cross government strategy was discussed. This included the widening of the remit of the group to include environmental management (rather than just biodiversity), and a subsequent widening of membership both across government departments and internally within Defra. This approach would help to minimize duplication of effort and improve efficiency. Discussion included the following points:

- AE informed the group that the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has led a cross-government working group looking at OT Bathymetry data – there has not been a formal link made between that group and OTBG.
- RS added that a wider remit would add value to MOD attendance, as their focus on OTs includes all environmental issues not just biodiversity.

### JNCC stakeholder group.

- TP gave the group a brief update on the JNCC\_NGO stakeholder group which has met 4 times in 2014 to discuss areas of shared focus, to explore options for synergy and collaboration. A process is being developed where organisational targets are being mapped against the Aichi targets to identify common areas of focus.

### 4. Engagement

- a. JMC update **Siôn Griffiths**

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SG gave a brief background to the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) and updated the group on this year's event.

From an environmental perspective, the focus was on the economic value of the natural environment. FCO has funded JNCC to run a project look at the economic value of the natural environment in a number of UKOTs. The outcomes of these project were presented at the JMC environment plenary session by Professor [Pieter Van Beukering](#) (Free University of Amsterdam).

This session was chaired by Lord de Mauley, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for natural environment and science at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. In addition to Professor van Beukering, the other panel members were: Dr Tony Weighell (*Overseas Territories Programme Manager, Joint Nature Conservation Committee*) and Paul Morling (*Head of Economics, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds*)

The Premier of the British Virgin Islands<sup>1</sup> Dr. The Hon D. **Orlando Smith, Premier** of the **British Virgin Islands** gave an intervention supporting the concept.

The [JMC Communiqué 2014](#) is the output of the event that lists the areas of focus and actions for the next year.

Some of the OT leaders also met with the Environment Audit Committee.

- b. Guadeloupe Conference.

No-one at the meeting attended the Guadeloupe conference. The strategic priorities in the message from Guadeloupe were discussed, and it was agreed that the message would be circulated.

- d. CIEEM Conference.

CIEEM are hosting a [conference on Overseas Territories](#) on the 16th December. [LTS International](#) will be giving presentation on Darwin Plus

- e. UKOTCF Conference, 2015 to include update **Tara Pelembe on JNCC input**

The UKOTCF will be co-hosting a [UKOT conference in 2015](#) in Gibraltar. JNCC will hold a face-to-face meeting of the UKOT Research and Training Steering group 2 days before the conference to help support UKOT government environmental representation at the conference.

Discussion on the conference included the following points:

- Defra have offered to provide someone to speak on MPAs
- AE is giving a presentation on Bathymetry in the UKOTs.
- Submission of bids to Biodiversa and IPBES will be around about that time, so this might be an opportunity to develop an OT bid, and to update OTs on IPBES.

### 5. AOB

- i. EEA OCT Biodiversity Indicators – **Tara Pelembe**

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<sup>1</sup> An OT where one of the green economy projects was carried out.

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TP noted that the EEA are looking at developing OCT Biodiversity indicators, and was interested to see if anyone was aware/involved. –

AS noted that the UK biodiversity indicators will be published next week.

### ii. Update on bird trapping – **Paul Newbegin**

PN gave an update to the group on Bird trapping in SBA Cyprus. This included:

- The focus and pressure is on what is happening on 'British soil'. A recent Birdlife report claimed that 500,000 birds killed on SBA.
- The longer term plan is to designate SACs and the process for doing this has been initiated.
- Funding for the removal of the rest of the acacia (c. £8 million) is being sought, and Life Project (in collaboration with Cyprus) is being considered.
- The MOD have also invested in and opened an environmental centre on Akotiri.

### iii. OTs and IPBES handling – **Andy Stott**

Established in 2012, [IPBES](#) is the 'biodiversity' equivalent of the intergovernmental panel on Climate Change. It is an Independent/UN facilitated expert panel. However it is well recognised that addressing biodiversity and ecosystem services needs to have local as well as global approach. An ambitious work programme has been developed, including thematic global assessment on pollination and security.

The next plenary meeting will be held in January 2015 where there will be proposals for a series of regional assessments to be taken, reporting against Aichi target implementation.

The proposal is for 5 regions:

- Europe and Central asia
- Africa
- Asia-pacific
- Americas
- Open ocean

There will be a scoping phase which will move into setting up expert/author panels to undertake this assessment. Governments and external stakeholders are invited to make nominations of experts who will be selected to write the reports based on existing evidence with a summary for policy makers.

The regional approach is being defined by geographic regions and therefore there are implications for OTs in those regions. It would be good to approach OTs to submit nominations (via the open nomination process) so that experts from OTs/people with expertise in OTs can be part of the process. The work on valuation in the Caribbean for example would be very relevant.

IPBES is very ambitious and depends on the voluntary input from governments – so there will be opportunities for OTs to be involved.

JNCC run a UK IPBES stakeholders network to provide stakeholders with updates on the call for nominations etc and it would be good to have UKOTs represented on that network.

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SG was also noted that Stewart McPherson (independent, who has filmed all of the UKOTs) is having an event on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January at 11am at Gibraltar House. MB will be attending for Defra.