

Note of IDGBOT Meeting 2.

14th April 2010 Room 405 Nobel House, London 10:30 am – 1:30 pm

Present:

Eric Blencowe	Defra (Chair)
Tara Pelembe	JNCC (Secretariat)
Jennifer Beschizza	Defra
Kedell Worbys	UKOTA
Heather Christie	FCO
Stacey Hughes	Defra
Steve Arthur	DFID

Invited to present at this meeting

Sharon Reid	Fera
Sugoto Roy	Fera
Nikki Chapman	JNCC

Lunchtime presentation

Clare Stringer	RSPB
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Apologies

David Moore	FCO
Anna Balance	DFID
Tony Weighell	JNCC

Agenda item 2.1: Matters arising.

EB gave an update on the matters arising from the last meeting which included an update on the actions that had been taken:

2.1.1 The partnership: the diagram delineating the relationships with other organisations was updated and circulated to partners.

2.1.2 Paper 1 was introduced to establish agreement on processes for inviting other (non-core group) stakeholders to OTBG meetings.

Decision 2.1.2: It was agreed that other stakeholders would be invited as required by the meeting agendas. In addition, a note of the OTBG meetings would be circulated to all UKOT stakeholders and put on the Defra website with Terms of Reference and relevant background information. Meeting papers would not go on the website.

ACTION 2.1.2 : EB to arrange for note of the meeting and TORs for the group to go on the Defra website.

2.1.3 UK OT biodiversity strategy: EB reported that the strategy was welcomed by the minister, was available at OTCC in December, and has been published on the web . Hard copies were disseminated by mail.

2.1.4 Role of IDMGEB: The intention was to write to ministers to suggest that the group (IDMGEB) no longer exists. The three main departments for the group were Defra/DFID and FCO. The FCO link was mainly because of UKOTs. EB has not yet written to ministers, as it seemed appropriate to wait until the after the election.

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ACTION 2.1.4: EB write to Ministers re: IDMGEB after the election.

2.1.5 *Terms Of Reference:* for the group have been updated based on the discussions at last meeting and were circulated to members.

2.1.6 *OT focal points:* UKOTA sent a written request to UKOT governments for a central point of communication about environment and wider conservation issues for each territory, and will send a spreadsheet of contacts to the group. To date responses not received from Gibraltar, Ascension and Bermuda and Pitcairn.

There was discussion around process for using the OT focal points. It was agreed that the focal points should be used for all contact with UKOTs by OTBG members about environment and wider conservation issues. Where there are existing, effective, relationships already established, these should be continued, however the OT focal point should be copied in to this correspondence as well (e.g. CITES requests which currently go to FCO, should copy in the UKOT focal point).

ACTION 2.1.6a: KW to send letter of request and spreadsheet of contact details to TP for circulation to the group by 15th May 2010

ACTION 2.1.6b: All members to make colleagues in their organisation aware of this agreed process and circulate with UKOT focal point contact details by 30th May 2010

2.1.7 *Defra UKOT mailbox.* Defra have created an email box for UKOT enquiries. UKOTenquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk

2.1.8 *Name:* Names for this group were discussed in the last meeting, but no final agreement was reached. It was agreed that the group would be called Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group (OTBG)

2.1.9 *BEST:* Update: EB informed the group that the European Commission's DG environment is taking forward the idea of establishing a voluntary protected areas initiative (with associated funding) for UKOTs. EB has been following this up and pressing for it to be progressed as soon as possible. There have been a number of draft proposals, which UK and OT governments and NGO's have commented on. The most recent, has been an amended version in French that is still waiting translation. EB is hoping to meet the French government and DG environment officials (Ladislav Miko) to see if the process can be speeded up.

KW noted that BEST hasn't been raised at OCTA (Overseas Countries and Territories Association) meetings. It might be useful to raise here as well, so that Denmark and Netherlands could be brought in.

ACTION 2.1.9a: EB to meet French and DG environment officials re; BEST and feedback to OTBG

ACTION 2.1.9b: TP to send BEST information to KW for OCTA meetings (and to circulate to OTBG) by 30th May 2010

2.1.10 *Funding project:* EB thanked DFID for providing an additional years funding for the continuation of work by JNCC relating to exploring alternative sources of funding for UKOT biodiversity conservation work, and for developing UKOT skills in proposal writing.

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2.1.11 *GEF and lottery funding*: EB noted that Defra had not followed up on this action and would carry over.

ACTION 2.1.11: EB to explore with relevant government officials the opportunities and/or limitations to UKOTs accessing GEF and lottery funding.

2.1.12 *Draft OTBG work programme*: The OTBG work programme (which has been drafted to deliver the UKOT Biodiversity strategy) has been circulated, and members of the group are requested to update on their input into delivery over the last 6 months.

ACTION 2.1.12 : ALL to update 6 monthly activities that relate to implementation of work programme and send to TP by 30th May 2010

Agenda item 2.2 : Round table, update on progress from each organisation over the last 6 months(FCO, DFID, Defra, JNCC, UKOTA)

2.2.1 *FCO*: HC reported that there had been a successful OTEP bidding round, with all of the funding committed (i.e. £1million on 15 projects). There was also a debrief with feedback on how the bidding round went with amended procedures. This time the number of projects applications (over 50) was more than double that of the 2008/09 bidding round, the quality of the applications was also very high. Potential reasons include the impact of the DFID funded, JNCC delivered, funding work. It would be good if some projects that OTEP was unable to fund sought funding from other sources.

EB noted that Defra have made a contribution of £30,000 to complement OTEP funding for a project at Wildscreen which hosts ARKive, a database of photos and images of species and habitats. The funding contributes to creating a database dedicated to species in the UKOTs, with the aim of increasing public awareness.

HC added that her role was changing within FCO to include climate change

2.2.2 **DFID** SA added that other potential reasons why there was such a large increase in applications this bidding round included the fact that the parameters for the funding were wider, and the Cayman Conference, and UKOTs biodiversity strategy had made people more aware of the funding opportunities. SA reported that DFID has received internal approval for an additional 4 years of funding for its contribution to OTEP. And OTD is moving to East Kilbride

KW noted that UKOTA had objected to the move as it was less feasible for people to have face-to-face meetings and resolve issues with relevant personnel.

These difficulties were noted, and HC encouraged DFID to take every opportunity to attend meetings following the current Defra example (EB is based in Bristol)

2.2.3 **DEFRA**: SH reported continued co-funding of the ACAP coordinator role (JNCC) – based in the Falklands. In addition the Flagship Species Fund, managed by Fauna and Flora International (FFI) has funded projects in UKOTs: last year a Cobb's wren conservation project in the Falkland Islands and this year 3 of 4 projects funded are in OTs (Defra contributed £50K).

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Under CITES, Defra is working with a number of OTs and CDS to bring their national legislation into compliance with the Convention. Defra also consulted some of the UKOTs over relevant proposals for the CITES COP however UKOTs were not invited to attend, as there was no strong OTs focus this time round.

Defra has also helped to fund the CMS IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU by making another voluntary payment of £15k to the secretariat.

2.2.4 UKOTA: KW reported that the UKOT contacts have been requested. KW asked for clarification on OTEP feedback process. HC confirmed that applications were given feedback individually. KW suggested that it would be useful if feedback included a recommendation/suggestion that the applicant discuss their application and feedback with the UKOT administration in particular the new focal point.

SA commented that St. Helena is unique in that within the territory there is a cross-sectoral group that ranks the proposals, other OTs don't do this.

KW reported that UKOTA had participated in a JNCC organised 2-day workshop. Students from the UKOTs studying environmental courses in the UKOTs were brought together, and were very involved in the activities of the two days. The group were looking at how to expand this to students not only on environmental courses as these are the future leaders and decision-makers on UKOTs.

SR suggested that UCAS could be contacted for a UKOT student list as they have record all of the university entrants.

KW reported that UKOTA (at the suggestion of Bermuda) are considering whether or not to have a combined UKOT student event. UKOTs currently hold territory specific student events. UKOT reps are compiling lists of students from their territory who are currently in UK.

It was suggested that if the number of students was too large, regional events might be considered. KW responded that there is a danger in regionalising OTs for example at OTCC there is a strong Caribbean input, and UKOTA is trying to break down those barriers.

EB noted that Defra would be interested in participating in, and supporting, a UKOT student initiative. There were opportunities for students to do work experience in different territories (e.g. St. Helena – TCI cross-territory skill share has already happened). EB asked to be contacted if there is anything Defra can do to help to make this happen

ACTION 2.2.4: OTEP (DFID and FCO) consider the inclusion of a recommendation/suggestion that the applicant discuss their application and feedback with the UKOT administration in particular the new focal point

ACTION 2.2.4b: KW to contact EB if support required for UKOT student event.

2.2.5 JNCC: TP reported that JNCC has reorganised its UKOT and CD programme of work to align it more to delivery of the UKOTs biodiversity strategy. As part of this, regional 'hubs' are being worked on in the Caribbean and the South Atlantic. In addition, Defra have contributed £250k to JNCC to facilitate work on invasive species and Climate Change in the UKOTs for the International Year of Biodiversity. Most of this funding has now been given to the UKOTs to work on their priorities. The funding work is progressing (detail in presentation Agenda item 7). The UKOT training and Research programme is progressing, and UKOTs are being given financial

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assistance for training courses and small contributions to research. An MOU with Reading is being established. In addition, an overview of biodiversity in the UKOTs (updating the JNCC 1999 publication) will be produced and launched at the end of the year.

Agenda item 2.3: Forward look – what next under the programme of work?

2.3.1 *How to engage UKOTs in MEA processes? Paper 3.* The paper recommended clear processes for inclusion, and reduction of reporting burdens be considered by the group. SH presented ACAP as a model for working with UKOTs that works well. Defra works in consultation with ACAP contacts in the South Atlantic OTs and the ACAP co-ordinator, based in the Falklands, co-ordinates activities to implement the Agreement in the SAOTs.

Decision 2.3.1 : It was decided that for all MEAs, if there hasn't been a process in the past, UKOTs should be contacted and a process developed, and this should begin with the principal contact point. If there has been a successful communication link, then these should be continued with the new UKOT focal point copied in.

Reducing reporting burden. There was a general view from the UKOTs that they are overburdened with reporting and filling in questionnaires. HC noted that Pitcairn, for example, often preferred not to sign up for anything as a result. It would be useful to talk to the central secretariat to explain the situation on very small islands, and there is usually a clause in the MEAs allowing small islands to report to the best extent possible.

What can UK government do to ease the process? Potential role to liaise with the MEA secretariat, and do most of the ground work. Hopefully once the focal point is established, there can be a discussion with them on what is needed and what is important. It was agreed that the process needs to be flexible and that the contact is key.

KW noted that it is important that UKOTs understand that there is help and advice available. If these avenues are used, then one to one advice can be given.

Action 2.3.1 : TP to arrange meeting with UKOT MEA focal points and UK government MEA leads to discuss what is most useful by 30th May 2010.

2.3.2 *Process for funding OT and CD people to attend events (paper 4).* This paper recommends consideration by the group of a common HMG approach to funding UKOT participation at international events.

EB noted that the proposal was a good idea, but Defra don't have a pot and not likely to have the foreseeable future although there might be some funding available at the end of the FY

HC noted that once OTEP funding had been finalised, it was highly likely that FCO might be able to contribute a few thousand this FY. It would be preferable if this process was managed by JNCC.

SA had no objection to the principle but was keen to minimise the transaction costs. There should be some way of prioritisation but the demand should be led by UKOTs

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and a report from the funded participant for wider circulation should be a requirement.

KW noted that OCTA also fund UKOTs to participate in international events (e.g. funded 5 people to go to COP 15) and participants provide reports to OCTA. It is important that the two initiatives communicate to avoid duplication.

There should be a written process around OTBG to say that have a list of requests and a decision can be made on greatest priority. This gives allowance for people to make comments/object.

Also added that a light touch would be good.

SA suggested there might be some way of means testing as if attendance is UKOT priority why does the UKOT government not fund participation?

KW noted that OCTA insist on report on the conclusions of conference

It was suggested that JNCC communicate list of upcoming events to UKOT principal contacts noting that there may be funding for this based on priority for individual OTs, and that match funding is encouraged.

KW will let OTBG know who is going to MEA conferences from OCTA and will circulate reports.

ACTION 2.3.2a TP to follow up with HC re: funding for participation

ACTION 2.3.2b KW to provide TP with list of OCTA MEA participants to circulate to group (and reports as available)

ACTION 2.3.2c TP to communicate list of upcoming events to UKOT principal contacts noting that there may be funding for this based on priority for individual OTs, and that match funding is encouraged.

Agenda item 2.4 Feedback from OTCC

2.4.1 KW hoped that a lot more would have come out from the OTCC Forum, but it didn't work as hoped. There was no real progress on the environment. It was noted that because the strategy was in place this year, it might be a good hook for an environmental agenda item at the 2010 OTCC.

Agenda item 2.5 OT event (Paper 5)

2.5.1 The paper outlined that there were a number of events planned or proposed in 2010 and there was to be discussion around a potential 2010 IYB event.

HC confirmed that on the 6th July there is going to be a FCO/Henderson event organised by the RSPB with David Attenborough speaking.

OTCC was planned for December 2010 but agendas for this need to wait until after the elections.

KW reported that the OT Training and Research Group had requested a more technical cross-OT meeting.

Decision 2.5.1 : IDGBOT noted that there was a clear desire for an event by the UKOT community and subject to the next government, would look to pursue holding some form of event with a partner to be agreed by OTBG before the next meeting.

ACTION 2.5.1 : **EB to arrange a meeting with OTBG members about an event after the election by end June 2010**

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Agenda item 2.6 Presentations

- 2.6.1 FERA – Sugoto Roy and Sharon Reid (pdf attached)
- 2.6.2 JNCC - OT funding work - Nikki Chapman (pdf attached)
- 2.6.3 RSPB – Henderson eradication .

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Appendix 1 List of Acronyms.

ACAP	Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
BEST	Voluntary Scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the European Overseas
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CoP	Conference of the Parties
DFID	Department for International Development
DG Environment	Directorate General for the Environment (European Commission)
FERA	Food and Environment Research Agency
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
IDGBOT	Interdepartmental Group on Biodiversity in the UKOTs (renamed OTBG)
IDMGEB	Inter-departmental Ministerial group on ecosystems and biodiversity,
IOSEA turtle MoU	Indian Ocean - South East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
OCTA	Overseas Countries and Territories Association
OTBG	Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group
OTCC	Overseas Territories Consultative Council
OTD	Overseas Territories Directorate
UKOTA	UK Overseas Territories Association